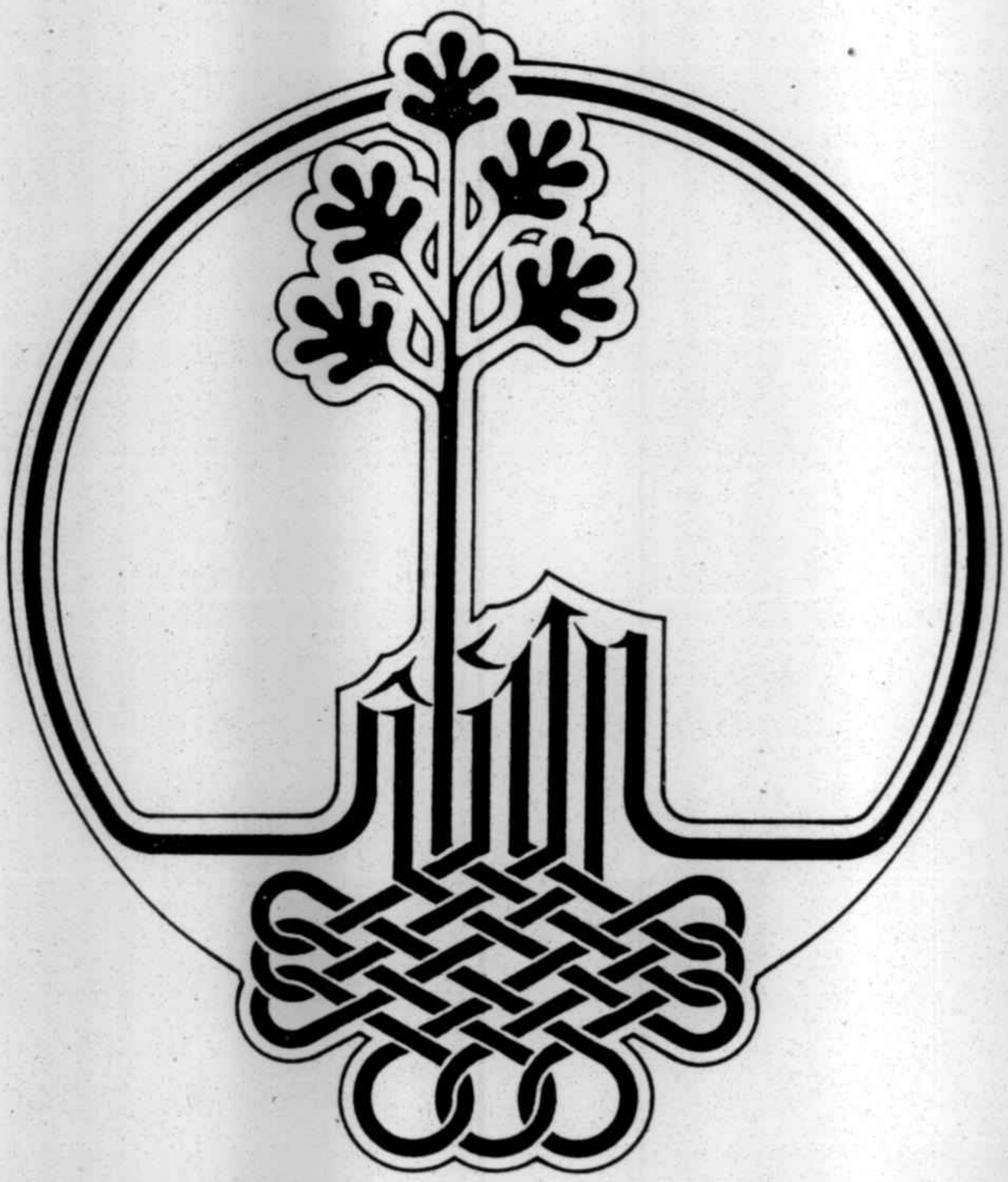
The Druids' Progress

Report Number Four



Ar nDraíocht Féin

A Druid Fellowship

From Ar ndraíocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship ("ADF"), P. O. Box 9398, Berkeley, CA, USA 94709-0398. The Druids' Progress ("DP") is published semiannually and is sent primarily to the subscribing members of ADF. Unless otherwise noted, all contents have been written by, and are Copyright 1987 by, P. E. I. Bonewits. All items created by other parties are Copyright 1987 by them. All opinions expressed are those of the individuals expressing them.

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If you were unaware of the new prices, you'll be given your first year's sub at the old rates, starting with the current issue of DP, although we'll be happy to get the extra $5 should you choose to send it. We'll probably also send you a copy of the Membership and Networking Form, so you can (a) order any back issues you want, and (b) give us the data we need about you for the Membership Directory.

Here are the changes in the Study Program: All fees are canceled until further notice. If you have already initiated yourself into the First Circle (as described in DP#2), you should (a) tell me the date of your initiation; (b) send me a written list of what you think you have already accomplished within each Track of the First Circle, and how; (c) send me a written list of what you intend to do to fulfill the requirements that you don't think you have done yet; and (d) send me whatever questions you may still have about the Study Program. I'll do the following: (1) send you a letter or discrete postcard either saying "OK" or else suggesting changes in your plans; and (2) answer unique questions personally and general questions in the *News* or DP. Note: if you live near a member of the Second Circle, (most of whom are running Groves), you can write to her/him for advice as well. Check out the Grove List in every issue of the *News* for their addresses.

A publishing event of extreme importance has finally occured: the new edition of Margot Adler's classic *Drawing Down the Moon* is finally out! This is simply the best book that anyone has ever written about the Neopagan movements, and is required reading for ADF members. The new edition has retained all of her earlier material (minus a few trivial errors) and added updating information to every chapter, plus a couple of brand-new chapters. She has four pages on ADF alone! We're already receiving information requests and subscriptions from people who have heard about us from this edition, and as I write these words, it's only been out a few weeks! If you've been looking for a book to show your parents, your shrink, your warden, your boss, your co-workers, your local newspaper's religion editor, etc., this is the one to get that will explain who and what Neopagans really are, warts and all. Buy it. (Beacon Press, 1986, $14.95)

DP#5 is going to consist mostly of your zines, since I want to spend the summer concentrating on getting the first annual Membership Directory out. So get them to me by Lughnasadh 1987 if you can.

However, if the date on your mailing label says "03/31/87", you may not receive DP#5, unless you remember to renew. Yes, this fourth issue of DP ends the first "year" of what was originally supposed to be a quarterly publication. All in all, over 300 pages of unique material on ancient and modern Druidism have been delivered (albeit slowly) for the original $20 donated by each member. I hope that you've enjoyed DP enough that you'll once again make the Pagan Publication Gamble and...

Renew!

The Basic Principles of Liturgical Design

(c) 1987 by P. E. I. Bonewits

Introduction

For the last decade or so, people in the Neopagan community, like those in the mainstream religions, have been complaining about the quality of the rituals they do. Although things have improved somewhat recently, it's my observation that, on a logarithmic scale of one-to-ten, the average Neopagan ritual still only rates about a "three" or "four", as far as the actual amount of psychic energies raised are concerned (though the mainstream folks are lucky to get a "one" or a "two"). If you want to consider the question of specific, desired and verifiable results from Neopagan ceremonies, then our ratings go down even further.

Even the best Neopagan ceremonies, such as the ADF Summer Solstice celebrations (he said modestly), the ones that people talk about for weeks and months afterwards, fall far short of what they could be. Yet politeness, interpersonal and intergroup politics, lack of fundamental psychic and magical training, and childhood conditioning that says "you don't criticize religious ceremonies", have all conspired to make people reluctant to voice their growing doubts about the ritual technology in common use in our community. And of course, simple ignorance of what really strong psychic energies feel like, has been responsible for many of us never really knowing what it is that we're actually missing.

This essay is intended to make ADF members and friends familiar with what I consider the most important theoretical and practical aspects of creating public worship rituals with genuine power and predictable results. Although my focus in this discussion is on Druidic ceremonies, most of what I have to say will be applicable to the liturgies being created and modified by a wide variety of other religious traditions, inside and outside of the Neopagan community.

I don't get into much in the way of specific detail in this essay, but that is not its purpose. ADF members know by now that I prefer to give them a thorough grounding in fundamentals, before going on to the nitty-gritty details. All too often, religious and magical teachers have focussed people's attention on the superficial aspects of what they were doing, instead of giving them the basic understanding that would allow them to make changes.

The pages that follow in this issue of DP (and those I expect you to write in future issues!) will explore the applications of these basic principles to the creation and performance of ADF liturgies. Those of you who belong to other Neopagan traditions should be able to apply this material to your own systems.

Throughout this essay and the ones that follow, I'll refer to the "performance" of a ritual, and make numerous other references to the theatrical and musical aspects of ceremonies. I've learned over the last twenty years, mostly from the priestesses and bards with whom I've worked, that the artistic elements of a ritual, and most especially

the musical and dramatic ones, can be the critical determiners of just how much psychic, magical and/or spiritual energy gets raised by the participants, and of how well that energy is maintained, focussed and discharged.

Most Neopagans won't object to an emphasis on music and singing, but will balk at the suggestion that a good ceremony should also be good theater. We've been raised in a culture that believes that "theatrical" equals "phony", and that being an actor means being a fraud. We've forgotten that what we now call theater was originally part of the Ancient Greek religion (essentially, a way to handle thousands of people in a single ceremony), and that all great performers act as mediums, channeling energy between themselves, the audience and the collective unconscious. It's difficult for those of us who are white, middleclass intellectuals (and that's most Neopagans) to relax and be dramatic in our rituals. So we tend to be inhibited both in our scripts and our performances, and to not bother to learn the dramatic skills we need -- including the scripting, directing, and acting skills necessary to make sure that everyone feels involved at every step of the ritual (so that no "performer vs. audience" distinction develops). Yet if we can manage to overcome our inhibitions, our prejudices, and our laziness, our ceremonies will improve a thousandfold in power, beauty, and glory.

Part One: Preliminary Definitions

I like to start complex discussions with a series of definitions of the terms that are going to be used. I know this is unusual in the occult community, but it does make sure from the start that everyone has a clear idea of what I mean when using various technical terms -- especially when those technical terms have vague and fuzzy meanings in the minds of most readers. In addition, an understanding of the etymological origins of various technical terms can (a) provide us with clearer concepts of what our ancestors and/or predecessors meant by those terms; and thus (b) give us clues to the ancient customs associated with their use; and (c) enable us to overcome the later monotheistic changes to their meanings. So please bear with me for the next couple of pages.

The word "liturgy", says the *Oxford English Dictionary,* comes from the Greek word *leitourgia,* meaning "public service, service of the Gods, public worship." It's used most often in English to refer to the Christian (especially Eastern Orthodox) ceremony known as the "Eucharist" or "Mass." More generally, according to the O.E.D., liturgy can also be defined as "public worship conducted in accordance with a prescribed form." Interestingly enough, among the Ancient Greeks it also meant "a public office or duty which the richer citizens discharged at their own expense" -- now <u>that</u> sounds a lot like the current Neopagan approach!

"Ceremony", on the other hand, comes from the Latin *caerimonia,* meaning "An outward rite or observance, religious or held sacred; the performance of some solemn act according to prescribed form." That's from the O.E.D. again, which also defines it as "sacredness, sanctity, awe, reverence, exibition of reverence or veneration, religious rite." In other words, the emphasis in this term was originally on public rituals of a sacred nature. However, "ceremony" is now often used as a synonym for "ritual" in general, both by the mainstream western culture and within the occult community.

But what does "worship" mean? It comes from the Old English *weorthscipe* (with about a dozen variations in its spelling). Originally, the O.E.D. tells us, it meant "the condition (in a person) of deserving, or being held in, esteem or repute; honour, distinction, reknown; good name, credit." Eventually, the religious connotations took precedence; and as a noun, worship became "reverence or veneration paid to a being or power regarded as supernatural or divine; the action or practice of displaying this by appropriate acts, rites, or ceremonies." As a verb, which is our primary concern in this essay, to worship something or someone means "to honour or revere as a supernatural being or power, or as a holy thing; to regard or approach with veneration; to adore with appropriate acts, rites or ceremonies."

Because the concepts involved in worship are absolutely central to this discussion, let's take a quick glance at what some of the subsidiary words in these last few definitions mean: to "venerate" means "to regard with feelings of respect and reverence; to look upon as something exalted, hallowed or sacred; to reverence or revere." "Reverence" means "deep respect and veneration for some thing, place or person regarded as having a sacred or exalted character." Lastly, to "adore" means "to worship as a deity, to pay divine honours to. To reverence very highly; to regard with the utmost respect and affection."

These are typically circular definitions, but they do point out several very important aspects of the nature of worship: when you are worshipping an ancestor, a spirit or a deity, you are showing them (and any observers who may be present) that you have respect for them (or Them). You are acknowledging that their status is higher than yours in some fashion, and perhaps most important in a polytheological sense, you are showing your affection as well as reverence for them. We'll go into the psychic, magical and spiritual implications of worship much later in this essay, but for now I want to emphasise that nowhere in any of these definitions is there a requirement for groveling, abasement or self-humiliation. These seem to come in with monotheistic ideas of omnipotent deities who act as if they were Middle Eastern despots.

So with all that out of the way, let's define the main term that this essay is all about: *"Liturgical design" is a subcategory of ritual design in general, in this case, the art and science of creating effective rituals for public worship.* That seems simple enough, but unfortunately, we still need to review the definitions of six other critical terms (this time my own definitions, the first five taken from the Glossary in *Real Magic,* instead of the O.E.D.) before we can continue, to wit: "magic", "religion", "ritual", "thaumaturgy", "theurgy", and "polytheology".

"Magic" is, among other things, a general term for arts, sciences, philosophies and technologies concerned with (a) understanding and using various altered states of consciousness within which it is possible to have access to and control over your psychic talents, and (b) the uses and abuses of those talents to change interior and/or exterior realities.

A "religion" is (again among other things), a magical system combined with a philosophical and ethical system, usually oriented towards "supernatural" beings; a psychic structure composed of the shared beliefs, experiences and related habits of all members (not just the theologians) of any group calling itself a religion. As a general rule, a religion shapes and expresses the entire worldview of its members, and conditions their concepts of necessary and proper behavior.

A "ritual" is any ordered sequence of events, actions and/or directed thoughts, especially one that is meant to be repeated in the "same" manner each time, that is designed to produce a predictable altered state of consciousness within which certain results may be obtained. The results may be mundane, as in achieving efficiency at your job through the ceremonial ingestion of coffee, in order to alter your state of consciousness to "awake" (the worship of the goddess Caffeina).

The desired results may be intellectual ones, as with the discoveries made through the various rituals known as "the scientific method". Or they might be artistic, as in the magnificent ceremony called "Beethoven's Ninth Symphony". But for the purposes of this issue of DP, we'll restrict the use of the word "ritual" to refer to those that are designed to produce psychic/magical/religious results.

The primary purpose of ritual is to reduce uncertainty, through the use of (consciously or subconsciously) established patterns of behavior that are known to have "worked" in the past, and which are therefore (by the magical Law of Pragmatism) considered to be "true", "correct" or "effective". The more people who are involved in attempting to accomplish a given goal, whether it's pulling in a fishing net or beseeching the Gods for rain, the more useful ritual behavior becomes.

Ritual is often confused with "ritualism", which like most other "-isms" consists of an obsession with the superficial aspects of the root word. Dry and sterile rituals performed by clergy and congregations who have forgotten the reasons behind their actions, but who are sticklers for "tradition", have given an undeservedly bad name to "ritual". As Neopagans, we have the opportunity to reclaim "ritual" as a neutral or even positive term.

"Thaumaturgy" is the use of magic for "nonreligious" (mundane or secular) purposes, even though it may be done within a religious context. Originally this Greek term meant the art and science of "wonder working"; we can think of it as using magic to actually change things on "the Earth Plane" of physical reality.

"Theurgy", on the other paw, is the use of magic for religious and/or psychotherapeutic purposes, in order to attain "salvation" or "personal evolution".

Most people are familiar with the term "theology", which is from the Greek *theologia,* "god-knowledge". Theology is usually defined as "the study of God," meaning the monotheistic concept of a Supreme Being. This Supreme Being is almost always thought of as humanoid and male, a fact which has not escaped the notice of modern feminists.

In recent years, feminist philosophers have coined a new term, "thealogy", based on the Greek *thea* for "goddess", and used to refer to "the study of Goddess" -- in other words, religious philosophy with an emphasis upon the feminine aspects of Divinity. But although some of these "thealogians" use their term to refer to discussions about specific historical goddesses (usually as faces of a single Goddess), most of them are still working within a monistic and monotheistic philosophical framework.

As a practicing Neopagan priest for almost twenty years, I have had to search for a term to use to describe the sort of philosophical, spiritual and ceremonial studies and practices that I have been engaged in, all of which were planted in pluralistic and polytheistic soil. I tried using "theoilogy" for a while, but that spelling, based on the Greek *theoi* ("the gods", plural), is even more likely to be considered a typographical error than "thealogy" is. Eventually, I settled on "polytheology" as an obvious, intuitive term for "polytheistic theology" -- one that most English speakers

would recognize immediately.

For the purposes of this essay, we'll consider "polytheology" to include every subcategory of knowledge/speculation that "theology" and "thealogy" contain, but with an emphasis on the pluralistic, polytheistic approach, especially as manifested by modern Neopagans. And with all these definitions out of the way, we can proceed.

Part Two: The Polytheology of Spirits, Deities, and Worship

A couple of centuries of Modern Science have devastated so many Judeo-Christian-Islamic ("J-C-I") dogmas that most intelligent people in our western culture have, consciously or subconsciously, decided that all J-C-I beliefs are "unscientific." Yet a person who has rejected every other J-C-I dogma will often continue to accept the one that says, "Judiasm/Christianity/Islam (choose one, and then a denomination within it) is the only real religion." This, of course, is based on the rockbottom monotheistic belief that "there's only one God, one reality, and one true religion."

Once you decide that the only "real" religion (usually your childhood one) is unscientific, and "therefore" unworthy of belief by a modern intellectual, it's a short step to declaring all those other "inferior" religions, magical systems, and psychic technologies to be equally unscientific and absurd. The technical term for this is "throwing the baby out with the bath water." And the usual result is a conversion to atheism, agnosticism, marxism, scientism, or some other nontheistic faith.

The irony here is that, although science doesn't really support any of the monotheistic religions very much any more, ever since Einstein it's tended more and more towards multi-model, pluralistic theories that fit very well indeed with polytheism and traditional non-monotheistic occultism. This makes it sad that even people who have consciously rejected monotheism for polytheism, and who practice various forms of "magical religion" (such as Neopaganism), are reluctant to let go of certain scientistic prejudices, especially those concerning materialism and the nature of reality.

I've often thought that the overwhelming reason why most modern magic is so inept, is that most modern magicians, Witches, Druids, etc. (whether Mesopagan or Neopagan), really don't believe in magic. It gets worse with religion. If you don't believe that the Gods are real People, in some sense or another, then the concept of worship becomes meaningless. Worship ceremonies become excuses for socializing, or for showing off the wealth or political status of the participants.

Let's recall that the root meaning of "worship" refers to respect. The showing of reverence towards spiritual entities is a logical outgrowth of this, at least for people who consider their gods to be worthy of respect. It implies that some sort of relationship exists between the worshippers and the ones being worshipped. If you want to create meaningful liturgies, then you and the folks you are working with need to have some polytheological theories of worship that make sense to you. Here are the ones I use:

A few modern occultists have been upset that I equate the energies used in ESP, PK, and other "psychic" talents with the "magical" energies used in casting spells. I'll go even further, in that I believe the Indo-Europeans made no clear distinction between these energies and those we might call "spiritual", and neither do I. All of these were

represented by Fire, and the fact that humans had psychic and magical talents proved that they had the "spark of divinity" within. I believe that this is the origin of the Hindu concept of *atman* which was both the individual spark (or the "real self") and the universal sea of divine flame. Fire became the symbol of the source of "enlightenment".

The Hindu metaphysicians later divided this energy up into different "levels of vibration", a concept which the Theosophists picked up, injected a lot of Christianity into, and passed along into the western occult mainstream as "etheric", "astral", "mental", and "causal" "planes of existence" (there's another matching three-plus-one pattern for you!). But the essential unity of these energies was maintained by the Hindus.

I believe that psychic energy not only permeates every human, but the entire universe as well, since I think it is part of the structure of "reality", like magnetism or gravity. This fits well with the Pagan concept of divinity as being both transcendent and immanent. So most of the time I tend to think of spiritual and psychic and magical energies as being all the "same" thing viewed from different perspectives. I believe that the Gods and all other spirits are either "composed" of psychic energy, or at least must use it to communicate with humans.

In DP#1 I mentioned that sometimes Neopagans believe in the Gods as "individual and independent entities; sometimes as Jungian 'archetypes of the collective unconscious' or 'circuits in the psychic Switchboard'; sometimes as aspects or faces of one or two major deities ..... and sometimes as 'all of the above'". Regardless of what deities and other spirits may "really" be in some abstract "objective" universe, in the subjective personal multiverse in which we experience our daily lives, these energy patterns frequently act as if they were "real people" of various sizes and powers, who just don't happen to have physical bodies as we generally conceive of matter. Being polytheists, we are free to accept a multi-model theory that involves all these possible explanations, and many more besides.

Some spirits seem to be fragments of humans who once lived, and are called "ghosts" and/or "the ancestors". Other spirits seem to be anthropomorphic modifications or filterings of energy patterns associated with natural phenomena, and are called "nature spirits". Other spirits are deliberate or accidental creations of human minds, and are known as "artificial elementals". When any of these energy patterns gets enough psychic energy fed into it, it begins to act more and more independent, and to engage in behavior designed to encourge more energy to be fed to it (if it just steals energy when it wants to, it will be called a "demon" or "evil spirit"). If a spirit gets to be large

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and powerful enough, and is perceived as predominately beneficial, it may become a deity. A feedback loop is established between the deity and His/Her worshippers through mythology, ritual, art, polytheology, and psychic phenomena.

Most of you will recall my discussion of "the Switchboard" in *Real Magic,* where I defined it as a "postulated network of interlocking metapatterns of everyone who has ever lived or who is living now, expressed as constantly changing and infinitely subtle modifications of current telepathic transmissions and receptions." Another way to put it would be "the total groupmind of humanity". Perhaps Jung's "collective unconscious" and/or De Chardin's "Noesphere", and/or even the Theosophist's "causal plane", are all concepts pointing in the same direction.

Some Neopagans have borrowed the Paleopagan concept of a "High God", or a "Supreme Being", who happens to be the ancestor of one's tribe, and from whom all the Gods are "descended". Such Neopagans then think of the Gods they worship as "aspects" or "faces" of this High God, a process known as "theocrasy", or "god-blending". This is something folks have been doing for millenia, though usually with local major divinities (Ra, Isis, Vishnu, Freya, etc.) rather than their High Gods. Neopagan Witches tend to have a double-gendered High God/dess, who is thought of as a blend of all the gods and goddesses that humans have ever known (should we call this "duotheocrasy" or "duotheoicrasy"?). Feminist Witches have this same approach, with only the female deities being mentioned, so we can call it "theacrasy". Regardless of the gender or genders chosen to represent the Supreme God, the principle is the same. (Neopagans may be worried about theocracy, but theocrasy doesn't bother them much at all!)

Which theory of divinity is "correct"? As a polytheologian, I tend to be one of those who says, "All of the above!" Each of these views of divinity can be useful, depending upon which area of your life (which "level of reality" or "plane of existence") is of concern at a given moment. For the purposes of defining the nature of worship, it's only necessary to consider two basic ideas: Firstly, that a god or goddess is (among other things) a pattern of energy, regardless of whether you think of that energy as "psychological", "magical", "psychic", "spiritual", or any of other kind. Secondly, rather than bemoaning anthropomorphic (humanlike) descriptions of the Gods, we should embrace them as, if nothing else, useful metaphors to describe the types of interactions appropriate for humans to have with Them.

The average Paleopagan culture had/has few ceremonies that concern their High God, believing that the Supreme Being is not concerned with human affairs. Instead they concentrate on interacting with the gods and goddesses who rule the tribe and the world around it. Because Neopagan Witchcraft began as a Mesopagan system, highly contaminated by the monotheistic culture surrounding its founders, the primary deities worshipped were perceived as a duotheistic variation of a High God/dess, capable of being worshipped through the use of multiple god and goddess names. As it became more "Neo-", the Wiccan movement placed more emphasis on using specific images of divinity (i.e., Diana, Bridget, Lugh, Cernunnos, etc.) instead of the generic concepts of "the Goddess" and "the Horned God". I suspect that this drift was a direct result of practical experience in liturgy. After all, when you invoke a vague deity, you get a vague answer.

Regardless of the metaphor we choose to use, I think that the Gods and other spirits either exist within this realm, or at the very least, communicate with humans through it (from "where"-ever else they may "really" be). And this realm, together with the Three

Worlds lived in by humans, animals and plants, constitutes a "universal ecosystem" around planet Earth, that includes all Her children, physical and nonphysical.

Most Paleopagans believe(d) that "the Gods need us as much as we need the Gods." Every time you have a single thought about a deity, you feed more psychic energy into that deity's energy pattern. If a lot of people are thinking frequently about a particular deity, She or He can become very powerful indeed. It's as if everyone were making spiritual deposits in Mt. Olympus Savings and Loan. Every once in a while, to assist with the survival of His/Her worshippers (and thus His/Her own survival), or simply to encourage more energy to be deposited, a deity may decide (or be nudged by a competent magician/clergyperson) to pay "interest" or "dividends" on those deposits of psychic energy. This often takes the form of divine energy being given to or through a clergyperson to be used for magical or religious purposes, though sometimes the deity may simply release some of Her/His power to an individual worshipper in the form of inspirations, personal spiritual strengthening, or actual "miracles".

This reciprocal relationship of "we scratch Their auras, They scratch ours" is known as "the worship bargain". It may not sound very "spiritual", but that gets us into the quagmire of defining spirituality.

In a monotheistic system of philosophy, you can get away with defining any sort of interaction with divinity as being "spiritual". You're not supposed to get involved with "lesser" spirits, since they will all lead you either towards or away from the Supreme Spirit, and you may as well go "straight to the top" (this is another reason why many monotheistic theologians don't consider Catholicism, with it's interceding Saints, to be "really" monotheistic).

Things get a great deal more complex with polytheistic systems, since spirits can be considered to have a wide variety of characters. Some will be wise, some foolish, some weird. Communications with deities are usually safe from a philosophical point of view, but the results can be confusing to the inexperienced. Calling any interaction with a spirit, whether ancestor, nature spirit or deity, a "spiritual" interaction leaves out entirely the theurgical, enlightenment-oriented aspects of the word as it's usually used in the west. Unfortunately the word "spiritualism" has been taken over by the necromancers, who use it to refer to a specific religion concerned with interacting with the spirits of dead humans. "Spiritism", on the other paw, is another technical term already in use, in this case, for the Mesopagan Afro-American religions practiced in South America.

But the term "spiritual" can also be used to describe certain effects upon a percipient and her or his associates, including those that imply psychological growth and healing. In fact, the modern liberal J-C-I definition of spirituality implies that if "real" spiritual events are occuring, then people are becoming "better" people, they are being healed of physical ailments, the community of believers (the groupmind) is being strengthened, etc. Followers of the J-C-I traditions have tended to consider certain psychic phenomena to be "miracles" or "gifts of the Holy Spirit" when they supported the religious status quo, and demonic deceptions when they did not. Ultimately, this has led to the modern fundementalist idea of "counterfeit miracles", as a desperate attempt to explain how people who belong to "false religions" can receive the benefits that are supposed to be reserved for the members of the "true religion".

A value range can be drawn between the traditional ceremonial magician "commanding" spirits and a traditional Christian priest "asking for favors", with the latter end being perceived as more "spiritual" by most J-C-I theologians. The liberal western theologians will say (mostly because they don't believe in magic, since it's "unscientific") that even asking for favors is "unevolved", but that "true spirituality" consists of simply opening yourself up to whatever a deity has to tell you, and accepting whatever blessings (if any) that it happens to send your way. This very passive view is fairly common among mystical types in many religions. Some versions emphasize the inability of a person to control their own life (reach enlightenment), and thus the need for divine intervention or assistance.

Many mystics say that all you have to do is "shut up and listen" to become enlightened. But 95-99% of the people can't do this, so other approaches to enlightenment get developed, including all those which have been called *yogas*. Physical exercise, philosophy, charitible acts, devotion, art, music, sex, drugs and magic have all been turned into yogas which have a spiritual/religious content when so directed. Most of these, except for the sex, drugs and magic, have been used by the J-C-I mainstream. (Even the sex, drugs and overt magic were used by tiny minorities.) Magical techniques are used in every religion, but are not usually admitted to be such in the west. Thus an artificial distinction has grown between "magical" and "spiritual" events, both inside and outside of liturgy.

For example, although they will never admit it, a "sacrament" in Christian theology is a magical and/or psychological ceremony being done with a predefined theurgical goal. Every Christian sacrament has its counterparts in most other religions. Baptism of children is to put up psychic shields around them (for adults, to cut their psychic links with other divinities and congregations). Confirmation is a standard coming-of-age rite, removing some of those shields and making the kids responsible for their own protection, as well as integrating them into the adult psychic network of the tribe.

In the Christian ceremony of the Mass, magical techniques are used to produce a spiritual result, through the symbolism of ritual cannibalism. Even if the priest is incompetent and untrained, the power the rite has in the collective unconsciousness (and even just the conscious and subconscious minds of the congregation) is sufficient to allow him to "coast"; the consecration will "work" anyway. Probably no host (the talisman of bread) can be consecrated without a psychic charge being infused into it, visible to most clairvoyants. But even an uncharged host might produce a spiritual effect (however weak) upon a communicant, if he or she had the expectation that it would.

Perhaps what is happening when you "consecrate" a cup of liquid or a piece of food is that you are using your magical arts to put a psychic charge on it that will cause the person consuming it to open his or her self to the power of the divine. Obviously this is something that the divinity involved would approve of, so He or She would assist with the process of charging. In fact, this is exactly what the priest/ess requests of Them during the consecration prayer.

So this gets us to the point of examining spiritual activities in terms of their magical and/or psychic patterns of energy flow. If you do a pattern analysis on the public worship ceremonies of those cultures still maintaining a strong belief in the existence and power of the God(s) they worship, and still practicing (however unconsciously) a working magical system, you will notice strong similarities in their litur-

gical designs, at least within related cultures. Among the Indo-European influenced religions, for example, I've noticed a common pattern, which consists of five main phases, occuring in this order:

(1) consecrating time and space, then getting the people centered, grounded, and unified into a "groupmind". This makes them ready for ...
(2) opening the Gates Between the Worlds, starting a back and forth flow of energy through the Gates, culminating with ...
(3) sending the major part of the congregation's energy to the primary God(s) being worshipped on the occasion. This is followed by ...
(4) receiving and using a return flow of energy from the primary God(s) of the occasion; and finally ...
(5) reversing the beginnings of the rite (unwinding the psychic/magical/spiritual fields woven) and closing the ceremony down.

I'll elaborate on this common pattern in the step-through of the Druid rite. In the meantime, let's look at the major and minor factors involved in creating liturgies.

Part Three: Primary Factors in Liturgical Design

There are many different factors that need to be considered when designing a liturgy. Some of the main ones are: the number of people involved on any given occasion; how well they know each other; the psychic talents available among them; the selection of the ritual's goal and target; the nature of the occasion; the exacting timing of the ceremony; and finally, the precise location in which the liturgy is to be performed.

The number of people involved

This frequently overlooked factor is actually one of the most critical. It certainly has affects upon almost all the other factors, major and minor. To begin with, the following rough size categories may prove useful for the purposes of this essay:

Number	Term
1	Solitary Ritual
2	Dyadic or Couple Ritual
3–7	Very Small Group Ritual
7–15	Small Group Ritual
15–40	Medium Group Ritual
40–100	Large Group Ritual
100–500	Very Large Group Ritual
500+	Gigantic Group Ritual

The Neopagan community has done a great deal of experimentation into solitary and small-group ritual techniques, but has had problems with larger groups. Most Neopagans have blithely assumed that the small-group methods invented by Gerald Gardner and friends would, "of course", work for medium, large, very large and even gigantic groups. This has proven not to be the case. Each increase in the size of your congregation brings new challenges and new opportunities for the aspiring liturgist.

Over the last twenty years, I have led or otherwise participated in magical and religious rituals in all of the size categories (the largest was with 1500 people, at the American Stonehenge, during a total eclipse of the sun). Despite the difficulties, I continue to be enthusiastic about the larger ones because, as the number of people increases arithmetically, the amount of sheer psychic/spiritual power that is at least potentially available for magical and/or spiritual use increases <u>geometrically</u>. Considering how much work needs to be done to save our Mother, I think we're going to need all the energy we can get!

Intragroup familiarity

Interwoven with the question of sheer size is that of how familiar the participants are with each other. This breaks down into three subcategories: knowledge, friendship or love, and group identity.

A small group of people who already know each other well can often generate more <u>usable</u> power than a larger group of people who don't. This is especially true if the people in the smaller group actually have bonds of friendship or even love between them, which is why the original Neopagan ideal of a working group being a group marriage had so much promise (most of which has never been realized, due to the inherent difficulties of making group marriages last. Oh well...).

Even if a group of people have never met before, they can, all other factors being equal, generate and focus their power more effectively if they all share some sort of a group identity (and "tradition" -- I'll discuss that later). The more specific this group identity is, the better it will work for this purpose. "We are all Gardnerians" or "we are all Frostians" will work better than "we are all Witches." "We are all ADF-ers" (<u>not</u> "Bonewitsians", thank you!) or "we are all Reformed Druids" will work better than just plain "we are all Druids". Even saying "we are Witches/Druids/Asa-Tru/Faerie Folk", etc., will give more of a group identity than just plain "we're all Neopagans."

All of these aspects of the intragroup familiarity factor affect your answer to this fundamental question: how good a groupmind are you going to be able to create and maintain with the people you expect to be present? Acquaintanceship creates intellectual and social bonds, while friendship and love create emotional ones. All of these "bonds" can function as "psychic links" (channels for the energy to be used in the ceremony), as can, to a lesser extent, those psychological bonds created by membership in a group. The more psychic links that there already are among the people participating in your liturgy, the easier it will be to create and maintain the groupmind necessary for a successful ritual.

Throughout this essay, I'll be mentioning how the other factors to be discussed are affected by these first two of population and intragroup familiarity. *More people*

means more power is available, but it will be harder to keep focussed. A very large part of liturgical design deals with how to create and maintain the groupmind at each of the different size levels.

The psychic talents available among the participants

This is an important factor that many people neglect. If you are doing a ritual to heal someone, and none of the participants happens to be a very good healer, then you are not going to get much in the way of useful results -- unless you have someone who is good at invoking and/or channeling divine energies and you have her or him contact a God or Goddess of Healing to provide the necessary fine-tuning of the energies (see the end of the target and goal discussion later in this essay). If all of your participants are empathic or precognitive, but none of them has any psychokinetic talents at all, then you're going to have trouble getting any rituals designed to affect matter to work well, regardless of the sincerity of the participants. *Sincerity is not a substitute for competence.*

Having the right psychic talents available is more of a problem with small groups than with larger ones. The more people you have involved in a ritual, the better a chance you have that people with the necessary psychic talents will be present. Since the talents necessary for theurgical results (telepathy, empathy, the clair-senses, etc.) seem to be more widespread than those needed for thaumaturgical results (often the psychokinetic talents), it's usually easier to collect the necessary people for a successful theurgical rite than for a thaumaturgical one.

The distinction between target and goal

Paying attention to this factor when designing a ritual is one of the great unwritten secrets of the occult. If you want your liturgy to have any positive results other than personal pleasure or egoboo (if any), then you must pay attention to this in your planning. Let's take some mundane examples first.

If you are planning a garden, then your goal is to produce food, and your target may be either a particular chunk of ground in the backyard or a window box in your kitchen. Either way, if you don't plant your seeds into real, specific, locatable ground somewhere, you aren't going to wind up with many tomatoes.

If you're a surgeon dealing with a person who has lung cancer, your goal will be to heal that person and your target will be the specific tumors that have to be removed. Doing an easier procedure instead (such as taking out her appendix) won't suffice, even if so doing constitutes a "successful" operation.

If you're a technological rainmaker, and you've been hired by some farmers to end a drought, your goal will be to cause the needed amount of rain to fall over a specific area, without causing meteorological side-effects hundreds of miles away. Your target might be a specific cloud bank, at a particular altitude, over a certain location. If you don't deliver exactly the right amount of silver iodide crystals (or whatever) to

exactly the right spot, at exactly the right time, you will probably not get the results you wanted. And it won't matter how much fun you had trying.

It should be clear at this point: the "goal" is the final result you are after, the "target" is the precise person(s), place(s) and/or thing(s) you need to change in order to achieve your goal.

Each of the examples given earlier has its exact parallels in the realm of ritual. Agricultural magic, psychic healing, and weather working all require that you focus your energy upon a specific target in order to achieve a specific goal. If you haven't clearly defined your goal, nor specified your target, nor designed the ritual to guide your energies towards that target, the odds are very high that little that will be useful is going to occur -- and some very unuseful results may happen!

If you want to make the crops grow better, pick a specific hunk of dirt with plants in it. If you want to heal Aunt Matilda's lung cancer, send the power into her lungs. If you want to make it rain, choose your cloud. Don't just send vaguely fertile, healthy or rainy thoughts out in all directions with the assumption that "they'll go where they're needed." They won't.

Rituals being done for "practical" physical purposes, such as starting or stopping rain, healing sick people, etc., are "thaumaturgical." Rituals being done for "impractical" spiritual purposes, such as attaining enlightenment, strengthening the Gods, honoring the ancestors, etc. are "theurgical" (as are those done for psychotherapeutic purposes, such as "empowerment" ceremonies). Like most pairs of terms in occultism, these are not opposites in a dualistic "black vs. white" fashion, but polar extremes at either end of a continuous range. The vast majority of thaumaturgical rituals contain theurgical elements and vice versa. Nonetheless, this factor needs to be clearly spelled out when designing a ritual.

The mental clarity needed to define a goal and to select a target that is likely (if affected properly) to achieve that goal, is just as important when designing theurgical rituals as it is with thaumaturgical ones. If your goal is personal spiritual growth, then your target is yourself and the other people participating in the rite. If your goal is the ethical enlightenment of the whaling industry, then your target could be the specific individuals who make the decisions to kill whales (so know their names, appearances and locations). If your goal is to honor and strengthen ancestors, nature spirits or the Gods, then they (or They) are the target (and you should pick one or two by name and appearance!).

The primary distinction between "magical" and "religious" rituals as such, is that when you are using divine energies you can afford to have secondary goals, each with its own target. This works better if the secondary goals are theurgical ones, whether the primary goal is theurgical or thaumaturgical. Also, in religious rituals, you can ask the Gods to help you select the correct target(s) through divination, and/or to provide necessary "fine tuning" of the energies, and/or to provide any needed ethical screening (or "escape clauses") for your target(s).

Since 80-85% of the people in the world use vision as their primary sensing mode, the process called "visualization" is the one most used to keep a group's mental energies focused on a goal and target. This requires every person in a group to create and maintain the "same" mental image of the goal and the target, with the target taking center stage. The closer a given person's images are to those being used by the others,

then the higher the probability is that the energies sent towards the target will be effective. But if every person in a group has a different mental image of the goal and/or the target, then even the most powerful of ceremonies will be a wasted effort. This is why there is so much emphasis in liturgical design upon the need for focus and unity. Or to put it another way: *Fuzzy rituals get fuzzy results.*

Remember that you need to visualize both the goal you want to achieve, and the target you wish to affect, in a future tense -- *as you wish them to be.* Putting more energy into the status quo will only make things worse, not change them. But merely visualizing the final goal clearly will not suffice to make your ritual work, regardless of what many popular books on the occult are now saying.

The nature of the occasion

No matter how unique a particular situation may seem to be, the practicing liturgist will soon discover that almost all rituals he or she needs to design can be seen as special cases of certain common overlapping categories of liturgy: those for personal and group needs, personal and group rites of passage, and cyclical celebrations.

Rituals done for *personal and group needs* can be for inducing or attracting fertility, prosperity, love, healing, peace, general blessings, etc. An individual or group with a particular focus of activity may do ceremonies to achieve certain spiritual, ecological, social, economic or political goals.

Personal rites of passage may include ceremonies for dedicating and protecting children, celebrating a coming-of-age, handfastings and weddings, ordinations, death watches, funerals, etc.

Group rites of passage are more likely to be such things as the dedication of a new hospital, school, temple or sacred grove, the installation of new officers for the group, a change in the group's name or status, etc.

Cyclical celebrations will mark various important events that occur on a regular schedule, such as solstices and equinoxes, the Quarter Days, moon phases, the beginning or end of local hunting/fishing/harvesting seasons, etc.

Once you have decided into which category(-ies) your ritual fits, you'll be able to shape your liturgical design with far greater clarity. Realizing that other people have done ceremonies for similar purposes will give you not only confidence, but also (once you track down information about how others have done those rituals), provide you with concepts and material to be absorbed and transmuted in your own design work.

Timing

This decision requires you to balance psychic and mundane factors, and will have multiple repercussions on everything else in your liturgical design and execution. The psychic factors have to deal with the fact that different times of day, and different days of the year, have different energy patterns (both physical and psychological) associated with them. Thus it may be easier or more difficult to accomplish a particular magical or religious goal at any specific time chosen.

On a daily basis, the magical energies available for use are simply different at sunrise, noon, sunset and midnight, and the halfway points between each. Similarly, the energies available at the solstices, equinoxes, and their halfway points are also unique. These are just the solar patterns. The phases of the moon also can have profound effects, especially when the moon is above the horizon. Those of you who have a background in astrology will need no persuasion in this department. The rest of you will have to experiment in order to verify my statements here (you may also want to pay attention to the biorhythms of the presiding clergy and bards).

It has been my experience over the last twenty years that performing a particular ritual, even a "simple" celebration of a Holy Day, on the exact day of the year, and at the exact (or at least the symbolic) time of the day associated with the event being celebrated, will dramatically multiply the ease and efficiency of your working. This is the reason why we in ADF celebrate the Major and Minor High Days at precisely calculated times (as listed in DP#2), even though these times do not match those now used by the majority of the Neopagan community.

Unfortunately, it's not easy to get other Neopagans to show up for a ritual being held at an "inconvenient" time. Often the proper date for a Holy Day is in the middle of the civil week, and the time associated with the event may be very late at night, or in the middle of the working day. You have some flexibility in the choice of a time of day, since you can choose to schedule your rite for either the astronomical or the symbolic instant of the event. For example, the spring equinox might occur on March 20th, at 10:15 pm in your local time zone. You could do your equinox ritual at 10:00 pm, or at the following sunrise, depending on which would be easier to get more people to. At the very least, you should schedule your ceremony sometime between sunset on the 20th and sunset on the 21st.

If you are planning a large public celebration, you'll have to schedule it according to the convenience of the majority of your grove members and guests, usually on the weekend before or after the event. Before is generally better, and you should try to do it at the symbolic time of day if you can (a midsummer's celebration at 9:00 pm would simply not be as psychologically effective as one done at sunrise or high noon). Official ADF groves are expected to celebrate the High Days within 24 hours of the correct instant, but this does not have to be their semipublic celebration.

Decisions about liturgical times should include factors such as the work schedules of the members, local transportation patterns, meals, availability of facilities, etc., since all of these will have an impact on how many people actually show up. The trick is to balance out genuine needs in the lives of your congregation against the laziness and inertia of those who simply haven't made attending your ritual a high priority in their lives. Just remember that if you decide to do a fall equinox rite at sunset, you will not be able to get the sun to hold off setting while late-comers straggle in.

That brings up the topic of planning again, which, though interwoven with liturgical design, is not quite the same thing. Planning will be covered elsewhere in this issue. Suffice it to say for now that different times of day and days of the year involve many mundane aspects of life such as transportation, clothing, noise levels, weather, etc. Don't ignore them in your design and planning, or you are likely to have unpleasant surprises disrupt your celebrations.

Location

Exactly what sort of site will you be using for your ceremony? The decisions you make in this area will have profound affects on the physical, psychological, and psychic aspects of your liturgy. It's better to be able to choose a site to match the liturgical design, but often you must work with what's available.

As mentioned in the script in DP#2, for Druid ceremonies (at least in good weather) you'll want to set up your ritual site outdoors, "in as natural an environment as possible". Obviously, a grove of trees surrounding an area large enough to fit all of you is good, especially if the trees are of one of the particularly sacred species. A hilltop is good, as is the beach by an ocean, lake, or river. A small island or sandbar can be nice, etc. The hilltop of a small island in the middle of a lake could be ideal, since it would combine all three of the three worlds: Land, Water and Sky. It all depends on what you have available in your area. You may wind up using a quiet corner of a large city park.

Private land is generally better than public, since you're less likely to be disturbed by tourists, hunters or rangers. However, if your grove is looking for new members, doing a few ceremonies in city parks, especially near universities, can attract folks who might otherwise never hear of you (it can also attract trouble, so make sure that security precautions are taken to prevent disruption).

Most Druid ceremonies require a fire in the center, whether it's a bonfire, a cauldron full of flammable material, or just a candle. Many public parks will not allow bonfires, and in some parts of the country it's just plain dangerous at certain times of the year. Fires indoors should be limited to candles or small cauldrons, so as to not set off the smoke alarms halfway through the liturgy, which can ruin the ambiance! If you were planning on a fire being an important part of your ceremony, you'll have to take these factors into account.

Speaking of working indoors, the script in DP#2 says, "If the weather is foul, try to use a cave, cabin, yurt or other premedieval enclosure." I know that this isn't always easy, but trying to fit thirty people into a small living room can be just as difficult, and far less aesthetically pleasing. If you're going to have to work indoors (as most of us will during the winter), you'll need to plan ahead. If you're uncertain of what the weather is likely to be like, you should have alternate indoor locations selected, and your liturgical design should be adaptable to the change.

But how do you get an indoor location? If you own some land, you may be able to find a large cave, or build a cabin, yurt or longhouse (a half a dozen determined people can create one in a month, just working on weekends). Many public parks, even in large cities, have rustic looking "lodges", often with fireplaces, that your group can rent inexpensively. These are usually surrounded by trees, and can be ideal for medium to large groups. Whether you're working in one of these lodges, your own temple, a living-room, or someone's garage, try to set up the site to look as nonmodern as possible. Those of you who have backgrounds in theatrical set design may be able to give the rest of us some ideas here, so please send them in for publication.

Whether indoors or out, don't assume that your site needs to be circular. The ancients Celts (and the other Indo-Europeans) had temples in the shapes of circles, rectangles, ovals, doubled squares and odd polygons. As for groves, the average one is not a precise

circle. Although it's aesthetically and democratically pleasing to have the congregation stand around in a circle, and this is the pattern that most Neopagans are familiar with (thanks to Gerald Gardner), you can do effective group worship/magic using other geometrical shapes. The script in DP#2 assumes that the congregation is standing outdoors in a circle, but in point of fact it has worked well with everyone sitting indoors in an oval instead. You could try having them in a triangle (with banners of the Three Worlds at the corners), or in a square, or in lines facing a particular direction.

Consider the theatrical difficulties as well as the psychic energy patterns likely to be generated by your choices. For example, from the point of view of the dramatic elements of liturgy, those of you with theater experience will agree that working "in the round" can be far more difficult than working in front of the observers. Unfortunately, with the latter setup, you may then have the problem that some people in the congregation will be unhappily reminded of childhood experiences in mainstream churches, and may refuse to overcome their biases.

Generally, the larger a site you have, the better, up to a point. You'll want to have enough room so that the members of the congregation can be standing/sitting/lying in whatever geometrical pattern you have chosen, while still leaving some empty space around the outside of them. Shade can be an important factor, especially with large congregations during the hotter months of the year, as we have found out during the last two Midsummer's High Noon ceremonies. Since the average large-scale Druid rite can last an hour or more, you need to make arrangements not only for shade, but for the health of the frailer members of your congregation as well (handicapped access to your site is a whole other topic, one I hope one of you will address in future issues).

Part Four: Secondary Factors in Liturgical Design

There are a number of other factors that a liturgist has to consider when creating or modifying a ritual: is the rite to be formal or informal? What will be its verbal and movement modes? How are dramatic tension, humor, and pacing to be handled? What percentage of the congregation will be familiar with the specific rite, or at least Neopagan rituals in general? What kinds of costumes and props are involved? What are the aesthetic, psychological, and cultural themes that will fit with the congregation and the occasion?

Formality vs. informality

This factor seems at first glance to be more of an aesthetic one than anything else. After all, some folks like their rituals to be "High Church Episcopagan" and others prefer to "get down and get funky." But in point of fact, there are some technical considerations involved.

To begin with, the word "formal" implies a concern with both structure and with custom. Since all rituals have some sort of structure, whether competent or not, the question of "formality" with a liturgy is one of (a) how tightly the intended structure

is actually maintained in both design and performance, and (b) how similar a given performance is to the customary way(s) of doing it.

However, in the Neopagan community our custom has always been to be informal, for reasons both honest and dishonest. Many Neopagans tend to think of Native American, African and other Paleopagan rituals as being "informal", whereas the mainstream Judeo-Christian rituals are seen as so formal as to be downright fossilized. Since it's the former kind of religions that we're inspired by, and the latter that we're trying to transcend, it makes sense that we would equate Paleopagan "informality" with authentic spiritual expression, and Judeo-Christian formality with everything else we happen to dislike about monotheistic religions. What most Neopagans don't realize is that Paleopagan ceremonies are usually very formal, both in terms of structure and custom. It's our western upbringing that conditions us to equate highly physically active, "primitive" ceremonies with informality.

But there are less honest reasons to reject formality in ritual. Most of them have to do with an unwillingness to admit just how difficult a formal ritual can be to create and perform successfully. Ceremonies that require talent, training, discipline and hard work from their clergy and congregation are simply not going to be as popular as those that can be done instantly by anyone. And they're certainly not "politically correct" in our egalitarian subculture.

Let's explore some of the aspects that impinge on the formality factor. For example, what's the vocabulary level of the clergy and congregation you are designing a ritual for? Formal ceremonies (if mostly spoken -- see next section) usually have a higher verbal complexity than informal ones, and thus can be more difficult for uneducated people to perform or comprehend. Allowing for this gets you into the social quagmire of having to analysise the verbal skills (and thus the intelligence, education and socio-economic backgrounds) of the people involved. Not allowing for it forces you to sacrifice precision of energy flow when parts of your group don't understand what you're saying and other parts are offended because you're "talking down" to them.

Formal ceremonies also require greater dramatic and musical skills from the clergy and bards, especially if the rite is going to be repeated on a frequent basis, without boring all concerned. The boredom problem should not be ignored. If your rituals bore the congregation (or even the clergy!), they are not going to raise a lot of power. On the other hand, the familiarity that bores some people gives a great deal of psychological comfort to others, while building up a useful pattern of energy in the collective unconscious. You can see that the "custom" aspect of formality is a two edged blade.

What happens if you need to make up a liturgy on the spot, with no chance to do a detailed analysis of the situation? If you've developed your intuition along with your ritual skills, you'll be able to create what you need, as you go. Intuitive ceremonies are often perceived as informal, because the structure being invented during the ritual is a covert, subconscious one. But if you are stringing together bits and pieces of ritual that your group is already familiar with, and you invent a pattern that is appropriate to the occasion, you may wind up with a very formal, but nonetheless intuitive, rite.

In general, the larger your congregation is, the more formality is needed to maintain the groupmind's unity and focus in timing and imagery. But it's important to remember the difference between formality and pomposity (clue: are the clergy focussing

more attention on the ceremony or on themselves as being "important" people?). This is where I reverse my favorite saying: *Competence is not a substitute for sincerity.*

Verbal and movement modes

Will your ceremony be mostly spoken, sung or silent? Spoken ceremonies are certainly the easiest, and can give you very precise fine tuning of the energy flow, but they tend to get very long-winded (and thus boring) unless delivered with enough dramatic skill. Having all the speeches in poetic forms that match the aesthetic and cultural themes of the ritual will add greatly to the power. Having everything chanted and/or sung will boost a verbal ritual to the maximum, since the sounds of the chanting, singing and incidental music will add their own subconscious power to that of the words.

Poetry and songs also have the advantage that they are easier to memorize than straight text. This means that a liturgy can be done without a script on the altar, and without the participants shuffling pieces of paper when they should be concentrating on generating and focusing energy. If the clergy, bards and congregation understand the liturgical design of the ceremony they are performing, they will be able to ad-lib any lines they might forget. As the person who wrote the script, you might get your feelings hurt that some of your "immortal words" were skipped or changed, but the results of such ad-libs are frequently better than the original wording. Also, requiring memorization gets rid of flapping paper sounds at dramatic moments, prevents people from reading ahead when they should be paying attention to the progress of the ceremony, and is a useful mental discipline for all involved.

The script for a brand-new liturgy, or one that has had many new changes added or parts assigned, can be placed discretely on the altar for the presiding clergy to glance at as needed. A poet or songwriter who has just created a new work that she or he is going to perform as a Praise Offering, can carry a cue card in their pocket. But other than these exceptions, paper should be avoided during a Druid ritual.

You can do ceremonies partly or completely in silence, or with only nonverbal sounds. These require the same sorts of nonverbal dramatic skills that a mime uses, and will work best with a smaller group (at least for complete rituals). As a ritual drama inserted into a large scale ceremony, however, the art of mime can be very effective (as was shown at the 1986 summer solstice ADF rites).

The kinesthetic mode needs to be thought about as well. Will your rite be physically dynamic or static? If there is going to be a lot of processing, moving back and forth across the ritual site, passing of objects around, ritual dancing, etc., then you need to have a level site with room for people to move in, and you need to train your people in how to do all of these movements. If either the site or the training is unlikely, then you should change your design to one in which the participants can stand or sit most of the time. But watch out for the boredom problem again, and be aware that for some members of your congregation having to stay in one position for long periods of time may be physically painful or even impossible.

A minor note on dancing: many Neopagan rites now require dancing by the majority of the congregation, but very few of us actually know how to dance. Holding hands and

skipping (or more usually, stumbling) around in a circle is not dancing. It is, in fact, an insult to the Gods, especially when done without any true involvement in the movement. Local folk dance, square dance, and medievalist societies often have free or inexpensive classes available. These can teach the basic steps to some ritually usable dances in only a few evenings or afternoons. If the people in your group are unwilling to attend such classes, you should probably skip (you'll pardon the expression) having dancing as part of your design.

Dramatic tension, humor and pacing

Good drama always involves some uncertainty on the part of the audience as to what is going to happen next. Will the winter solstice sun actually return? Will the May Queen wed the Green Man? Is the Corn King really dead? No matter how familiar the participants are with the story, they should experience at least a moment or two of uncertainty. (Thanks to Diana Paxson for bringing this to my conscious attention.)

As the liturgist, you have the task of inserting this uncertainty into the ritual in such a fashion as to facilitate rather than disrupt the energy flow. For example, in the old Reformed Druids of North America rituals, after the Sacrifice is offered, the presiding clergy ask the four winds whether the sacrifice has been accepted or not. A stiff breeze, a sudden bird call, or other omen was expected (and usually received!). In the summer half of the year the clergy would declare that all was well, and in the winter half the sacrifice would be announced as unaccepted. This worked well as a way to introduce controlled dramatic tension, except for the fact that sometimes the omens would not "behave" properly (showing up when they weren't supposed to, or not appearing when they should). This disturbed some folks.

In the version of the ADF rite published in DP#2, this request for an omen of sacrificial acceptability was omitted. This last year we inserted it back again, in a less constrained fashion. We now throw the runes to see if the Lord and Lady of the occasion have accepted the sacrifice. If the answer is "Yes", we rejoice and continue the ritual. If the answer is "No", then more Praise Offerings are made, the Sacrifice prayer is repeated, and the runes are thrown again. Should we ever have three refusals of acceptance, the liturgy would be immediately shortened, with the final Consecration and Passing (which is the return of energy from the Gods) skipped, and the people sent home to meditate upon why the Sacrifice was refused.

For this is the point where drama, which came out of the temple, goes back to its religious origins. We can't afford a contrived solution to every uncertainty in a worship ritual, though this is normal in mundane plays. If we are going to actually "believe" in the Gods we worship as "real" beings, then we have to be willing to accept that sometimes Their answer to us will be "No". And we have to be prepared to deal with such answers.

And how does humor fit into all this? Very carefully. I have seen humor used in ceremonies with positive results on several occasions, both as theatrical inserts in large scale liturgies, and as quiet quips to bring back a congregation's focus after a minor disruption of the energy flow. I've also seen it used, often deliberately, to drain the power from rituals that are getting "too heavy" for the jesters (sometimes the

clergy themselves!) to handle. Humor is a two-edged blade that should be handled with the greatest of care, or left out entirely.

As for invoking Trickster deities, such as Hermes, Loki, Coyote, etc., let alone deities associated with chaos (such as Eris), these entities have a habit of destroying any Neopagan ceremonies that they actually show up at. Most of them have a nasty streak to their characters (especially Eris, or Discordia, who has become a "fun" deity only in the last twenty years) and need to be handled with the greatest of care and respect. Unfortunately, the vast majority of Neopagan ceremonies in which these deities are invoked, whether formally or informally, are invoking Them to provide an excuse for poor liturgical design and/or performance.

Pacing is a topic that anyone familiar with the theater will tell you is absolutely crucial to the success of a performance. A liturgy should be designed and performed with each segment flowing smoothly into the next. You don't want segments to either slow down to the point where everyone gets bored and their attention begins to wander, nor to speed up to the point where people loose track of what's happening. The only way to learn pacing is to experiment a lot with modular design (see later in this essay) and by rehearsing the people in your group to find out their skills and limits. A five minute guided meditation may be too long for some groups, and too short for others. Taking thirty seconds to bless each person in turn is fine if you only have a small group, but can be a disaster with a large one. A chant that builds to a peak in three minutes should not be dragged out for ten. Etc.

Problems with pacing are usually solvable by artistic means, especially bardic. So make sure that your group's bards are involved in the design and rehearsal activities from the beginning. *And take their advice!*

Familiarity with the liturgy

This factor has been touched upon in the formality discussion. If you have the same people showing up for rituals on a regular basis, and the ritual is essentially the same each time (as it probably will be if everyone belongs to the same "tradition"), then they will be thoroughly familiar with the liturgy, and your major worry will be the boredom problem. If some of them only show up once in a while, you'll need to have obvious cues built into the script. This will be even more important if many or most of the participants have never been to a liturgy of this type before. If there is a broad range of ritual experience in the expected congregation, then your ritual design needs to have plenty of things for the inexperienced members to do, with built-in instructions on how to do them, but with the cues not being offensive to the more experienced members. This is difficult to do, which is part of why liturgical design is an art form.

One solution that helps avoid boredom while clueing-in those who are moderately to very familiar with your rite, is to have the majority of your liturgy be the same each time, but a minority of it change to reflect each occasion. In the Catholic Mass, for example, this is known as the "Ordinary" and the "Proper". In most Druid rites, this is accomplished by having a different God and Goddess as the primary deities for each ceremony, and by having new chants and songs for different occasions.

You can also make an occasion different by having special visual effects: banners, altarcloths, tabbards, etc., done in the colors and with the symbols appropriate to the occasion and/or the deities involved.

Costumes and props

Many of your decisions in this area will be based on those you make about aesthetics and cultural focus (see next section), since you'll want people to wear clothing in the colors, fabrics, and styles, and to use ceremonial tools, that fit with the aesthetics and cultures you have selected. But here too, you may be forced to work within already established constraints. If the group of people you are creating the ritual for all have robes that touch the ground, you should avoid having them process through brambles or muddy ground. If their sleeves are long and flowing, don't create parts of the ritual that involve reaching across a fire. If none of the members have staves, and there's no time to make some (let alone train anyone in their use), then don't write in a ritual combat with staves.

Many Neopagan liturgical designers create rituals that require pentacles, chalices, wands, knives, etc., on the altar, without having any real reason for those tools to be there, and without any clear idea of how these tools can or should be used for dramatic or magical effect. When in doubt about whether or not a given tool is really needed, skip it. Unused or misused ceremonial tools merely clutter up the scene and either add nothing to, or sometimes actively detract from, the quality of your liturgy.

Druid liturgies usually involve the following props: There are cups or cauldrons of various sorts for passing the Waters of Life around, individual cups or horns for the congregation, a sickle for cutting the sacrificial branches, small cauldrons for asperging or holding a fire, staves for marking signs on the ground, banners and ribbons for color, etc. Each of them has a specific purpose for a specific occasion, or it is simply not written into the liturgy.

(By the way, one of the duties of a liturgist is to make up a complete "props and supplies" list for the organizers of the event to use early in their planning. The people purchasing and/or constructing these should keep track of the money and time required, as an aid to planning future ceremonies.)

A major prop, one that most folks don't think about very clearly, is the altar. What sort, if any, will your design require? The whole question of altars is on weak historical ground. Some of the Indo-Europeans seem to have used stone altars in their temples (the Greeks put them out in front of their's), but we don't know if altars were used in the sacred groves at all. Nonetheless, they're very handy for storing the ceremonial tools and supplies, and make a good focus of attention, so I recommend them highly.

If you own your own land, your group might go ahead and build a permanent stone altar (you might even want to design it so a fire can be built on or in it). If you are using public land, you can either plan on bringing in your own altar or on putting one together on-site from available rocks, stumps, etc. The challenge in the first case is to make your portable altar both sturdy and light-weight, in the second to wind up with something genuinely level at a convenient height. The altar should be two to three feet across, depending upon the number of items to be placed upon it.

How many altars should you have? One near the center (the fire, if any, could be on or in it) will generally do for each site. However you might consider having additional ones for the Three Worlds, set in a wide triangle around the central one. If you decide that the four directions are important, you might choose to have small altars, shrines or cairns marking each one around the edges of the site.

By the way, if you live in an area with large numbers of fundamentalists, it may be a good idea to disguise any permanent altars as something else, since conservative Christians have a bad habit of desecrating the sacred objects of competing faiths.

Aesthetic, psychological, and cultural themes

You'll need ones that will fit with both the congregation and clergy available and the occasion at hand. Almost all of the secondary factors and their aspects deal with that nebulous topic of aesthetics. Every decision you make about what will be the most beautiful way to do any given part of the liturgy, is an aesthetic choice: formality, vocal type, physical activity, dramatic approaches, nonobtrusive cueing, site selection, costumes and props, etc. The best way is to make all of these decisions reinforce each other to produce a coherent whole. This in turn constantly supports the unity of the groupmind and its spiritual/magical ability to focus the energy flows involved.

Your choice of psychological theme(s) can help greatly here. Is this to be a happy, sad, silly or grave liturgy? Are you dealing with a birth adding a new member to the community, or a death transforming one? What is the emotional relationship between the members of the group and the spirits or divinities to be contacted in the rite? Is the ceremony a celebration of a holy day -- if so, what meanings does that holy day have for those participating? Answering these questions can add tremendous power.

Another way to improve the unity and focus of your group is to design your liturgy around specific cultural themes. A Celtic liturgy is very different from a Native American or a Chinese liturgy. Every culture has symbols, styles and metaphors that reinforce each other. Using these, and excluding ones from other cultures that aren't congruent, gives your ritual a definite assist.

For example, try having your people dress in Slavic costumes, sing Slavic tunes, invoke Slavic deities in a Slavic language, and drink Slavic liquor in your liturgy. The amount of Slavic-flavored energy raised will be tremendous, and the groupmind will be a hundred times more unified and focussed than you may be used to. It's possible to blend in cultural themes from related cultures (such as the Balts or the Norse, in this example) without too much damage. But if a culture is too far removed (say East African, Japanese or Eskimo), the clash of cultural symbols, signs and metaphors may easily destroy the psychic structures your liturgy is supposed to create.

Which requires me to say a word or two about the mixing of Native American elements into Neopagan ceremonies. There's been a lot of that lately, ever since "shamanism" became the "in" word for people to throw around (I'll talk about that some other time), but most of it has been not only magically sloppy, but insulting to both the European and the Native American deities invoked. Neopagans have been mishmashing deities, symbols, music, chants, and fragments of rituals from a dozen different Native American cultures, and injecting these wholehog into Wiccan style ceremonies. This is somewhat

similar to what has been done to the Afro-American religions by well-meaning but grossly ignorant Neopagans.

For the last ten years, two people named Sun Bear and Wabun Bear have mixed Native American beliefs from several tribes, western astrology, and Wiccan rituals into a new religion. I've participated in ceremonies based on their work, and they were beautiful and emotionally uplifting. But I don't think they were as powerful as authentic traditional Native American rituals used to be, partly because too many unrelated tribal belief systems were mixed, partly because Wiccan liturgical design tends to be confused anyway, and partly because Neopagans (rather than Native Americans) were doing them.

There is merit in the argument that we are practicing our ceremonies on land that used to belong to the Native Americans, and that we ought to pay attention to the local nature spirits and to the deities who used to be worshipped here. I see nothing wrong with a grove of Druids including local references in their liturgies, provided that they have done their homework. Don't make an offering to an Iroquois nature spirit in Texas, or a Sioux buffalo goddess in New Jersey, unless the members of your grove have very strong psychic links to those tribes. Learn how to pronounce the spirit and deity names correctly, and what their associated metaphysical systems were, and what their religious symbols meant. Then you can very carefully start to blend appropriate bits and pieces into your local liturgies. But just because Native Americanism is popular in the Neopagan community now, don't assume that you can suddenly pull in all that energy without having to pay attention to the details of what you're doing.

Part of the experimentation that we are doing in ADF is to discover how far apart two cultures can be before they clash instead of reinforcing each other in a ritual. So far it seems that the various Celtic cultures work well together, as do the Norse and German, the Slavic and Baltic, and the Greek and Roman. But will mixing Baltic and Roman, or Celtic and Greek themes together in one rite ruin it? Or will all the cultural members of the Indo-European language family work together? Only time will tell.

Your decisions on cultural themes will usually be based on the cultural interests of the people you are creating the ceremonies for. Use the language(s) and culture(s) that they have the most affinity for. And try to use that culture's ideas of beauty to guide your own aesthetic decisions.

Part Five: The Modular Approach to Liturgical Design

It's now time to discuss the exact "how" of creating ceremonies. What I call "Modular Liturgical Design" is an approach inspired by computer programming techniques. Before anyone complains that computers are neither magical nor religious, let me point out that a computer program can be seen as a type of ritual: a program is an ordered sequence of events (in this case, instructions to be executed), that is usually followed in the same way each time, that is designed to produce a predictable (altered?) state of "consciousness" (decision making), within which certain desired results (decisions) can be obtained. Yes, I know it's rather a strained metaphor, but following it has led to some interesting breakthroughs in liturgical design (besides many programmers have told me that programming is "an arcane art").

How do most Neopagan liturgists now work? Generally, they start at the beginning of a ritual script, write it straight through, then try it (usually without rehearsal). Each subsequent script by the same liturgist will contain modifications designed to correct the perceived mistakes (if any were actually perceived) from the last time. Since the rewrites are usually done once a month or once every six weeks, it can take years before a liturgy has been completely "debugged" (if it ever is), and long before then, it's become a fossilized "tradition", and people aren't allowed to make any more changes.

The modular approach to liturgical design starts with doing a complete pattern analysis on your proposed ceremony. Break it down into a handful of major sections of ritual activity, and each of these into subsections and subsubsections. You might even consider drawing a "flow chart" showing the path from each stage of the rite to the next.

Then pick a few related subsubsections and create them. Test each individually to see how it looks/sounds/feels. Fiddle with them until each unit works just the way you want, then create something that links them all together. The linkage can be temporal (picking an order to do the subsubsections in) and/or spacial (designating where the subsubsections will be done, in relation to each other) and/or conceptual (creating words, music or other sounds and sights that will tie the basic idea of each subsubsection together with that of the others). Then try performing this subsection of the liturgy, and observe the results.

When you're satisfied with the first subsection, proceed to create and test other subsections in the same way. Eventually, you can link the subsections into sections, test them, then merge the sections into the liturgy as a whole. This gets tested in the rehearsals before the first full performance. When doing the testing, make sure to pay attention to the pacing of each part, and remember the effects that different sized congregations will have on various activities (if passing food or drink among twenty people takes five minutes, doing it with 200 people can take half an hour).

Just as with modular programming, this technique of liturgical design takes longer to create the first full version of a ceremony. But it has the same advantage that modular programming has, of making it easier to change and expand the results. And just as programmers build up a "library" of programming modules (or "routines") that they can use over and over again, so too can a liturgical designer build up a library of ritual modules that can be combined in a variety of ways in later ceremonies.

For example, suppose you are creating a Celtic-style liturgy in which you need at some point early on to "open the Gates Between the Worlds" (a fairly standard need). You create a procedure for one or two of your ritual participants to do this, say singing a chant in Gaelic, making a particular gesture with a particular magical tool, and visualizing a Celtic spiral opening. You test different versions of the song, different gestures with different tools, and different versions of the spiral. Eventually you settle on the combination you like, figure out the exact order and spatial relations you want, wrap some Celtic music around it (to provide part of the conceptual linking), and try it <u>without</u> full psychic power. (In this particular example, you don't want to test it with full power until after you've created and tested a full-powered Gate <u>closing</u>!) Then you can procede to create and test the other parts of your liturgy that happen before and after the Gate opening, then the entire first quarter or third of your liturgy (including the Gate opening), then the entire ritual.

The next time you are creating a liturgy that requires a Gate opening part, but it happens to be a Norse rite, you can start out with the basic pattern you already have for the Celtic opening. You might translate the song to Icelandic (or write a new song entirely), keep the gesture but do it with a more Norse type of magical tool, visualize a Norse sort of Gate image instead of the spiral, use Swedish music to tie it all together, etc. The result will be that you can (re-)create your Norse Gate opening in a fraction of the time it took to write the first one, since you are working with well tested and familiar modules. Provided that the cultural and aesthetic themes don't clash within or between the modules of your design, you can borrow bits and pieces from a dozen previous ceremonies created according to this approach, and put them into a new liturgy with amazing speed. Eventually you'll acquire a liturgical design library of ritual modules (processionals, Gate openings, invocations, consecrations, etc.) that can be carefully mixed and matched (via the linking procedures) to meet whatever future design needs may pop up.

Many Neopagan liturgists do part of this process already, in that they will borrow and reuse favorite prayers, chants, etc. Unfortunately, they do it without the pattern analysis, linking and testing procedures we've been discussing. Most of the time some ritual design created years ago is repeated (because it's "traditional") and the favorite items are inserted willy-nilly. The results are usually chaotic and confusing, without a smooth energy flow from start to finish, without a groupmind being created and reinforced, and without the psychic/spiritual forces actually going where they are supposed to. These cannot be considered "successful" ceremonies, no matter how much fun people had putting them on.

Conclusion

We've seen from the foregoing that your job, as a liturgical degigner, is to make sure that every single element of your ceremony is in a state of dynamic balance with every other part, that each stage flows smoothly into the next, and that everything your people will be doing, saying and perceiving will contribute to the overall dramatic and magical/religious atmosphere (while still staying focused around the target and goal).

But it's important for those of you who aren't creating ceremonies to realize that your liturgical designer (who will often, though not always, be your clergyperson as well) can't do it all by him/herself. Every person participating in a ritual must be working (and playing) hard. Clergy can't do 100% of the work by themselves, even though this is what most people, both Neopagan and mainstream, seem to expect them to do.

I'm sure that all of the topics covered so far in this essay (not to mention those to follow) have convinced you that creating and performing effective ceremonies requires an incredible amount of time and effort. Yep. The name of the game is "commitment". Too many of us want the excitement and glamor of being able to call ourselves by fancy titles, without doing the work necessary to earn those titles. For people who did not grow up in cultures where effective magical and religious rituals are common, where everyone learns to dance as children and magical knowledge is commonplace, creating and performing effective ceremonies is a time consuming and often expensive proposition.

You have to be willing to give up quite a bit of time in order to study theater, dance, music, magic and mythology. This isn't easy, especially if we're also trying to practice what we preach by being involved in social, political or ecological activism. But if we aren't willing to invest the time, energy and cold hard cash -- in other words, to make personal sacrifices for the deities and ideas we claim to love -- then perhaps it's time we re-evaluated our motivations and personal priorities.

This kind of commitment is hard to achieve, especially for the sort of intelligent, creative anarchists who in the past have made up the majority of the Neopagan community. Most of us are afraid, for very good historical reasons, to have a really deep commitment to any belief system. Many of us have been burned(!) before by established religions that tried to coerce us into following them. As American intellectuals, most of us have a strong aversion to discipline of any sort, including self-discipline. We've been trained by television advertising to expect "something for nothing" and "instant success", while the mainstream churches have raised us to believe that "God will do everything for you, if you just believe strongly enough". All of this cultural conditioning has been drummed into our heads from a very early age, and it's very difficult to overcome as adults.

Even those of us who want to make the necessary commitments, often find that our (deliberately?) depressed economy makes it difficult for us to spare the necessary time and energy to try and change ourselves or the world around us. Now this may all mean that we are unlikely to ever become a mainstream religion ourselves, and thus to become a "danger" to others, but it also means that we are unlikely to be much help to the world either. That is a real tragedy, far more important than the pain of our wounded egos -- because Neopaganism represents one of the very few healthy religious movements around, one that could be of incredible value both to the biosphere and to our fellow humans.

Creating and performing effective liturgies, re-linking ourselves and others to the Gods and our Holy Mother Earth, actively causing personal and global transformation -- this is our task as Neopagan Druids. It may be the most difficult challenge that most of us will ever face. But then, we knew the job was dangerous when we took it!

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Avalon is Rising

(c) 1985, 1987

words by Isaac Bonewits, music trad. ("Babylon is Fallen")

Hail the day so long expected, when the Gates are opened wide.
Magicks old and new collected, have restored the ancient pride.
Throughout Faerie's wide dominion, hear the trumpets swoop and soar --

Avalon is rising, is rising, is rising;
Avalon is rising to fall no more.
Avalon is rising, is rising, is rising;
Avalon is rising to fall no more!

All of us now stand in wonder, as our visions come to pass.
Earth Mother and God of Thunder, Huntress, Weaver, join the dance.
Swell the sound of joyous laughter, hear immortal voices roar:

Avalon is rising.....

Though some thought that all their hating, had sent Her beneath the waves;
Avalon was merely waiting, for Her folk will not be slaves!
Now the day of freedom's dawning, brings Them back forevermore --

Avalon is rising.....

Hark all ye in beds and bowers, Pan has come another time;
Ruling with a rod of flowers, giving us the bliss sublime.
Frigg and Frigga now shall guide us, Danu be our counselor --

Avalon is rising.....

Listen warriors of the Old Gods, as the Wild Hunt's horn doth sound;
All their works shall fall before us, and the evil ones be bound.
Raise the shield of bright Athena, swing the hammer of great Thor --

Avalon is rising.....

Hear me now each dree and bandree, brahman, volkhvi, flamen too;
Priest and priestess, poet, godi, runemaster and shaman true:
All your faith now is rewarded, prophets of the ancient lore --

Avalon is rising.....

Some of us shall go a-sailing, through the void so deep and far.
They will come with us unfailing, plant the seeds from star to star.
Hear our children's children's voices, join with those from days of yore:

Avalon is rising.....

Preparing for a Druid Ritual

(c) 1987 by P. E. I. Bonewits

Physical Preparations

Ceremonial Baths: It's usually a good idea, whenever possible, to do some sort of personal cleansing before starting any kind of ceremony. Why? There's nothing spiritually "unclean" about the average Neopagan, and we don't believe in "original sin" (although Neopagans generally approve of originality). So we're not talking about "washing away sin", so much as we're dealing with the topic of altering our state of consciousness. Now every ritual does that, one way or another, but with personal cleansings (or banishings or exorcisms) what you are altering is the focus and flavor of your attention more than anything else.

Here are some simple examples: If you had been cooking an Indian curry, and then decided to bake an apple pie for dessert, you would naturally wash any lingering curry powder off your hands before starting to cut up the apples. If you were a doctor who had been working with ill patients and then had to attend another with open wounds, you would make sure that your hands were thoroughly sterile before touching her. If you had been doing a weather spell, and your mind was full of low pressure zones, jet streams and cirrus cloud formations, and you then desired to do a fertility spell for the crops, you would need to clear your mind of all the weather oriented thoughts before attempting to get fertile.

In the first two examples, neither curry powder nor microbes are necessarily evil (though some would argue on both), but their leftover presence could cause the results of your later activities to be less than satisfactory. The washing of hands can be a powerful symbolic act, so it should come as no surprise to know that many cooks and surgeons make a much bigger fuss over cleaning themselves than either the culinary or the medical arts require.

In the third example, again, what you want to get rid of is not evil, wicked or "sinful", just inappropriate. Here a physical cleansing of your self (and the working area and tools) becomes more obviously symbolic. As in other rituals, what you are doing is giving your subconscious a series of cues, in this case to wipe your internal blackboard clean so that you can start writing new thoughts upon it.

On the practical, Earth-plane level of reality, if your hands are full of axel grease, you're going to leave permanent fingerprints on your white robe. If you've been engaging in some strenous activity that has left you covered with sweat, the odors wafting from your body are likely to compete with the incense. If you're feeling dirty, oily or gritty, you're going to have a much harder time concentrating on relaxing and opening yourself up to the spiritual energies to be invoked.

So I always recommend to people (especially clergy) that they take a shower or (preferably) a long, hot, soaking bath before doing any important ceremony. One tradition is to bless a handful of salt and mix it into the water, thus exorcising the water of any

energies at all other than cleansing ones. Depending on the sort of ritual coming up, you might want to mix crushed herbs into the bath, so that you can breathe in their odors while you bathe. Play soothing music on a recorder, burn appropriate incense, light a candle, or add any other elements you like that will reinforce two primary ideas: (1) getting rid of all previous thoughts and obsessions, and (2) beginning to focus on the energies to be worked with in the upcoming rite.

When you get out of the water, put on clean clothing, whether it's traveling clothes or your actual ceremonial garb (which should have been cleaned/ironed beforehand) Then go straight to the site without letting your mind drift too far into other topics.

Diet and Drugs: If your ceremony is to be short, you'll want to avoid having red meat or other heavy foods in you when you start. If it's going to be a long ritual, you may want to eat a good solid meal a couple of hours beforehand. Obviously, good nutrition is very important in maintaining your alertness and stamina.

As for the drug question, a small dose of caffeine or sugar may be useful to some people just before the ritual begins. Others find that alcohol or THC in very small amounts is useful for reducing preceremonial jitters. However, large amounts of any of these four drugs can ruin your sense of timing, and the latter two can affect your memory and make you miss cues. As with everything else in magic and religion, common sense and moderation will usually be your best guides.

Site Preparation: The site should be prepared well ahead of time. Outdoors, clear the ground of sharp rocks, twigs, etc. Clear the leaves and animal droppings from the altar. See what the light and/or shade is likely to be like at the scheduled time, as well as the views in different directions (what tree *is* the sun going to rise over?). Check out the acoustics to see if that bagpipe is really practical. In fact, most of this should be done at or before the first rehearsal.

If you are going to have a fire, see to it that someone who knows what she or he is doing has been appointed as Fire Warden. Let her/him set up a proper firepit, and arrange for the necessary fire fighting tools to be available if needed. The fire, by the by, should be started at least fifteen minutes *before* the ceremony begins.

When working indoors, make sure before the ritual begins that the telephone is unplugged and "Do not disturb" signs are on the outside doors. Turn off any noisy airconditioners or heating systems that are otherwise likely to roar into action during the rite.

Chalices: This is an area where both population and health factors need to be taken into account. With a small group, all of whom are known to be in good health (i.e., with no contagious conditions), the main chalice or drinking horn can be passed around with a secondary cup of spring water (for the teetotalers in the group). If the presiding clergy have colds (or other unpopular viruses), both of the main cups should stay at the altar and additional ones be passed. Each participant can then drink from either or both container, and pass them on.

With a medium or larger group, it's safest to assume that at least some of them have a cold, flue or other virus that should <u>not</u> be shared along with the waters. Therefore, the main chalice of waters should usually stay on the altar and larger vessels, (such as cauldrons, pitchers, etc.) of waters should be filled and consecrated along

with the main chalice. Under these circumstances, you'll want to suggest to people in your early announcements (and perhaps your Processional songs at a festival) that they each bring their own ritual cup or drinking horn. These can then be filled from the larger vessels of alcoholic and nonalcoholic fluids carried around by the cupbearers.

Another thing that these bigger vessels, especially cauldrons, are used for with larger groups is asperging. With a small or medium sized group, passing the waters around four times is not a major problem, but with large groups, the amount of time required for each participant to meaningfully partake can add up to the point where it destroy's the ritual's pacing. For this reason, small cauldrons filled with spring water (and a dash of alcohol) can be consecrated along with the main chalice during the Triad Invocations, then taken around the circle by the cupbearers, who asperge the congregation and bards with a ritually appropriate bundle of twigs. This is not quite as effective as drinking the waters would be, but with more than forty people, it may be necessary. However, if you have many cupbearers available, you could try having each one fill up the cups of a small segment of the congregation (such as an eighth of the circle) after each consecration, instead of asperging.

All of these drinking vessels (large or small) should be of horn, stoneware, metal, wood or other natural substances. They do not have to match, however the one(s) for nonalcoholic waters should be very distinctive in appearance. If all you have are multiple identical vessels (or if none of them match each other), try putting silver or blue ribbon around the one(s) containing nonalcoholic waters, and gold or red ribbon around the alcoholic one(s). Generally, the proportion of alcoholic to nonalcohlic vessels should be one-to-one for a small or medium sized group, and four-to-one with larger groups. If in doubt, it's better to ere on the side of caution and have extra vessels and cupbearers.

Branches: With a small congregation, you'll only need one cut branch from a tree of the appropriate seasonal or occasional species. This should be 12–18 inches in length, cut from a sucker shoot or other part of the tree where your removal will not damage it. Always ask permission from the tree first, explain what you are doing and why, and put some healing energy back into the tree where the cut was made.

If you have a large enough group of people that you decide to do aspergings for the first three consecrations (instead of passing cups around), then you'll need in addition three small branches (9–12 inches) of birch, yew, and oak (or their local symbolic equivalents) to use as aspergillums (sprinklers). If you take multiple thin twigs from a tree, you can tie them together with the proper color of ribbon (black for birch, red for yew, white for oak). For special occasions, you may want to use gold ribbon to tie additional sprigs or twigs to the main branch (such as holly and mistletoe to oak for Yule). Use your imagination, remembering that the aspergillums should be sturdy, and that they will be burned or otherwise disposed of at the end of the ceremony.

Clothing: The presiding clergy, at least, should wear long white robes. The rest of the congregation can wear white robes, tunics or dresses. Everyone's clothing should be of natural fabrics, with plenty of colorful embroidery or applique work. The styles can be Celtic, Germanic, Russian, etc. Different groves may choose to have a common cultural theme running throughout their ceremonies and thus through their clothing, or

energies at all other than cleansing ones. Depending on the sort of ritual coming up, you might want to mix crushed herbs into the bath, so that you can breathe in their odors while you bathe. Play soothing music on a recorder, burn appropriate incense, light a candle, or add any other elements you like that will reinforce two primary ideas: (1) getting rid of all previous thoughts and obsessions, and (2) beginning to focus on the energies to be worked with in the upcoming rite.

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may choose to be Pan-Indo-European. Almost any style of clothing will do, as long as the general effect is Paleopagan, rather than modern. People should be encouraged to wear their fanciest, brightest ceremonial garb. If you have any medievalists in your grove, they may be able to loan appropriate clothing to the other grove members.

All of the preceding is, of course, based on the standard seasonal and holy day rites. If you are doing a ceremony for a specific purpose that is not bright and cheerful, you may wish to have the participants wearing more somber garb. Solid black is, however, to be discouraged, as it is too reminiscent of Satanism and other Christian sects.

Black, red and white cords should be avoided as belts, since many Neopagan Witchcraft traditions use these as signs of rank. If people are going to wear belts at all, wear the sort that would be worn by the folks who originally wore that type of clothing.

If your grove decides to work barefoot (apparently an old Indo-European custom, at least during good weather), then shoes should be of the easily removed sort. The white berets and any other head coverings should be removed at the entrance to the ritual site (this is when shoes would be removed too), at least by the presiding clergy and bards. Both these customs are to symbolize our connections with the Earth and the Sky.

Since most Druid rites are done outdoors, sensible precautions should also be taken for the weather. Druid ceremonies tend to last 45 minutes to an hour or longer. In hot weather, you don't want people in heavy robes and bare heads standing around in the sun for long periods of time. In cold weather, you want warm robes that are loose enough to be worn over multiple layers of woolens, etc., and you may want to add white gloves to the presiding clergy's regalia.

Misc. Items: It's nice if you can manage to have a large sickle on the main altar, and/or if the presiding clergy are wearing small ones. These do not have to be gold -- bronze or iron will do fine. If you are indoors, or in an area where you can't have a bonfire, you naturally need to remember to bring a small cauldron or candle stick(s). Banners symbolic of the three worlds, or of various deities, add a wonderful splash of color, especially in the Processional and Recessional. Whiskey, mead or other alcoholic beverages should be brought, remembering that you will need more of it if everyone partakes at each consecration (instead of being asperged for the first three). Ordinary spring water should also be on hand, for the benefit of those members of the congregation who cannot or will not drink alcohol. All these liquids should be in aesthetically pleasing storage containers. Fuel for the fire or candles will be needed. Don't forget to bring properly colored ribbons for tieing to chalices and/or branches.

Intellectual and Artistic Preparations

Planning Sessions: Even if you were just going to use the script straight out of DP#2, with no modifications (something I <u>don't</u> recommend, since even I have been making changes in it), you would still need to make additional plans. Get the folks together who you know intend to take part, at least two weeks beforehand. Decide on who is going to play what role, who will have responsibilities for what preparation work, who will bring which supplies, etc. Decide on a theme for the rite, and thus on the

colors, symbols, deities and songs to use. Decide if more research into the deities and/or the occasion might be needed, and who will do it. Decide on the exact place and time for the rehearsals and the ritual itself, on how its going to be publicised (necessary for the semipublic celebrations of the eight holy days), and how everyone and everything will be transported to the rehearsals and the ceremony.

Making all these decisions may take more than one session. If you are having regular weekly or biweekly grove meetings, you can incorporate this planning into them, simply spending more time on it as you get closer to the actual date. Otherwise, you should schedule at least two planning sessions, one to focus on making the decisions just listed, and the other to hand out scripts, song lyrics, driving maps, etc. Try to give everyone enough time to enable them to memorize their parts, since all ceremonies look better without scripts and cue-cards being visible.

The presiding clergy and the bard(s) should figure out ahead of time how they are going to handle mistakes and unexpected events during the ceremony: flubbed lines, missed cues, absent people with important functions, actions going faster or slower than expected, intruders showing up on the scene (or late-comers), etc. The person who knows the script the best (usually the Senior Druid of the grove), should be ready with lines like "Now let the Ancestors be invoked!" or "Now let us thank the spirits we have had with us today!", in order to cover for missed cues. The bard(s) should be ready to sing or play music to fill in or stretch out parts of the ceremony that are not matching the desired pacing of the energy flow. The grove guardians should be instructed on how to invite in people who show up after the ritual has started. Etc.

Casting: You'll want the most qualified folks available for each role. Don't have a chief bard who can't play his/her instrument adequately, or sing on the pitch, when someone competant is available. If there's only one person around who can pronounce the Irish (or Welsh, or Polish, or Norse, etc.) correctly, let her or him do the words in that language. If that person's not an experienced or competant ritualist, pair them up with someone else who is. For a medium or larger group ceremony, screen the folks who want to do Praise Offerings, and select the best ones. If you're going to do a ritual drama or dance in the middle of the rite, get people who know how to do it well.

Obviously, if your grove is just starting out, and you only have five or six people who are working with you, then you can't be picky. Just assume that we're all growing in our arts and pass the available roles around as democratically as you like. But as soon as your grove begins to have twenty or thirty people showing up for the High Days (within a year or so), you're going to want to start selecting and training specific individuals to take on more and more responsibility. Newcomers who want to perform major roles in the rituals should be tested and (if competant) immediately drafted. The idea is not to be snobbish, but to exercise at least as much discretion in casting as your local little theater group or community chorus does.

Watch out for nepotism! Your spouse, lover, or best friend may <u>not</u> be the best person for a particular role, no matter how much you love them. The owner of the site is not automatically qualified to be the presiding clergyperson, despite Neopagan customs to the contrary. A member who makes a large donation to your grove's expenses should not be casually handed an important role that he or she is not competent to fulfill. Special thanks, blessings, or social positions may be given to people of these sorts, but

personal preferences (or animosities) should not be allowed to interfer with giving the Gods, and the members of your grove, the best possible ceremonies.

What roles are there? Obviously, you need one or two presiding clergy to do the invocations, sacrifice, and consecrations, etc. To be really authentic, you might want to have your Senior Druid stand by during the rite to supervise (supplying missed cues, covering for mistakes, watching for omens, etc.) You should have at least one good bard for the occasion, to play the music for and lead the songs and chants. If you are going to use some form of divination in the rite, then you'll need a diviner to handle it.

Cupbearers/aspergers are necessary for medium or larger sized groups. Ritual dance and theater sequences require dancers and actors. If you have banners for the Three Worlds, you may want people to be banner holders. If you expect that your ritual may be disturbed by unfriendly outsiders, you may also want to have a few warrior types with quarterstaves guarding the perimeters of your site -- these should be people with extremely cool heads, since you're likely to lose any subsequent lawsuits. You may also want them to take responsibility for helping anyone who has a medical or psychological problem during the ceremony (in which case they should know what they're doing).

And oh yes, don't forget your shills (excuse me, "chant facilitators"). Any ceremony with a medium sized group or larger needs to have some people who really know all the chants and songs well, and who can deliver them loudly enough to lead the rest of the congregation. The choreography of the rite should make sure that these folks are evenly distributed throughout the congregation at all times. Perhaps your group's chief bard may select and train these people, and you may want them to have some distinctive symbol or article of clothing (that way the pre-ritual briefing can include something like "listen to the people with the blue sashes, they know all the songs".) You should have one facilitator for every ten people, but they can also be taking other duties, such as being cupbearers, provided that they are evenly distributed around the circle (or whatever shape the congregation is in) whether moving or standing, and they keep singing or chanting throughout.

Each of the major roles should have understudies (who can double as shills). Not only is this a good way for less experienced members of your group to learn your customs, but can be a goddess-send when one of your major officers is suddenly called out of town or gets the plague. And if one of the understudies winds up doing a better job of memorizing and performing the ceremony than the person originally cast, then she or he should be given the part. Yes, there will be screaming about this. But if your group is really interested in ceremonial excellance, then they are going to have to be able to subordinate their artistic egos to the cause of better ceremonies.

Above all, when selecting people to handle functions in a large public ritual, remember yet again: *Sincerity is not a substitute for competence.*

Rehearsals: Oh yes! You need to have at least one full-dress rehearsal for any ritual with any degree of complexity, especially if you want to avoid some of the problems already mentioned. For a lengthy ceremony, you may want to have two or three rehearsals, with possible additional work for the singers, musicians, dancers, etc. I've been hearing complaints about demanding rehearsals for years, but there is no escaping it -- every really powerful, beautiful and effective large group ritual I have ever participated in had plenty of rehearsal. Folks who are unable or unwilling to rehearse have

made their choice of priorities, and have thus decided to be part of the congregation rather than clergy or bards.

Your final dress rehersal is the time for photos and recordings to be made. That way you can ban photographers and audio/video tapers from the ritual (unless they have long distance lenses and mikes). No one should ever be filmed without their express permission, though ceremonial masks are an option for large gatherings.

Pre-Ritual Instructions to Congregation: When everyone has gathered at the site, someone other than the presiding clergy should tell them (1) any parts of the ceremony that have been changed at the last minute, (2) any chants, song choruses, or litany responses that they may not be familiar with, (3) who will be responsible for what duties during the ceremony, (4) which chalice(s) will hold non-alcoholic liquid, etc., --- all the facts they need to know to participate fully, without the use of written scripts. *If* it's a small group for whom an unscheduled Praise Offering would not disrupt the planned flow of the ceremony, everyone should be encouraged to offer something if they have it well memorized. Since Druid rituals usually have newcomers at them, this sort of pre-ceremonial briefing should never be skipped.

At a large Pagan festival, the Processional may occur before all the members of the congregation have arrived on the ritual site, since they may join the Processional as it winds through the festival area. In that case, the pre-ritual announcements will need to be made after the Processional has arrived and the people have distributed themselves into their intended places. This style of announcement should be fairly formal and dignified, so as to not disrupt whatever spiritual energies have already been raised among the congregation. If at all possible, have your bard put the necessary information into a poetic form and either chant or sing it.

Emotional and Social Preparations

Individual Emotional States: As a general rule, a ceremony will work best if the participants begin in an emotional state similar to that which the ritual is supposed to reflect. Getting into the appropriate mood should be part of the pre-ritual meditations of all participants, but is especially important for the presiding clergy and bards. Members of the congregation can "go with the flow" during a rite, but the clergy and bards must keep a portion of their consciousness separate even during the most emotionally intense moments, in order to keep track of and guide the energy flow of the ritual as a whole. If this necessary separation is not to be emotionally and spiritual distressing to them, they must saturate the rest of their consciousness thoroughly with the mood(s) that they intend to create within the congregation.

On the other hand, anyone who is in a particularly foul mood, where of anger, fear, depression, pain, etc., should not participate in a magical or religious ceremony without warning at least some of the other participants, including the presiding clergy. Otherwise they are likely to poison the groupmind's emotional focus and/or disrupt its psychic unity. This does not mean that people in need should be abandoned, or banished from the community's rituals. On the contrary, it means that a special effort should be made (either before the ceremony, or very early on in it) to cheer them up or, if

personal preferences (or animosities) should not be allowed to interfer with giving the Gods, and the members of your grove, the best possible ceremonies.

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Your final dress rehersal is the time for photos and recordings to be made. That way you can ban photographers and audio/video tapers from the ritual (unless they have long distance lenses and mikes). No one should ever be filmed without their express permission, though ceremonial masks are an option for large gatherings.

Pre-Ritual Instructions to Congregation: When everyone has gathered at the site, someone other than the presiding clergy should tell them (1) any parts of the ceremony that have been changed at the last minute, (2) any chants, song choruses, or litany responses that they may not be familiar with, (3) who will be responsible for what duties during the ceremony, (4) which chalice(s) will hold non-alcoholic liquid, etc., --- all the facts they need to know to participate fully, without the use of written scripts. *If* it's a small group for whom an unscheduled Praise Offering would not disrupt the planned flow of the ceremony, everyone should be encouraged to offer something if they have it well memorized. Since Druid rituals usually have newcomers at them, this sort of pre-ceremonial briefing should never be skipped.

At a large Pagan festival, the Processional may occur before all the members of the congregation have arrived on the ritual site, since they may join the Processional as it winds through the festival area. In that case, the pre-ritual announcements will need to be made after the Processional has arrived and the people have distributed themselves into their intended places. This style of announcement should be fairly formal and dignified, so as to not disrupt whatever spiritual energies have already been raised among the congregation. If at all possible, have your bard put the necessary information into a poetic form and either chant or sing it.

Emotional and Social Preparations

Individual Emotional States: As a general rule, a ceremony will work best if the participants begin in an emotional state similar to that which the ritual is supposed to reflect. Getting into the appropriate mood should be part of the pre-ritual meditations of all participants, but is especially important for the presiding clergy and bards. Members of the congregation can "go with the flow" during a rite, but the clergy and bards must keep a portion of their consciousness separate even during the most emotionally intense moments, in order to keep track of and guide the energy flow of the ritual as a whole. If this necessary separation is not to be emotionally and spiritual distressing to them, they must saturate the rest of their consciousness thoroughly with the mood(s) that they intend to create within the congregation.

On the other hand, anyone who is in a particularly foul mood, where of anger, fear, depression, pain, etc., should not participate in a magical or religious ceremony without warning at least some of the other participants, including the presiding clergy. Otherwise they are likely to poison the groupmind's emotional focus and/or disrupt its psychic unity. This does not mean that people in need should be abandoned, or banished from the community's rituals. On the contrary, it means that a special effort should be made (either before the ceremony, or very early on in it) to cheer them up or, if

appropriate, to encourage them to share their emotions with the congregation in a way that gives the unhappy person meaningful psychological support and which restores their sense of belonging to the group. They can then participate in a positive way.

Social Factors: Much of this was covered in the discussions on intragroup familiarity in the previous essay. Obviously, a group of friends who see each other frequently are going to create a more unified groupmind than an equal sized group of people who barely know each other. Thus, the more activities of <u>any</u> sort that a group engages in together, the more effective their liturgical interactions will be. It used to be that people made their religious group the center of their social lives, and thus their ceremonies used to be more powerful and effective. This is one of the reasons, by the way, that people living in large cities, with many social distractions available, often have more difficulty creating and maintaining working ritual groups.

But in any social group, whether tight or loose, you're going to have problems arise between the members. Intragroup and intergroup politics, personality clashes, and love relationships can wreak havok with your efforts to create a groupmind for a ceremony. This is where the clergyperson needs all of her or his psychological and social skills to prevent such problems from destroying a ritual before it starts. If two or more members of the group are having a conflict, or someone shows up who is actively disliked by most of the membership, or the ceremony is an open "ecumenical" one with people from fueding groups likely to show up, the presiding clergy need to deal with the situation quickly and effectively, yet compassionately. This can be one of the hardest tasks that a clergyperson ever faces, yet evading it will ruin even the most beautifully designed and executed liturgy.

Psychic/Magical/Spiritual Preparations

Exorcism of the Site: This shouldn't generally be necessary, especially outdoors (unless you forgot to check out the vibes of the place first). But if you or someone else has been doing magical or religious rituals of an incompatible sort in the same location recently, you'll want to psychically clean the area along with the physical cleansing mentioned earlier. This exorcism can be done by the presiding clergy just before they retire to meditate (see next section), or by their assistants (if they really know how). There are a wide variety of ways to do this, but you should choose a Pagan style that fits with the ceremony to follow. Taking the Processional all the way around the site while singing a chant in praise of the Gods is usually effective. You may also want to take this opportunity to set up "wards" (psychic defenses) around the site to prevent disturbance by unfriendly folk, should that be a matter of concern.

Pre-Ritual Meditations: The presiding clergy and the bard(s) will be most responsible for directing the energy flow of the ritual, so they should be able to spend at least fifteen minutes to half an hour in meditation before the ritual starts. Such meditation would consist of "grounding and centering", dwelling upon the theme of the rite, contemplating their ceremonial tools/instruments, getting into the appropriate mood, reviewing their relationships with the deities of the occasion, etc. The purpose

of all of this is to clear their minds of every nonritual thought, so that they can concentrate on the work they are about to do. For that reason, other members of the grove should take care of trivial and routine matters during this time period.

If there are no trained subordinates in the grove, or if you have a very small group (as most of you will when starting out), the presiding clergy can announce a five minute meditation break, five minutes before they intend to start. Encourage everyone to be silent and to make themselves ready for the ceremony. While they're doing that, the clergy can get some meditation of their own accomplished, perhaps while putting the final touches on the altar. In fact, even with a larger congregation, such an announcement and preparation period isn't a bad idea. If you're going to have a long Processional walk, that can serve a similar purpose in starting the group focus. But you should absolutely <u>not</u> go from a casual social or party atmosphere directly into a ceremonial one.

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Will Ye Now Come Back Again?

(c) 1974, 1987

words by Isaac Bonewits, music Scots trad. ("Bonnie Charlie's Now Awa")

In exile live our Olden Gods, vanished o'er the foaming main,
To lands no mortal ever trods. Will They e're come back again?

Will Ye now come back again? Will Ye now come back again?
Better loved Ye canna be. Will Ye now come back again?

Hills They walked were all Their own, blest the land from sea to sea,
Till the folk with tortured moan, abandoned all the noble Shee.

Will Ye now.....

Sweet the chanting of the druids, lilting wildly up the glen,
Pouring out the sacred fluids, as they sing Your songs again!

Will Ye now.....

Many a gallant Pagan fought, many a gallant Witch did burn.
Priest and priestess, all have sought, to sing the prayers Ye canna spurn!

Will Ye now.....

Now with eagle and with dove, sing we hear our heartfelt plea:
Come with thunder, or with love, but come! Good Gods, we so need Thee!

Will Ye now.....

Step by Step through "A Druid Worship Ceremony"

(c) 1987 by P. E. I. Bonewits

Preliminary Notes

I hope that the previous essays on liturgical design and preparation have made it clear that decisions about the structure of a ceremony are not just a matter of arbitrarily picking and choosing things to do that seem "nice", "fun" or "traditional", nor of slavishly copying a script that someone else wrote a long time ago. The "Outline for Druid Worship Rituals", published in DP#2, was carefully constructed according to the principles we've been examining. It should, with the modifications mentioned in this essay, be usable without major changes for a few more years of further liturgical experimentation.

But even the best(?) liturgical design will not guarantee an effective and satisfying religious experience unless the people performing it actually understand what they are doing, and why they are doing it. So the purpose of this essay is to give you some of the details about actual ceremonial performance that the version published in DP#2 did not have room for. I'm not going to repeat all of the rubrics, nor the text of the prayers (except for translation corrections). So you'll need a copy of that issue in order to get the most out of this. In the pages that follow, we'll go through that script, following the (modified) outline step-by-step, and taking into account comments, critiques, changes and variations that have occured during the years it's been used.

Once you've digested the materials in this and the preceding essays, you should be able to come up with <u>new</u> scripts based on the outline, which will be repeated in its current form at the end of this essay. You can then publish these in your zines. We are especially going to need (a) scripts based on all of our different Indo-European ethnic focusses, and (b) scripts for rites of passage and spell castings which can fit into the ceremony as currently structured. And of course, we're going to need scores(!) of new songs and chants from our bards, so send those in too.

Let me emphasize this as blatantly as possible: I don't want to have to create the entire liturgy all by myself. I'm willing to figure out the basic liturgical designs necessary to accomplish various goals, but the artistic expression of those designs must be a community effort if what we are doing is ever to fulfill its potential. Don't worry about whether your new script is "as good as" mine, or constitutes immortal poesy, just work on making it better than the last one you did. As time goes by, we will all steal good lines from each other's scripts, translate them into the languages we're each using, and explore the possibilities inherent in each design.

Before we begin this stepthrough, let's review the five-part structure: (1) Starting the ritual and establishing the groupmind; (2) Opening the Gates Between the Worlds and beginning the power flow; (3) The major sending of power <u>to</u> the deities of the occasion; (4) Receiving and using the returned power <u>from</u> the deities of the occasion; and finally (5) Unwinding and ending the ceremony.

First Phase: Starting the Rite & Establishing the Groupmind

The Clearcut Beginning: the Consecration of Time

Every ritual, whether religious or not, should have a clearly designated beginning. This can be signaled by a bell ringing, by the clergy showing up in full regalia, by candles being lit, or in some other fashion. What's important is that the participants in the rite receive the cue that says to their subconscious minds, "the ceremony is starting, it's time to be magical/spiritual/psychic."

In this rite, the opening phrase in a nonEnglish language provides this vital cue: Tá muid anseo leis na déithe a adhradh. "We are here to honor the Gods." The English translation immediately follows, and after this the English version of each phrase or prayer gets done first. Yes, I know that's the opposite of the way the script has them, but experience has shown that this pattern works better for congregations who are not familiar with the nonEnglish language involved.

(Linguistic note: the second phrase in the published script is better translated as "O Gods, whose power gives life to everything which is alive, <u>be you here with us</u>," rather than "give to us your presence" as published. Obviously, the quality of the Irish/English translations still needs work.)

In any event, the first phrase is to announce to the subconscious and conscious minds of the human participants, and the second phrase is to announce to the Gods, that the ceremony is now starting. When loud instruments are available, a single blast of sound before the opening words are spoken helps, especially if there's a large congregation on hand. Right after the opening phrases are finished, the instruments can start up again with real music.

The Consecration of Space

Having begun the consecration of time, you need to immediately consecrate a bit of space. In a place that is normally used for religious activities, all you need to do is to walk into the temple or grove with a proper intent, and the sacred nature of the place will become activated. In a location that is normally mundane (or at least not normally viewed as sacred), you will need to mark the physical perimeter of the area you plan to use. This can be done <u>loosely</u> by processing around the area, or (if you are short on manuevering room) by having everyone sit or stand in a circle (or other shape) and hold hands while singing a song about sacred space (such as "Circles", for example).

The physical perimeter of your ritual area can also be set up <u>tightly</u> by physically marking the edges of the area, followed by ritually consecrating those edges. The choice of a loose or tight boundry depends upon the type of magical/religious activity you intend to do. More specifically, it depends upon how critical it is that certain energies be kept in or out of the working area, either temporarily or permanently.

A number of people have been astonished that this Druid ceremony pays no attention whatsoever to the Wiccan tradition of "invoking the Four Quarters." In fact, although some folks have insisted on inserting Quarter invocations into it, and this doesn't actually <u>hurt</u> the energy flow, most of the time we don't bother. Here's why:

As near as I can figure, Quarter invocations probably weren't necessary for Paleopagan Druid ceremonies, since (a) everybody probably already knew which direction was which, so the orientation factor was covered, and (b) sacred groves were already sacred, so calling on spirits from the Four Quarters to "make" them sacred would have been redundent. I've seen little evidence that the Indo-Europeans paid much attention to the Four Quarters, and they certainly did not use the Judeo-Christian Cabalistic arrangement of four-elements-plus-one (Earth, Water, Air, Fire, plus Spirit). Instead they seem to have used three-worlds-plus-one (Land, Water, Sky, plus Fire). So rather than an equal armed cross with the fifth "element" of Spirit in the middle as their symbolic map of the cosmos, they would perhaps have used a triangle or a three legged spiral (triskalion) with Fire in the center. But then, for them Fire was the "fourth world" of Spirit.

There's also the fact that the "Guardians of the Quarters" or "Lords of the Watchtowers" in Neopagan polytheology are very vaguely defined. Every group, and often every member within such a group, who "invokes" (actually, invites) Them seems to have a different idea of who or what They are, and what (if anything) They are supposed to do upon arriving. Actually, the "Watchtowers" are another concept lifted by Gardner, I believe from the Masons, and those who aren't Masonic initiates can never be too sure of what they, or their Guardians, really are. For the rest of us, it's a matter of *Invoke a fuzzy spirit, you get a fuzzy answer!*

Wiccan circles are an outgrowth of Goetic circles, but with the barriers meant to keep energy in, as well as to keep it out. They are very appropriate for private small group rituals, where intense magical work is going to be done by people expecting outside interference. On the other hand, Paleopagan Druid groves were, naturally, open to the air (though fenced on the ground), and were meant to attract energy, or at least the attention of spirits, ancestors and the Gods. There was no need to try and keep out energy, since no "demon" or other evil spirit would dare to invade a sacred grove. Did they have a need to keep energy in? I don't know. Keeping energy in may only be necessary for rituals involving the buildup to a single peak of power. My experience with the ADF ceremony is that the psychic/magical/spiritual energy can be successfully "breathed" in and out of the grove, throughout the entire ritual, without worrying about barriers at all. The pattern seems to turn into a vortex/whirlwind shape, with energies going up and down, in and out, simultaneously.

On a practical basis, having a loose "open" ritual area means that late-comers to the ceremony can join those already present, instead of having to wait outside and passively observe. This latter effect happened during an ADF Fall Equinox rite in Kansas City. A group of local Pagans arrived late, did not realize that a traditional closed Wiccan circle had not been cast, and so assumed that they had to watch from the sidelines, which they very quietly and respectfully did. I was so focussed on the rite, and on my prayers to Taranis to hold off an impending thunderstorm, that I didn't even notice them standing there in the dark until the ceremony was nine-tenths over. Here was another situation where it would have been good to have someone whose job it was to bring late-comers into the group. (The rain started as we were heading back to the cars.)

On a polytheological basis, this distinction between tightly defined, closed magical boundries that should never be crossed during the ritual (the Goetic/Wiccan style), and loosely defined, open boundries that can be crossed without mishap (the style used in ADF rites), is one of the major differences between an exclusionary psychic/magi-

cal/spiritual system and an inclusionary one. Either approach can be appropriate for different groups at different times, but it's important that a choice be made one way or the-other on each occasion, since this is one case where compromises usually fail.

In terms of defining the sacred space on the ground, one processional pattern that we have done successfully works like that described in the script -- the forming of a giant Druid sigil shape: ⌀. Other patterns could be experimented with, such as a triangle (with banners of the Three Worlds at the corners), or an egg-shape (if you are working with the symbolism of a "cosmic egg"), etc. What would be important here is that everybody gets into motion, and that they all define on the ground a shape that has meaning to them. However, if you're going to use a noncircular shape, you should mark it out physically on the ground beforehand, and be sure to mention it in the pre-ritual briefing.

If this is a night Procession with torches, the torches should be put someplace safe at the end of it: either in the center bonfire, in a ring around the middle, or (if there are a lot of torches) in a ring far outside the edges of the congregation. Remember what was said in the preceding essays about the necessity of appointing a Fire Warden for supervision. His/her word should be final.

Although Processions get everybody moving in unison, and thus are the beginning of getting a groupmind together, they can also scatter the energy a bit, unless they've been well rehearsed, and the chants being done during them are simple and effective. For example, consider "We All Come from the Goddess" and "Hoof and Horn". These popular Neopagan chants go to more-or-less the same tune (along with a dozen others), and can be alternated or interwoven in a wide variety of ways. Lines or couplets or entire verses can be passed back and forth between male and female voices, parts can be inserted between spoken phrases by the clergy or bards, etc. Here's the version we used at the 1986 P.S.G. ritual:

We all come from the Goddess	.....	Hoof and horn, hoof and horn,
And to Her we have returned;	.....	All that dies shall be reborn.
As our ancestors	.....	Corn and grain, corn and grain,
Worshipped Her air, land and sea.	.....	All that falls shall rise again.

Those of you familiar with the Goddess chant will notice that the words have been changed somewhat. This was done (1) to avoid summoning rain, which the usual line about "like a drop of rain flowing to the ocean" usually does; (2) to emphasize that we <u>have</u> returned in our present lives, rather than "shall" return someday at our deaths; (3) to insert a punning reference to reincarnation ("As our ancestors") for those who believe in such; (4) to place a reference to the Three Worlds at the very beginning of the rite (a motief that continues throughout); and (5) to put an "eee" sound at the end of the chant, which would wrap around to the beginning "We" sound (thus making it a cyclical round instead of a liner poem). It's amazing how many polytheological implications you can get out of some very simple changes. (By the by, the original version of the chant began with "All things come from the Goddess", not the usual "We all come from the Goddess" that most folks are now familiar with.)

Many other songs and chants can be used for Processionals. I've used dozens over the years, and will share some of them with you in future issues. So don't fossilize the

ones printed above (or in the rest of this essay). Instead, write your own, and send them in for the rest of us to enjoy.

As mentioned earlier in this essay, if you are working in a small indoor area, you may not have the room to process -- especially if you have chairs or pillows set up in a circle or horse-shoe (oriented on a fireplace) shape. In this situation, it's a good idea to sing some sort of song, or chant a chant, with words that focus on the concepts of ritual space. Gwen Zack Moore's classic "Circles" song is good for this, though we could use some new ones that are more polytheistic and less Generic Wicca. You could also use the "I Circle Around" Amerindian chant here, doing it nine times.

One way of settling down the energy at the end of the Consecration of Space is to do a simple plainchant, and this is the function of the "O Earth-Mother" chant published in the script. This chant goes back twenty years to the old Reformed Druids of North America. The singing style is the Irish sean os ("old style"), with much ornamentation and abrupt stops. Other chants can and will be used, but this one (a) is Earth oriented, and therefore begins the grounding process, (b) has triads and references to sacred trees, and therefore sounds Druidic, and (c) has been used effectively in RDNA rites for twenty years. It works, and (4) I'm nostalgically fond of it. For those of you who can't find your copy of DP#2, here it is again:

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!

Naturally, other plainchants could be written for this section, and I encourage you to do so. The idea is to have something striking, yet dignified.

Centering, Grounding and Merging: the Tree Meditation

"Centering" is a term used in Neopagan ritual technique to refer to each person finding the center within him/herself. If you close your eyes and say to yourself, "Where am I in this body, anyway?", some of you will find your center behind your eyes, some of you in your heart area, some of you in your belly, or elsewhere. There is no right or wrong place to have your center in (at least not for the purposes of this ceremony) from a polytheological aspect. However, from a movement awareness aspect, you

might be better off to move your center of awareness to the solar plexus region, tuck your pelvis under, and otherwise stand or sit in a fully relaxed manner, in order to open your body up for the maximum internal flow of psychic energy (comments from martial artists, yoga students or dancers on this would be appreciated).

"Grounding", on the other foot, is one of those quasi-technical terms that Neopagans commonly use for two very different ideas. The first one is that of of making a physical and psychic connection to the ground, both as a source of physical and psychological stability, and as a spiritual source of energy (the Earth-Mother). The second way in which the term "grounding" is used is as an electromagnetic metaphor for draining off "excess" psychic energy into the ground (or occasionally into one's ceremonial tools). At this point in the ADF worship ceremony, it is the first sense that is primary.

The next step is to merge into a "groupmind." For those of you unfamiliar with this term, think of it as getting everyone present to be "on the same wavelength", experiencing the same emotions and seeing the same visual and mental images. This is usually done through individual centering and grounding, followed by a reminder to the congregation of what they have in common (ancestry, beliefs, relations to the divine, etc.), and some sort of meditation, song or other activity designed to promote a sense of unity and to begin the circulation of coordinated psychic energy by the group.

In the ADF rite, this is all accomplished by the "Tree Meditation." This can be done as a spoken guided meditation by one of the presiding clergy, as mentioned in the script, or can be sung or chanted by one of the bards. See Karl Steinmayer's zine in this issue for the text and music to an excellent sung version of it. The Tree Meditation was deliberately designed (a) to accomplish the centering, grounding, and unifying steps just mentioned; (b) to use dynamic organic images in keeping with a Pagan worldview, rather than static inorganic ones; and (c) to use the overall image of a tree, and thus to induce a Druidic feeling into the participants early on in the rite.

Let's go through this part of the liturgy in detail, because this is the first really critical stage of the ritual. We begin with individual centering. Each person in the group, including the presiding clergy and the bards, focusses their attention on finding their personal center, as described above. This can be seen as finding your "seed" of individual power and awareness.

Then it's time to put down "roots." You can visualize and/or feel psychic roots growing out of the bottoms of your feet (those of you who know how to "drop a cord" from the bottom of your spine should do this as well). You ground yourself to the actual dirt/sand/rocks that you happen to be standing upon, feeling the connection between yourself and the planet. If you are indoors, extend your awareness through the floor and directly downwards as far as necessary, until you connect with the Earth. If you are several stories up in the air, you may need to link yourself to the building first, then feel its connections to the Earth. If you are in an airplane or space station, you may need to skip grounding entirely.....

Think about all those dead ancestors of yours, buried in the earth, as well as your predecessors (the folks who have done these sorts of ceremonies in the past, whether as clergy or congregation). Make the psychic link to them, feel yourself as a part of something very ancient. Then return your mind to the recent past, thinking calmly (like a tree would) about any important events that have occured to you in the days or weeks previous. Contemplate the highs and lows with equal dispassion, and think briefly of the

lessons each had for you. Then feel yourself absorbing nourishment from all these sources: the rock of the Earth-Mother and all Her holy biosphere, the rich psychic soil of your ancestors and predecessors, the spiritual compost of the lessons you have recently learned. Feel this nourishment flowing into you like sap rising up a tree.

As this sap rises up your legs and into your trunk(!), lift your arms as if they were branches. Feel your entire being glowing and growing, visualize branches sprouting out from you in all directions, reaching out to the limits of your aura. Feel the breeze blowing through your branches, let your mind become very clear and settled (your leaves will rustle in the wind, but your center should remain calm).

You are now in touch with all Three Worlds: the Land beneath your roots, the Water running through your trunk, the Sky caressing your branches. Now let your leaves begin to absorb the Firey light from above (whether sun, moon or stars) and the hidden Fire within the Earth below. This Fire will circulate throughout your entire being, making your body, mind and soul glow with its creative power. You have become a human tree.

So now is the time to create the grove, by extending your roots and branches until they meet and intermingle with those of the others participating in the ceremony. Realize(!) that you are all rooted in the same Land, drinking the same Water, beneath the same Sky, and receiving the same Fire. With that realization, feel yourself becoming one with the others, merging into a single being -- the grove, something that is far more than the sum of its parts.

Now is the time in most religions where an affirmation of group beliefs would be done. With Neopagans, however, creedal statements are difficult to write in a way that genuinely includes everyone. Small groups should experiment with trying to write such statements for themselves, but for most of us (especially with large-sized ceremonies), songs work far better than prose, and have the additional advantage of beginning an almost automatic circulation of energy around the grove. Such songs should have easy melodies and memorable choruses, so that literally everyone can join in, and be serious rather than humorous. If you can come up with polytheistic (rather than duo-) themes and Druidic images, so much the better. But for pacing purposes, you'll want to keep it down to three or four verses plus choruses.

Speaking of pacing, the entire Tree Meditation section should take five to ten minutes, depending upon the time necessary for the slower members of the group to trance out. It won't hurt for the more experienced ones to spend extra time being trees, but the less experienced folks need to be brought thoroughly into the groupmind. Yet spending more than ten minutes may (with some groups) offend and/or start to bore the majority of the congregation.

Specification of the Ritual Focus and Deities

Once the groupmind has been created, it is reminded of the deity or deities that it is supposed to be concentrating on for that occasion, what the purpose of that occasion's ritual actually is, and of why the deities chosen are appropriate. This gives everyone the intellectual, artistic and spiritual themes they need to be concentrating upon. Unfortunately, with a small group, this part is easy to forget, since "everybody already knows" all this. But all you need is one newcomer or unexpected guest who doesn't

already know, and he or she can generate a lot of confusion. So try not to forget this vital internal reminder.

Second Phase: Opening the Gates & Preliminary Power Raising

Invoking the Gate Keeper

Having gotten the groupmind ready, it's necessary to next "tune" the groupmind's psychic powers to whatever "wavelength" the ancestors, spirits, and/or Gods will be communicating on. This is often symbolized in Pagan ceremonies as "Opening the Gates Between the Worlds", and is usually accomplished by invoking (although that may not be quite the correct term here) a particular deity who is considered a "Gate Keeper", and Who is the easiest of all deities to contact, since He/She is always halfway into this world already. The Gate Keeper is then requested to open the Gates, which She/He will usually do with little fuss. This deity was Ogma in the published version of the script, but we have also experimented with Manannon, based on suggestions from various members that the latter might be more appropriate.

(Another linguistic note: Molann muid thu mar gheall ar do chumhacht should really be translated as "We praise you for <u>the</u> <u>brightness</u> <u>of</u> your power".) Brightness/light/fire were considered primary attributes of divinity among the Indo-Europeans.)

The prayer of invocation is followed by a chant. So far, we've used two versions each of two different chants, in varing ways. The tunes for both chants are traditional Irish. The first one goes like this:

Siúil linn a Oghma... ("shool-leen ah oh...mah")
...walk with us Ogma.

or

Siúil linn a Mhanannon... ("shool-leen ah wah-na-non")
...Walk with us Manannon.

The pattern is sung either three or nine times. It's also been used successfully as a Processional chant. The second chant goes like this:

We invoke thee Ogma, Opener of every Gate. *(repeat)*
You shall reach us, You shall teach us, and reveal our fate! *(repeat)*

The three-syllable name "Manannon" can be substituted for the words "thee Ogma" in the first line. Each line is done twice, and the whole pattern is sung either three or nine times. (This habit of repeating things in threes and nines not only fits aesthetically with the Indo-European patterns, but also makes it easier for people to know <u>when</u> <u>to</u> <u>stop</u>, something that script writers frequently forget about.)

When the Gates are Opened, exactly where are they? Generally, I've noticed that they seem to manifest in the center of the circle, over the fire or altar, and anywhere from six to ten feet up. Different groups will visualize and perceive them differently, and this is something that should be discussed during your planning sessions.

One way to remind people of this (at least if you're outdoors or in a large area), and to focus their psychic energy towards the task of invoking the Gate Keeper, is to do some sort of choreography involving physical movement by a few clergy or bards (or even banner holders) circling around the Gates' intended location during the chanting. These Gates function as the ritual Center of the grove, regardless of their space-time coordinates. I'll have more on this later, but in the meantime I can't recommend too highly Mircea Eliade's writings on the mystical/magical importance of the Center.

Invoking the Matron/Patron of Bards

Although it is not mentioned in the script published in DP#2, this is now followed immediately by an invocation of a deity in charge of bards, since bardic activity is our primary means of raising and tuning power. This deity should be of the opposite gender from the Gate Keeper, in order to maintain balance in the ceremony. So far, this has usually been Bridget in the ADF rites. This invocation (which deserves the term fully, since we are attempting to pull Her energies into ourselves) will begin the first trickle of energy from the Other Side, which is used to inspire the bards and the congregation to generate more energy. Here's the song, called "A Hymn to Bridget", that I've been using for the last couple of years (the transliteration is on the right):

A Bhrid, ár gcroí, an-gheal Bheanríon;	(ah vree, ar gree, ahn-yawl von-reen)
Lo de thoil é beannachta sinn.	(low da doily bah-nacht-tah sheen)
Is sinn bhur leanaí, is tu ár mamaí;	(iss sheen vur lanni, iss too ar mom-wee)
Bí ag isteacht dúinn mar sin.	(be ah gay-stot dween mar shin)
Is tu an coire, anois inár doire;	(iss too ahn hweer-ah, ah-neesh in-ar deer-ah)
A Bhean-Domhan tinfím orainn.	(ah van-dowan tin-feem or-rin)
A thine ghrá, a thine bheatha;	(ah hinna hrah, a hinna byah)
Lo de thoil é ag teacht Bhrid dúinn!	(low da doily ah tockt vree dween)

O Bridget, our heart, O brightest Queen;
Cast your blessings unto us.
We are your children, You are our mother;
So hearken unto us.
You are the cauldron, now in our grove;
Earth-Mother inspire us.
O fire of love, O fire of life;
Please Bridget, come to us!

A Bhrid, ár gcroí, an-gheal Bheanríon....

Obviously, this is used to invoke Bridget as the Matron Goddess of Bards. The words are by myself and Shenain Bell, and the music is Irish traditional ("Roving Galway Boy"). Currently the first verse is repeated after the English verse. The English translation–verse needs work, and it would be nice to have several more verses in Irish or English.

We've also used a chant called "Lady Lift Us Up", which has a jazzy sort of tune, and which (when done nine times) does a very good job of exalting the participants. It goes like this:

Lady ... lift us up.
Up ... where ... we belong.
Lady lift us up where we belong!
And higher and higher!

The Triad Invocations

In the ADF rites, the next step is the "Triad Invocations", which are designed to invoke entities associated with each of the Three Worlds. Each invocation, consecration, and passing of (or asperging with) the Waters of Life brings more power to the groupmind and makes the subsequent invocations more powerful. In effect, since we are tapping into a very sleepy and distant part of the collective unconscious, we are "lifting ourselves by our own bootstraps" through a back and forth exchange of energy through the Gates. Other religions accomplish the same effects in different ways. All of them spend time and effort to get the groupmind (a) generating lots of energy and (b) focussed on the needs of the occasion.

If you have set up three altars around your site, you can do one of these invocations at each of them. The first at the Land altar, the second at the Water altar, the third at the Sky altar. Naturally, the fourth and final invocation (see Phase Four) would be done at the central altar.

I have recently come to the conclusion that the nature spirits should be invoked first, and the ancestors/predecessors second, even though this is the opposite of the way the published script has them. Originally I associated the ancestors with the World of the Land because of the common Indo–European tradition that the dead lived beneath the ground, in a mirror universe, where they walked "upside–down" to our perspective. The justification for associating the spirits with the World of the Waters was not quite so clear. The Waters are often seen as the Gateway to the Other Side, where the spirits exist, but the Gods and the ancestors exist there too.

Eventually it occured to me that the nature spirits are, first and foremost, the spirits of the Land, and that their primary impact is on the producer caste -- the hunters and the farmers (fishers, on the other fin...). To keep the tripartate Indo–European motief throughout the ritual, the first of the Triad Invocations should be of those entities who affect fertility, and the second be for those associated with death, such as dead people. There may even be occasions when warrior spirits may be appropriate to invoke then instead of, or in addition to the ancestors/predecessors. (I'm not sure that I really understand the connections between war/death and the World of the Waters.)

However, I think that the most important principle here is to have the liturgy maintain the sequence of (1) fertility, (2) mortality, (3) divinity, and (4) transcendence.

So we now begin with invoking the nature spirits, both those of the ancient times and those in the locality where the ritual is taking place. The spirits being invoked here are those of the trees and the grasses, of the deer and foxes, the birds and the fishes. Even if you now live in the middle of a large city, you can make the psychic/spiritual link to the continent-wide forests that once covered Europe, as well as the woods, prairies and swamps that once covered North America. This is the part of the ritual where you may want to think of Native American nature spirits who were once worshipped in your area.

In this part of the ceremony we are asking them to give us the comfort, knowledge and blessings that we will need to accomplish our goals for the rest of the ceremony, as well as in our private lives and group activities to come. The purpose of the consecration is to make the Waters a bridge between them and ourselves, so that as we partake (through drinking or asperging) each of us has a clearer and stronger connection to them -- one that will last long after the ceremony has ended.

As mentioned in the rubrics, the energy flow during the invocation is directed from the center of the grove downwards and outwards, in a radiating cone. In the moments after the words are finished, the nature spirits reply by reversing the energy flow into the grove and thence into the Waters (thus consecrating them). The clairvoyantly inclined will "see" an arc of energy going from the center into the containers of Waters. Even after the Waters begin to be passed around, the energy flow continues to climb up the cone into the center. As the Waters go around the grove, the arc of energy from the center will touch each person. Eventually, everyone present will have a direct psychic link to the nature spirits through the center.

In order to keep everyone focussed during the passing of the Waters, it's important to have some sort of chant or song, preferably one that reflects the flavor of energy being absorbed. Here's one (written by Sable) that we've used very successfully (it should be done at least nine times, and continued until everyone has partaken):

Fur and feather and scale and skin,
Different without but the same within.
Many of body but one of soul,
Through all creatures are the Gods made whole.

Next comes the invocation of our ancestors and predecessors. The vast majority of folks interested in Druidism have at least some European ancestry; even those who haven't feel a strong psychic and/or psychological link to the Ancient Druids/Godis/Flamans, etc. Here the energy flow is directed from the center outwards into the world around us, psychically connecting us to the ever-present spirits of those who have gone before. This energy pattern may be perceived as a horizontal disc floating around the center, or as the space between two shallow cones radiating from the center. (Stand with your arms pointing out horizontally from your shoulders. Lift them 15 degrees and slowly turn around in a full circle. Drop them to 15 degrees below horizontal, and turn around again. The area between your upper and lower arm positions is the sort of shape I'm talking about.)

As with the preceding invocation, the return response of energy comes from the center and arcs towards the containers of Waters, from whence it passes around the grove as the members partake. These energies are <u>added</u> to those of the nature spirits, which continue to radiate into the grove.

Here's a chant that we've used for this passing of the Waters. It should be done at least nine times, and continued until everyone has partaken.

It's the blood of the Ancients
That runs through our veins.
And the forms pass,
But the Circle of Life remains.

The last of the Triad Invocations is of the Gods "in general". Most congregations will probably have a particular pantheon of divinities that they feel closest to, such as the Celtic Gods, the Norse, the Slavic, the Greek, etc. Or a given ceremony may be focussed around a particular ethnic group, so its divinities would thus be the appropriate ones. In any event, the purpose of this invocation is to open ourselves to the powers of the Gods <u>as a collectivity</u>. The power flow from each divinity will not be as strong as the energy to be received later from the specific god and goddess of the occasion, but neither will it be as tightly focussed. Thus if a weather working is to be done later, with a weather god and goddess as the ones for the occasion, a person who needs healing or prosperity may receive at this point of the rite some appropriate strengthening from a healing goddess or god of wealth. Everyone in the grove will, at the very least, find themselves exalted spiritually to the point where they will find it easier to absorb the powers of the specific god and goddess to be invoked later at the high point of the ceremony.

The geometric pattern of the energy flow for this third invocation is the opposite of the first one -- a cone of energy going from the center and radiating upwards, then reversing its direction as the Waters become consecrated. Again, an arc of energy will come from the center into the containers of Waters, and follow it around the grove as each person partakes.

Naturally, another chant or song is need for the third passing of the Waters. Here is one that we've used in the past (as before, nine repetitions minimum are recommended):

Mother I feel You, under my feet. Mother I hear Your heart beat! *(repeat)*
Father I see You where the eagle flies. Spirit gonna take me higher & higher! *(repeat)*

This is OK, since it tends to establish the symbolic link between the earth and sky, but does have the drawback of being focussed on only two divinities. Another, more polytheistic one we've used is my own "Will Ye Now Come Back Again?" song, which has a simple chorus for people to join in on and a tune almost all Celtophiles will recognize instantly ("Bonnie Charlie's Now Awa' ").

By the time the Waters have gone around the grove three times, the participants will not only be thoroughly charged up with psychic/magical/spiritual power from each of the Three Worlds, their groupmind will be a thousand times stronger than it was at the beginning. (If each of the Triad Invocations strengthens it by a factor of ten...) Those

drinking even tiny sips of whiskey or mead will be loosened up, but probably not drunk (and for some reason hangovers are very rare from these rites!). The total energy pattern for the grove will be one of energy flowing in and out of the grove, from below, around and above. The center of the grove, being the intersection point, should be glowing so brightly at this point that even folks who aren't normally clairvoyant may be able to "see" it. The Gates Between the Worlds will be wide open and waiting...

Third Phase: The Major Sending of Power to the Deities of the Occasion

This is the stage at which most ceremonies will have some form or another of "sacrifice". There's no room here to go into a general theory of sacrifice, so suffice it to say that the purpose of a sacrifice is to "feed" the Gods with as much psychic energy as possible, in order to trigger a return response of divine power. Anything that will generate psychic energy can be (and has been, throughout history) used for this purpose. This includes chanting, singing, dancing, drama, storytelling, sex, drugs, the slaughter of animals, etc. The overwhelming majority of Paleopagan religions, including the predecessors of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions, have practiced human, animal and/or plant sacrifices, because any living thing will release psychic energy when killed.

However, blood sacrifices are messy, difficult for modern folks to do (unless they were raised on a farm) without excess pain to the animal, and are generally unnecessary. Additionally, most Neopagans (especially the vegetarians and animal rights activists) consider them morally repugnant (and far too reminiscent of Satanism), so including a blood sacrifice in a modern ceremony is far more likely to offend your congregation than it is to uplift them.

I can currently foresee only two circumstances under which I would consider a blood sacrifice to be acceptable in connection with any ADF ceremony: (1) when the presiding clergyperson has decided that a genuine emergency exists, of a life and death nature, that requires the degree of intensity that blood provokes, *and is willing to cut him- or herself to provide it;* or (2) when a young women has decided to release her virginity as part of a coming-of-age ritual -- something that is most likely to be a dyadic rite with no other witnesses anyway. In both of these rare situations, the informed and uncoerced consent of the person loosing blood is required, and not enough should be shed to endanger their health. *Sacrificing any animal (or human!!!) in any Neopagan Druid ceremony is absolutely forbidden.* After all, that's one of the reasons why we're Neopagan instead of Paleo-.

Depending on the season, people may bring fresh cut flowers or recently harvested fruits and vegetables to be used as sacrifices, but most of the time our rituals, like those of the Reformed Druids before us, use small branches cut from trees. These do not contain enough psychic energy to be very effective sacrifices by themselves, but they make an excellent focus of attention for sending the energies raised by singing, music and other artistic offerings by the congregation. These energies constitute the real sacrifice in our ceremonies.

Praise Offerings

This procedure begins when the presiding clergyperson says something on the order of, "Has anyone brought praise for the Lady and Lord of this feast?" or "Now let us praise the Lady and Lord of this feast!" The first cue is most appropriate with a small group, all or most of whom are planning to offer Praise. The second cue is better with medium sized or larger groups, where particular people have been selected ahead of time and a performance order decided upon.

Praise Offerings most often consist of songs and poems, preferably original, designed to have the maximum emotional impact. We have also had ritual drama performances and storytellings, as well as ritual dances.

Dances done as performances are usually not as effective by themselves as those done with the participation of most or all of the other people present. However, a badly done group dance is much worse than no dance at all, so if a proposed participatory dance has not been thoroughly rehearsed by all parties concerned, you are best off to have your grove's dancer(s) do it as a performance piece between two other carefully chosen verbal/audio pieces. Even better, you can have them do it at the same time that a song or chant is being done. Either method will prevent the damage that a poorly done group dance can do to your ceremony's focus and pacing, while still allowing for group participation.

Pacing is absolutely critical here, because this is the main "power raising" for your ceremony. The folks who plan to offer Praise should show their material to everyone during rehearsals, or at least to the presiding clergy beforehand, so that the best possible performance order can be worked out ahead of time. Then people can be called upon to offer their Praises in such an order as to generate the greatest possible amount of energy.

You can, of course, just pick a person to begin, and go around the grove deosil, hoping that the energy will grow and that the last person will be terrific. With small groups, where everyone is offering something, this approach is fairly common. But as far as results are concerned, it's very unpredictable, and often the last Praise Offering is not as good as an earlier one was.

With this sort of a situation, or if some outside event has disrupted the steady buildup of emotional power, the presiding clergyperson may want to end this section by calling upon the best bard present to do a specific piece that she/he is known to be good at. Clear this with her/him beforehand, and make sure that they know what pieces they may be asked to do, so they won't have to spend precious time retuning their instrument, or trying to remember words they haven't sung recently. If the presiding clergyperson is a bard him/herself, then he/she can make this decision instantly, knowing (we hope) their own strengths and weaknesses, and perhaps doing the final Praise Offering him/herself.

Another option you have here is to have ready a simple, powerful, and well-rehearsed chant to use as the final Praise Offering. Start it out softly, then gradually build up the volume and speed of both the voices and the music (especially drums). Decide on a cue (such as raising their arms high) for the presiding clergy to use to indicate that the last verse is coming up. This part gets tricky. You can't just stop the music abruptly at the end, since folks are likely to start yelling and screaming (especially

at a large festival rite), and your carefully woven web of energies will go splattering in all directions. If the musicians and chant facilitators drop their volume on cue and slow down for the final verse (which they should), with no visible signal to the rest of the grove, then the other participants may not notice, but instead continue to increase the volume and the speed of their chanting until it all falls apart.

Try this: When the cue is given, have your chant facilitators step three paces towards the center, turn around with their arms held high, and gradually lower their arms as they lower and slow their voices (and the musicians lower and slow their music). The presiding clergyperson can be doing the same gesture near the main altar, slowly rotating in her/his place. The chant will end with everyone slowly whispering it, then stopping simultaneously. The chant facilitators can then return to their previous positions, and the energies in the grove will be at a strong and steady peak. (This technique will work even better if it's been used a few times earlier in the rite, or at previous ceremonies.)

It's important to remember that the primary purpose of all these Praise offerings is to raise as much psychic/magical/spiritual power as possible, all of it focussed around the deities of the occasion -- not to boost the egos of the performers (that can be a secondary or tertiary purpose). By the time the last Praise Offering is done, the grove should be charged up with as much energy as it is capable of generating.

The Prayer of Sacrifice

It is at this moment of supreme tension that the presiding clergyperson lifts up the sacrificial branch (and perhaps one of the flowers or fruits, etc.) towards the Center. She/he then touches the branch with a sickle or other blade (to symbolize death, mortality, harvesting, etc.), and intones the Sacrificial prayer. The one in the previously published script is a variation on the Reformed Druid version, but the concepts involved are universal ones. With this prayer/incantation, she/he sends the power in the grove through the Gates Between the Worlds to the God and Goddess of the occasion. All present should feel their energies going through the branch and out the Other Side. After a moment of silence, the clergyperson puts the branch back on the altar.

The Seeking of the Omen

Now he/she asks the deities of the occasion if they have accepted the Sacrifice. The reply from Them may be through a sudden wind, bird calls or flights, the fire leaping up, etc. If possible, you should have a grove diviner present to read these auguries, or to cast the runes, or to otherwise do some on-the-spot divination. She or he should announce the results clearly, in such a fashion as to make it clear that this is a legitimate divinitory process (for example, by, calling out the runes that appeared, naming the omen observed, etc.). If the Omen is positive, the ceremony continues in the usual fashion. If not, further Praise Offerings are necessary, in which case the clergyperson or bard should lead another song or chant. Then repeat the Sacrificial prayer and the divination.

If the results are still negative, try one more time. Make more Praise Offerings, repeat the Sacrifice, seek for the omen. A third answer of "No" indicates that the deities of the occasion, for Their own reasons, are not inclined to assist the grove in achieving the ceremony's goal. So this should be announced, the members of the grove should be advised to meditate upon these events, and the fourth phase of the ritual skipped. Instead, jump directly to the fifth phase of winding down the ritual.

But most of the time the Sacrifice will be accepted and the branch can be cast into the fire, along with the aspergillims. Some folks object to the symbolism of burning flowers, so you may want to dispose of any sacrificed (and decorative) flowers in running water after the ritual is over. Fruits and vegies can be kept where they are, and consecrated (or just blessed) along with the Waters (see next section), then consumed as part of a ceremonial feast.

Once your Sacrifice has been accepted, it's time to procede to the.....

Fourth Phase: Receiving and Using the Returned Power

Preparation for the Return

This is what the whole process of a worship ritual is leading up to, so it's important that everyone be ready to receive and handle the divine power that is about to be returned to them through the Gates. This has (naturally) three steps: meditation upon personal needs, a repetition of the group's needs, and the induction of a state of receptivity.

The first step is relatively simple, since the presiding clergyperson will ask everyone present to meditate upon what they need from the Goddess and God of the occasion. In a primarily theurgical ceremony, this process will take somewhat longer than in a mostly thaumaturgical one, since receiving these blessings will be the main point (the goal) of the entire liturgy. So folks should be given a few minutes to think quietly, with no outside sounds other than those provided by Nature, or perhaps some serene harp or flute music.

In a predominately thaumaturgic ritual, the second step becomes more important than the first. It's here that the participants are reminded of the group's goal(s) and target(s), and of the need for unity to achieve them.

The third step is a matter of getting the participants into a state of maximum openness and receptivity, by reminding them of what is about to happen and why. This encourages them to drop whatever remaining psychic shields or psychological blocks they may have between themselves and the deities. This third step is meant to be accomplished by the old RDNA "Catechism of the Waters", which was put into the script more for reasons of nostalgia, than because it's really effective.

It should be possible to write a quiet, powerful song to accomplish all three steps, with verses to add or subtract to change the pacing and focus. This would probably work best in a verse-plus-chorus or litany format being led by one or two singers, and including long pauses for meditation.

Final Consecration and Sharing

So now we come to the fourth and final consecration of the ceremony. Just as the first three represented the Three Worlds of Land, Water and Sky, this one represents the Fourth World -- Fire. As the presiding clergyperson lifts the two main cups towards the Center, she/he enchants the words that ask the Goddess and God of the occasion to bless the liquids within them (and the other containers to be passed), to make them truely the Waters-of-Life.

As before, an arc of energy will leap from the Center/Gates and into each cup (or other container) being consecrated. The power will be stronger and clearer than before, and may appear as twin arcs of differently "colored" energies. As each participant sips from the Waters of her/his choice (this is the consecration where asperging is <u>not</u> normally an adequate substitute for drinking), and does the breathing exercise mentioned in the script, the God and Goddess will fill her/him with the maximum amount of power that she/he is capable of handling safely.

Thus each individual and the group as a whole receive what they need in the way of "healing, blessing, power, and inspiration". Bonding within the group as a whole will be reinforced, something that will last beyond the ceremony, whether it's bonding with the community at large, or with the members of one's local grove. Some people will have visions or be healed of ailments, others will be filled with a holy joy or suddenly recognize a psychic link to a deity they never really knew before. The changes may be simple or comples, subtle or obvious. Every participant will have a unique experience, as well as sharing those of everyone else. "Communion" with the Goddess and the God, as well as with each other, will be achieved.

We've used the following chant (given us at PSG 86 by Nicholas Sea) successfully for the final passing of the Waters. It should be done softly, a minimum of three times. Generally it's continued until all have partaken.

Burn bright, flame within me,
Kindled of eternal fire.
Of the people I do be,
And the people part of me.
All one in many parts,
A single fire of flaming hearts!

Larry Cornet has collected this chant in a slightly different form, with the second line being "Kindle love's eternal fire." This has different polytheological implications, and folks may want to discuss which seems more appropriate at this point of the ceremony.

If food has been offered up as part of the sacrifice, the presiding clergy may choose to consecrate all or part of it along with the Waters. However, unless the food is bite-sized and ready to eat, it may not be a good idea to pass it around with the Waters, since the distribution and consumption of food can easily destroy both concentration and pacing. Often it's better to do a lesser blessing (rather than a full consecration) on the food, and to consume it afterwards as part of a feast.

Optional Activity: Spell Casting or Rite of Passage

Now is when the participants will be able to perform the most powerful spell castings and/or rites of passage. There's no room here to go into either category in detail, and the high points have mostly been covered in the preceding essays. I will, however, mention one bit of magical "tech" here: the use of the Center for casting spells, instead of the "cone of power" method.

The idea of "raising a cone of power" is that the participants are supposed to create, usually by dancing and chanting, a large, cone-shaped field of psychic energy. At a peak of energy buildup, the cone is supposed to "fire" a blast of energy towards the target, carrying the power and information content of the spell. Nice theory. Unfortunately, most of the time it doesn't work very well.

Leave aside the rude comments I've previously made about Neopagan ceremonial dancing, and the fact that most Neopagans don't physically mark the edges of their circle, and thus have no clear idea of where the base of the cone is supposed to be. Ignore the fact that no two cone raisers ever seem to agree about the size, shape (sharp or squat?), color, dimensionality (solid or hollow?), etc. of their cone. These are all symptoms of the general lack of planning and training in the community, and can eventually be overcome. We can even ignore the fact that the imagery is completely male. Let's look instead at a different cluster of factors, ones of physics and metaphysics.

When you fire off a spell in a straight line towards a distant target, you are essentially broadcasting a message. And like any other message broadcast through normal space and time, a spell is subject to deterioration of (a) its power level, (b) its directional vectors, and (c) its information content.

The further away your target is, the more power will be used up simply in getting there. So when it does arrive, it won't be strong enough to do much. If your target moves, or you didn't really know where it was in the first place, or some other energy field deflects your "beam", your spell will wind up missing the target completely. And if the distance is great, the sheer psychic static of our biosphere (let alone deliberate efforts by others) can disrupt the psychic structure of your spell, causing it to lose all or most of its information content, or to suffer major changes in meaning. Thus, even if it arrives "on target" with lots of power, it may well wind up doing little or nothing that you wanted done.

How do you get around the problem of a spell deteriorating when it goes through normal space and time? You just go "around" normal space and time completely, by using the Center of your working area as a "shortcut". You see, every ritual Center is connected to every other ritual Center, since in one sense thay are all the "same": each is the Center of the Multiverse. So if you have previously created a sacred space around the target of your spell, or if you create one symbolically ("by remote control") at this point of the ceremony, you can establish (recognize, actually) a magical/psychic/spiritual connection between the ritual Centers of both places.

A spell that you cast into the Center of your grove will arrive instantly at the Center of the other location, without going through time or space as we know it. It will pop out of that other Center with full power and information content (directional vectors become irrelevant). It won't matter if your target is ten miles or ten thousand miles away (note to my great-great-grandchildren: or ten light years away).

I first discovered this technique by accident over fifteen years ago, when I was living in Berkeley and heard on the radio that the Canadian nesting grounds of the whooping cranes were about to be engulfed by a major forest fire. I had already noticed a 500 mile limit in my previous spell castings, and the distance involved was a couple of thousand miles, but I figured I had to do something. So I got out a map of Canada and drew a circle centered on the nesting grounds, then invoked Thor and did a rain spell. The circled map was in the middle of my altar, which was in the Center of my working area. I cast the spell into the map and hoped for the best. Much to my surprise and delight, a few hours later I heard on the news that a sudden rainstorm had "come out of nowhere" and stopped the forest fire a mile away from the nesting grounds.

For years I thought it was the use of a mandala/pentacle that had been the key, but eventually I figured out that the critical steps had been defining two ritual Centers and then merging them. So now I hardly ever do "cone raisings" if I want to affect a distant target, and I highly recommend this "Center-to-Center" technique as a replacement. And now, back to our ceremonial step-through, which is still in progress...

Remember when you do spell castings or rites of passage at this stage of the liturgy, that you'll have no need to generate more power, since everyone will already have as much Gods-given power in them as they can handle. Instead, use chants, talismans, and gestures (mantras, mandalas, and mudras) as devices to focus your visualization and timing. That way, everyone can release their divinely enhanced power into the Center at the same instant, towards a uniformly visualized target, with a unified intent, to achieve the agreed upon goal.

Now obviously with most rites of passage, or specific healings/blessings on people present in the grove, you are not going to be sending energies outside the boundries of your current sacred space, but rather into the bodies/auras of folks right there. The ritual-within-the-ritual of child blessing, ordination, coming of age, healing, etc., should give everyone all the information they need to send or receive the energies. We'll talk more about this in future issues of DP. For now, let's go on to the...

Fifth Phase: Unwinding and Ending the Ceremony

Affirmation of Success: Following Through

Those of you who are familiar with golf, tennis, bowling, baseball, croquet or any other sport that involves casting or striking a small object away from you, will know about the importance of "follow-thru". You don't just stop moving abruptly the instant the ball is struck or thrown, you continue the bodily motions you were engaged in at that instant. This insures that your motions will be smooth and continous, rather than abrupt and jerky, and thus improves the accuracy of your casting/striking.

Oddly enough, this can be a very useful metaphor for casting a spell instead of an object. This is true even for purely theurgical workings in which you are, in essense, casting a spell upon yourself. The way you do a "follow-thru" in a ritual is by proclaiming that the blessings have been received, the spell is already working, etc. This

"affirmation of success" alerts your subconscious to stop receiving and/or sending energies. Just as importantly, it tells your subconscious to let go of the target(s) psychically. Without this letting go, your subconscious is likely to continue "worrying at" the target(s), which usually has the effect of draining away the energies sent, often ruining the results. So you need to have your conscious mind say to your subconscious mind (and any spirits who might be listening?), "Hey! It worked!"

In the script this affirmation of success is represented by the phrases, "The Lady and the Lord [of the occasion] have blessed us" and "Every time we invoke Them, They become stronger and more alert to the needs of Their people." That's because the primary goal of this liturgy has usually been to strengthen and awaken the Old Gods, and the secondary goal has been to obtain blessings for the participants. The affirmation is interwoven (incorrectly) with the silent contemplation and the "Let us return to the realm of mortals" cues necessary for the Recovery process (see next section).

Recovery

After the follow-through, it's necessary to bring people back in touch with the Earth-plane level of reality, regardless of whether you have done a spell casting or rite of passage or neither. Otherwise folks will drift in their altered states indefinately, and the energies absorbed and/or channeled will not be properly "digested". So at this point the presiding clergy should remind the participants to refocus their attention through the Three Worlds: thinking about what they've been doing, feeling the emotions that have been generated as a result, and sensing their physical connections to the "realm of mortals" again. This recovery process will continue through the rest of the ceremony, gradually returning everyone to their "normal" states of being (through we hope in an improved condition).

Thanking of Entities Invoked

This portion of the ceremony accomplishes three tasks: (a) it shows courtesy to the entities invoked and invited, (b) it further affirms the ceremony's success, and (c) it lets the Gods and the lesser entities, not to mention the people, know that you are winding things down and that They can leave if They wish. As a general rule, *you do not "dismiss" goddesses and gods*. If nothing else, it's rude.

Yes I know that some ancient Egyptian magicians were in the habit of bossing their deities around, as are some modern followers of Voodoo/Hoodoo. But I've always considered these to be corruptions from the earlier states of these religions, something that happens when the magicians involved no longer believe in the Gods as Gods.

In the fully developed Afro-American religions, unlike Hoodoo and Voodoo (which have lost most of their religious character and become mostly grab-bags of magical techniques), the initiated clergy will sometimes have to urge a possessing deity to leave Her/His "horse" (the human being possessed). However, I believe that they do this through reminding the deity of the contractual agreements made at the time of the clergyperson's initiation. It's done with love, courtesy, and respect -- not with the

typical arrogance of the Goetic magician (the source of Wiccan style "dismissals"). In general, I tend to think that the current Neopagan phrase of "Go if You must, stay if You will," reflects a much more appropriate attitude.

The entities are thanked in the reverse order of their invocation or invitation: first the God and Goddess of the occasion, then the deities as a group, the ancestors and predecessors, the Nature spirits, the Matron/Patron of bards, and the Gatekeeper (even though it's not in the script). When the Gatekeeper has been thanked, this effectively closes the Gates, but it's still a good idea to overtly ask Him/Her to close them. That way, folks will know that they should stop having an "open line" to the Other Side.

Reversing the Tree Meditation

In keeping with the unwinding process, it's now necessary to go through four steps: (1) to "unmerge" the groupmind, though some psychic links will remain *in potentia*; (2) to drain off any excess psychic/magical/spiritual energies that might be remaining; (3) to return the participants to a more mundane consciousness; and (4) to recenter each of them within themselves as unique individuals. In this liturgy, you accomplish all this by doing a reprise of the Tree Meditation, which should be done by the person who led it at the beginning of the ceremony, in a similar delivery style.

Step 1: Everyone is told to pull back their psychic branches and roots from being interwoven with each other's, and to become individual trees again.

Step 2: Folks are instructed to release any remaining excess energy that they might have and which they don't need. They can send the excess through their roots into the ground (the other sense of "grounding" mentioned earlier), or else into the ceremonial vestments or tools they may be wearing.

Step 3: All are guided in pulling back their roots and branches and "becoming humans" once more.

Step 4: Everyone is told to refocus their attention on their personal centers.

The Libation

At this point, you should pour any remaining Waters onto the ground or into the fire. The traditional RDNA prayer is a nice one for this: "To Thee we return this portion of Thy bounty, O our Mother, even as we must return unto Thee." (If you like, you can consider the fire to be masculine and say, "O our Father" instead.) If there is going to be a ceremonial feast afterwards, you may want to save a little of the consecrated Waters to mix into the punch bowl or ale cask, but you should <u>not</u> casually pass cups of consecrated Waters around, in order "not to waste" them. It's not wasting the Waters to return them to the Earth or the Fire, it's a sign of love, respect, gratitude, and courtesy, just as the various thankings are. Furthermore, it's a clear indication that you're not greedy, that you know when to stop taking and start giving.

Clearcut Ending -- Deconsecration of Space and Time

Just as every ritual needs a clearcut beginning, it also needs an equally definate ending. Your ritual space will need to be deconsecrated, unless you are lucky enough to have a temple building or sacred grove which you expect to be able to remain holy. Usually, however, deconsecration is necessary (a) to prevent outsiders from wandering through a still "charged" area and accidently connecting up with the psychic links of the folks who have been worshipping there; (2) to prevent your people from worrying about fundamentalists or other hostile intruders committing sacriligious acts there; and (3) to announce to the subconscious minds of the participants that they are "back" in the "real world" again.

You also need an overt cue to each person's subconscious that it's no longer "magic time". So announce that "this ceremony is over" verbally, then follow it up with snuffing out the candles, ringing a bell, or playing a special piece of music.

A good way to combine all this is through a Recessional (balancing out the Processional at the beginning). Make your announcement, then have everyone leave the area (thus destroying the temporary definition you had of sacred space by crossing its boundries physically), while singing an appropriate song. Here's the Recessional hymn that we've been using since Summer Solstice of 1986:

Walk with wisdom,
from this hallowed place.
Walk not in sorrow,
our roots shall e're embrace.
May Strength be your brother,
and Honor be your friend,
and Luck be your lover,
until we meet again.

This should be sung a minimum of three times. The words and music are by Sable, of the Minneapolis Grove. See her zine in this issue for the musical notation, and Susan Kirsch's zine (also in this issue) for a "sitting" variation of the words. Some people may prefer to use "sister" instead of, or simultaneously with, "brother".

Cleanup and Critiques

As soon as the liturgy is over, the presiding clergy and bards should go off somewhere to remove their ceremonial gear and perform any additional grounding and centering which they might need. In the meantime, their assistants can be packing up the ritual tools and supplies, putting out the fire, etc., while volunteers check the area to make sure that nothing has been left behind (especially litter -- Neopagans, like scouts, always leave a site cleaner than it was when they arrived!).

Comments about the liturgy should be limited at this time to positive ones. Individuals may want to share visions with each other, or to write down any insights sparked by their experiences during it, but a critical analysis should wait at least twentyfour

hours. This is to enable everyone to digest what has happened and to enable any workings done to "solidify" without "second-thoughts chasing after them on the astral."

A few days later, but no more than a couple of weeks at most, gather together as many as possible of the participants to discuss the ceremony in depth. This is the time to say things like: "That chant we wrote for the second consecration just didn't sound right." "George, you kept missing cues. Do we need different cues or were you having an off day?" "The harmonies on the Processional were terrible. We'd better practice them some more." "Susie, your Anglo Saxon pronunciation needs work." "The altars for the Three Worlds are too big, the dancers kept running into them." "The clergy didn't project their voices quite loud enough." "I had an insight about the wording of the consecration prayer, and I'd like to rewrite it." Etc.

It's very important to state the criticisms in a friendly way, with the emphasis on future improvements rather than assigning blame. Positive feedback about every aspect that went well should be included. People should share any psychic/magical/spiritual events that occured to them during or after the ritual. In effect, you should be doing the same kind of fair-but-firm critique session that a theatrical troupe or symphony orchestra would have after a major performance. Who knows, perhaps we will even have genuine ritual critics writing reviews in the Neopagan press someday!

Detailed notes should be kept, to be used in future planning, preparation and performance. These notes can be copied and distributed to all the members of the group who might be interested, including the ADF Mother Grove!!

An Update on the Liturgical Outline

This is the version of the Outline for Druid Worship Ceremonies that I would like people to use for the next few years, and which I've been discussing throughout this essay. Please make sure that the new liturgical scripts you send in for sharing with the other members all follow this basic pattern:

First Phase: Starting the Rite & Establishing the Groupmind
- Clearcut Beginning
  - Consecration of Time
  - Consecration of Space
- Tree Meditation
  - Centering
  - Grounding
  - Merging
  - Affirmation of Group Beliefs
- Specification of Ritual Focus and Deities of the Occasion

Second Phase: Opening the Gates & Preliminary Power Raising
- Invoking the Gate Keeper
- Invoking the Matron/Patron of Bards
- Triad Invocations, Consecrations and Sharings
  - Nature Spirits
  - Ancestors and Predecessors
  - Gods as a Group

Third Phase: The Major Sending of Power to the Deities of the Occasion
- Praise Offerings
- Prayer of Sacrifice
- Seeking of the Omen
- (Possible Repetitions of Praise/Sacrifice/Omen Seeking)

Fourth Phase: Receiving and Using the Returned Power
- Preparation for the Return
  - Meditation upon Personal Needs
  - Repetition of Group Needs
  - Induction of Receptivity
- Final Consecration and Sharing
  - Reception of Individual Blessings
  - Reinforcement of Group Bonding
- Optional Activity: Spell Casting or Rite of Passage

Fifth Phase: Unwinding and Ending the Ceremony
- Affirmation of Success: Following Through
- Recovery
- Thanking of Entities Invoked
  - Deities of the Occasion
  - Deities as a Group
  - Ancestors and Predecessors
  - Nature Spirits
  - Matron/Patron of Bards
  - Gatekeeper -- Closing the Gates

Reversing the Tree Meditation
- Unmerging
- Draining of Excess Energies
- Pulling back of Branches and Roots
- Recentering

Libation

Clearcut Ending
- Deconsecration of Space
- Deconsecration of Time

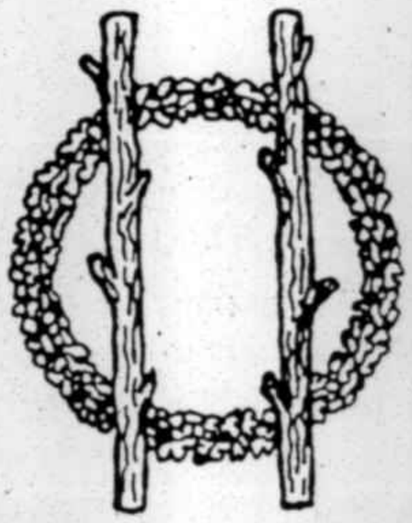
Conclusion: The Importance of Joy

After reading sixty (very) odd pages on liturgical design, preparation, and performance, many of you may have decided that this is all a lot of grim, dull work. Nothing is (or should be) farther from the truth. Any harper will tell you that the joy of composition and performance comes after you have mastered the basics of your instrument, and learned your scales. A painter may spend years learning color mixing, anatomy, the laws of perspective, etc., yet if there were no joy in the learning and the practice, she/he would have stopped being a painter early on.

Creating, preparing, and performing a ceremony requires a series of artistic decisions and actions, no matter what other polytheological, psychological, magical, or technical factors may be involved. And for Neopagans, joy is an integral part of every art we practice. Regardless of whether your liturgy is one of thankfulness or of grief, of love or of rage, of celebration or of entreaty -- if it is to be a Neopagan liturgy, it must be filled with joy. This may be the quiet, serene joy that strengthens us in times of fear and sorrow, or the noisy, boisterous joy of friends sharing pleasure, or the wild and dangerous joy of the tigress defending her young: Balder or Bacchus or Kali. If our liturgies are truly to transform both ourselves and our world, there must be joy!

So make sure that you and the people you are working with pay attention to having fun during the entire process. The average Neopagan Druid liturgy is no more complex than putting on a three-act play, or a Beethoven symphony, things that thousands of people every year manage to do in high school -- while having a great deal of fun at the same time. With sufficient determination, practice, imagination, love and joy in our hearts, we can create ritual experiences that will have longterm positive effects on ourselves and the entire world. And remember...

The Gods are watching us, so let's give Them a good show!



There Were Three Sisters

(c) 1987

Words by Isaac Bonewits, music English trad. ("Henry Martin")

There were three Sisters in our ancient land,
In our ancient land there were three.
And they did dispute which of them
Should be, should be, should be,
Greatest of all in the hearts of the free.

O first spoke Danu, the Mother of All,
Her voice was as rich as the earth:
"I give them my cattle, my grain,
And mirth, and mirth, and mirth.
Freedom without joy is of little worth."

And then spoke Macha, the Goddess of War,
Her voice was the roar of the wave:
"I give but courage, for fear will
Enslave, enslave, enslave.
Freedom's a gift given but to the brave."

Now third spoke Rion, the Light of the Moon,
Her voice was as vast as the sky:
"I give to their thoughts great wings
To fly, to fly, to fly.
Freedom means naught if you never ask why."

Repeat first verse.

But then came Bridget, the Queen of All Arts,
Her voice was a flickering flame:
"My sisters I fear your gifts miss
Their aim, their aim, their aim.
None but through me can their true freedom claim."

"For pleasure and riches are fleeting at best,
And a warrior's strength is quite brief.
And knowledge alone brings them naught
Save grief, save grief, save grief.
Without beauty's fire within their belief."

"My healers restore hope to those who despair.
My smiths forge them weapons so grand.
My bards cause all those who kneel
To stand, to stand, to stand.
The fires of Freedom are lit by my hand!"

There were four Sisters in our ancient land...

Feedback Department Rules

1) All zine contributors must be paid members (Subscribing, Family, or Supporting).

2) You do <u>not</u> have to contribute a zine in order to continue to receive copies of everyone else's.

3) Please don't use (SF) 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 craftsperson. 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 <u>not</u> necessary to offer mailing comments on every zine which may have appeared 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) Pages should be numbered at the bottom center, with your name or abbreviated zine title attached, so that folks leafing through a 150 page publication can find your stuff.

10) Please leave a one inch margin on the top, bottom and sides.

11) 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.

12) Please type or print-out your originals with a fresh ribbon and <u>proofread</u> them! Handwritten zines, unless <u>very</u> clearly calligraphed, and zines containing illegible and/or illiterate typing will be sent to volunteers to be transcribed, and may not appear in the desired issue.

13) Send a complete set of sharp black and white, camera ready printing/xeroxing masters, on standard 8.5"x11" white paper. Try to avoid large black areas, since they don't repro well. If you want to include photos, have them screened at a local photographers' stat house first.

14) About advertising: it's OK for you 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 Dept. on the inside back cover for details). Extra white space in your zine may be used by me to fit in ads by other people.

These rules are designed to make it as easy as possible for me to get your ideas across to each other with a minimum of hassle and expense. The restrictions on mailing comments are meant to prevent 27-page zines filled with personal conversations the rest of us can't keep track of. Those on the format are meant to insure that the resulting printed and/or xeroxed zines are as legible and as locatable as possible.

The Grove of the Silver Oak
Airgiadach, c/o 2-A West End Avenue, Nyack, NY 10960

Fellow Seekers -

Bright Blessings and welcome to the Grove of the Silver Oak. You may find some of the paths though the grove to be familiar to you, but most will probably not be. I sincerely hope that above all, your sojourn on these paths will open up new vistas for you, no matter how long you may be on them.

These lessons are a guidance program that I have been working on for many years, and are planned to be as well-balanced as possible. This does not mean that feedback on the stucture is not welcome. We are all learning together. Also, these lessons are designed to follow the Ar nDraiocht Fèin circle program. For that reason, and because they are designed in a building sequence for each area, for the maximum benefit, do not skip lessons or take them out of order. Even if you are familiar with one or more exercises or have done similar work, it will help you the most to follow the lesson plan. It is very difficult to over-practice

Since each two lesson set will cover about six weeks, the time breakdown will be as follows:

-- Pick one time of the day to be the regular time to do your lessons. Since some of the exercises are time-comsuming if all done together, you might wish to break up your period of practice, but do your best to follow a schedule. Pick a time when you will not be disturbed.

-- Always warm up with a few minutes of relaxing, meditating and/or comtemplating.

-- Do the first set every day for two weeks, then write down your observations.

-- Do the second set every day for two weeks, then write down your observations.

-- Do both together for two weeks and then send me a synopsis of what you feel you have learned.

-- After the initial four weeks, you may practice previous lessons at anytime that feels right, but always practice the current lessons at the same time every day.

-- I will not send new lessons until I have received the synopsis of the previous ones.

The five areas covered are broad and will have some overlap, but I believe that you will be able to feel the essence of each as well as how they can blend. The areas covered are as follows:

Sensing: psychic tasting, psychometry, clairvoyance, clair-audience, etc.

Communications: telempathy and telepathy.

Energy control: polarity shaping, psychokinesis, etc.

Time lines: precognition, past experience, present sentience, ect

Planar travel: dreams, astral, mental, and soul travel.

Each will be developed over a period of seven years. From first to second circle will be one year and for third, fourth, and fifth will be two years each.

This is enough explanation for now. More will be discussed from time to time and individual questions will be answered personally. If some things are asked that have bearing on all students, the replies will either be sent with all lessons or in the Druids' Progress.

A Blessed Journey to You All

Sensing

Lesson One -- Introduction to Psychic Tasting

The rudiments of sensing are best expressed in identifying minute sensations that usually are overlooked. A solid foundation in discerning the differences in objects by a linking of physical touch and the resultant taste is invaluable to the development of psychometry (reading objects) and the clair-senses (at a distance).

To start with, rinse your mouth with plain soda water to clear all other tastes. Do this before every tasting.

Now assemble an array of five different colored (red, yellow, green, blue, white) pieces of paper of the same kind, such as construction paper or origami paper.

Lightly touch with one forefinger of your dominate hand one piece and get the general feel of the paper.

Now concentrate on your tongue while touching the paper. What do you tates?

Remove your touch. What do you taste?

Touch again and let the taste fill your awareness.

Repeat with each piece, savoring the papery taste.

Touch the red piece again and taste the paper. This time discern any taste beyond what is papery. It might be a chemical taste or a color taste.

Taste the red and then the yellow piece for ten seconds. What changed?

Touch the yellow and the green for ten seconds each. What changed?

Repeat for each combination of two colors.

Touch five in a row for ten seconds each.

Many different combinations may be done, but by this time, you will probably pick up the redness and blueness, etc, as well as the paper taste. Once you have a feel for the colors, close your eyes and shuffle the pieces. Lay them out and discern color by taste alone.

Communication

Lesson One -- Introduction to Empathy

In any communication, it is necessary for the communicator to know what the message is before it can be communicated.

Knowing your own feelings before expressing them is not only important, but essential.

Too many times, by being too close to the source of our feelings, we believe them to be ourselves and therefore can be manipulated by them. If someone knows how to evoke a mood they can control any who are not aware and in control of their own feelings. Advertising is the main tool today for those who wish to control the emotions and responses of humanity.

First we must be aware of our feelings before we can control them, and by "controlling" I mean not to become a humorless automaton, but to avoid being a slave to our emotions.

First obtain paper and pen and find a quiet spot.

Relax and reflect for a moment.

Find a quiet spot in yourself that is peaceful and without any strong emotion.

Reflect back to a time that was absolute joy to you -- immerse yourself in it, then write it down. Note your current reactions and anything not directly related to the prior experience. Write that down as well.

If the joyous feeling was coupled with a love feeling, repeat the excerise with something that was just happiness without interaction with a loved one.

Note the differences and likenesses.

Strive to feel love without joy -- just the deep, rich awareness of loving. Write it down.

After each separated excercise, return to the quiet spot in your mind. If you have trouble doing so, take three deep breaths and close your eyes. Visualize or feel a bright blue sky and repeat either a mantra or a prayer or whatever makes you feel in balance. One that I have used with incredible results is like the breath of the wind.

SAMHAIN PROCESSIONAL

Words by Barbara St. Germaine & Airgiadach
Music traditional ("The Minstrel Boy to the War has Gone")

We gather now for the Samhain rite,
And to honor those who went before us.
We pray the Lady on this sacred night,
And the Lord of Hunt and Stream and Forest:
Keep the Hearth fire burning bright,
Throughout the winter's bitter night;
That when the summer shall return again,
We shall feast once more upon Your bounty.

A MULTIPLE GUESS EXAM FOLLOWING DRUIDISM 101 -- by Silverleaf and SeaFire

I. How many Druids does it take to screw in a light bulb?

a) Druids don't screw in light bulbs, they screw in stone circles.

b) Druids don't screw in light bulbs, they screw in groves.

c) Make a check payable to P.E.I. Bonewits (not ADF) for $25 and he'll tell you.

d) They don't screw in light bulbs, they just make sure it's done right.

II. Why do Druids in ADF wear white berets?

a) Sorry, that's a Fifth Circle Secret.

b) Why not? Do you have something against white berets?

c) It's not important, it's all illusion anyway.

d) Make a check payable to P.E.I. Bonewits (not ADF) for $25 ....

III. What are the most important Study Tracks in the Study Program?

a) Communication, Survival & Physical Health, and Social Sciences.

b) Druids screw in stone circles, not in light bulbs.

c) Sorry, that's a Third Circle Secret.

d) Make a check payable.....

e) Tantric Yoga. P.E.I. Bonewits will make a blank check out to anyone whose major concentration is in this Study Track.

f) You people are disgusting. Clean up your filthy minds. Druidism and ADF are Serious Stuff and you have no right to muck it up with smut like this.

IV. What happened to the money I sent Isaac for issues number 1 - 3 of Druid's Progress?

a) Isaac burned it to appease the Gods and Goddesses.

b) Isaac spent it to appease the printers.

c) Sorry, that's an IRS Circle Secret.

d) Tantric Yoga. P.E.I. Bonewits made out a blank check to anyone whose major concentration.....

e) It's not important, it's all illusion anyway.

f) Hey, I told you people to cut this out. Sex jokes might be funny to people with garbage minds, but this is real invasion of privacy.

g) Make a check payable.....

Michael Atkinson

MY DRUID INITIATION

Last Summer Solstice, I and a friend camped out for four days in San Diego's Cleveland National Forest. Our campsite had two oak trees and three Mistletoe laden sycamores. A fresh stream with two shallow pools and a small waterfall flowed past our campsite and came complete with Nymphs (Sun Bathers).

My Initiation started with a plunge into the Waters of Life (one of the pools) that afternoon.

The Moon was full that evening. I was dressed all in white and my friend all in red. After our Solstice Rite, I filled a silver chalice with the Waters of Life- from one of the pools. Offering the chalice up to the Moon, I handed it with both hands to my friend, who dipped Mistletoe leaves into the water and sprinkled me thrice. Thus I was Initiated into Ar ndraiocht Fein with a Druid's Baptism.

THE SCYTHIANS

One of the biggest influences on the Celtic life style was the Scythians, whose land overlapped with the Celts in eastern Europe and northern Turkey. Customs such as headhunting and the wearing of torcs (neck rings) and trousers were first found among the Scythians. Other things in commmon with the Celts, included the Scythian love for Greek wine and brightly coloured clothing. It is hard to determine if some artifacts found in eastern Europe are Celtic or Scythian, since Scythian art is, in many ways, similar to Celtic art.

The Scythians were nomads of the Russian steppes. These horse nomads received their name from the Greeks, who referred to the land as Scythia and called it's people Scythian simply because they were there. These horse nomads were known by many other names. The Persians, Arabs and Hindus knew them as Sarmatians and the Chinese called them Hsiung-Nu. The Chinese described them as having red hair, green eyes and a profusion of coarse body hair (at least by Chinese standards). The Hsiung-Nu have since been racially absorbed by the Chinese, and today are called Mongolians.

The major source- if not the only source- cintemporary with the Scythiains, was Herodotus, whose accounts were based on first hand experience. According to Herodotus, the Scythians

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Last Summer Solstice, I and a friend camped out for four days in San Diego's Cleveland National Forest. Our campsite had two oak trees and three Mistletoe laden sycamores. A fresh stream with two shallow pools and a small waterfall flowed past our campsite and came complete with Nymphs (Sun Bathers).

My Initiation started with a plunge into the Waters of Life (one of the pools) that afternoon.

The Moon was full that evening. I was dressed all in white and my friend all in red. After our Solstice Rite, I filled a silver chalice with the Waters of Life- from one of the pools. Offering the chalice up to the Moon, I handed it with both hands to my friend, who dipped Mistletoe leaves into the water and sprinkled me thrice. Thus I was Initiated into Ar ndraiocht Fein with a Druid's Baptism.

THE SCYTHIANS

One of the biggest influences on the Celtic life style was the Scythians, whose land overlapped with the Celts in eastern Europe and northern Turkey. Customs such as headhunting and the wearing of torcs (neck rings) and trousers were first found among the Scythians. Other things in commmon with the Celts, included the Scythian love for Greek wine and brightly coloured clothing. It is hard to determine if some artifacts found in eastern Europe are Celtic or Scythian, since Scythian art is, in many ways, similar to Celtic art.

The Scythians were nomads of the Russian steppes. These horse nomads received their name from the Greeks, who referred to the land as Scythia and called it's people Scythian simply because they were there. These horse nomads were known by many other names. The Persians, Arabs and Hindus knew them as Sarmatians and the Chinese called them Hsiung-Nu. The Chinese described them as having red hair, green eyes and a profusion of coarse body hair (at least by Chinese standards). The Hsiung-Nu have since been racially absorbed by the Chinese, and today are called Mongolians.

The major source- if not the only source- cintemporary with the Scythiains, was Herodotus, whose accounts were based on first hand experience. According to Herodotus, the Scythians

had no priesthood, bdut instead had Seers. Despite their lack of an organized clergy, the Scythians followed a religion. Their altar was a sword fixed in the ground.

A couple of purification rites: "... their women make a combination of Cypress, Cedar and Frankincese wood, which they pound into a paste. With this substance, they plaster their faces and their whole bodies. A sweet odor is imparted. ... and when they remove the plaster, their shin is clean and glossy." and; "...fixing in the ground three sticks... and stretching aroulnd woolen felts (a teepee like structure)... inside a dish is placed on the ground into which they put a number of red hot stones and then add Hemp (Cannibus or Pot) ...the Scythiains shout for joy.." Herodotus.

This last rite was employed before a divinational reading that used Yarrow sticks, thrown into the air, and both were part of their funeral rites.

Their deities consisted of; Tabiti- the Goddess of the Hearth Fire and the Home (tent) - Papaeus- the Father God- Api-the Earth Goddess- Goetosyrus-the Sun God- Argimpasa-the Goddess of Love, and Thagimasadas- the God of Water.

According to Herodotus, the western Scythiains did not allow their women to ride or fight in battle. However it seems likely that women were freely allowed to be come Seers (shamen). Though the Sarmation women fought and rode beside their men, the Scythians may have been influenced bsy their Greek and Persian neighbors, who were both very patriarchal.

So where are the Scythians today? The most likely candidate appears to be the Gypsys. The Gypys are said to have come from India, though they do not appear indigenous to the Hindu culture- the Scythians have been in India. Both were addicted to the use of divination, both were nomadic- traveling in painted wagons- and both wore brightly coloured clothing. And one thing the Gypsys have in common with the Celts (apeople in contact with the Scythians) is the love for wild and sensual music. Could the Scythians have gone to India, only to return ceturies later as Gypsys?

The First Horsemen by Frank Trippett; Time-Life Books

Before we go on to my poetry I would like to say that I am interested in starting an Ar ndraiocht Fein Grove in the San Diego area- Wiccans and other Neo-Pagans are welcomed.

AN ALL-MOTHER'S DAY POEM

All is Love
And
Love in All
From Begining to End
And
From Finis to Start
Again
As the Love of Life
Is the Life of Love
In Love- We Live Again
She's the Greatest Giver
And yet
The Greatest Gift of All
And
This I Know
By the Power of
Oak, Ash, Holly
And Mistletoe

DAGDA MOR

Days long forgotten past
Let them glow and let them live

For You are here and now
But I am Forever Mor

Let them live and let them glow
From past incarnations- Forever Mor

Remember days forgotten past
Forever past- Forever Mor

I CAN- I AM

Listen now- All take heed
a new LAW I make

I can ACCOMPLISH any
goal I set

I can SUCCEED in any
career I choose

I can LIVE the life
I want

I am the GOD of my
universe

I am the LAW of my
universe

I am the LIFE of my
universe

I am the WILL of my
universe

And as I so will
So Mote It Be

THE MAGIC CIRCLE

One Circle for Unity
Two Circles Enjoined for Eternity
Three Circles the Third Degree of Love

A Circle of Power to raise Love
A Circle of Love to raise Power
A Circle of Magic to Know them Both

A Circle of Stars for to Wonder
A Circle of Light for to Know
A Circle of Stones for Our Dance

A Circle of two arms around a Lover
A Circle of two arms around a Chiled
A Circle of Friends around Us Both

A Circle of Flowers for You for Me
A Circle of Trees just to be
A Circle of Life- Blessed Be

LOVE

Draw Myself into Thee
For I am Thy Own True Soul
Come unto Thee

Draw Me into Thee
For I am Your Own Light
Come to Shine

Draw Me in- Draw Me Deep
And as We so Will
It was Meant to Be

LUGHNASADH

Darkness be Done
Light be Won
Victory for the Shinning One

Death be Stayed
Life be Made
By Lugh the Mighty Rayed

Destruction Dead
Creativity Fed
Lugh's Procession Led

A SUMMER SPELL

This hot summer day
Let the wind blow it away
What else can I say

Footenotes
Beth Bock and Nightfire
Box 347, University Stn., Syracuse, NY 13210

Hello there Druid Folk! I've been subscribing to D.P. for about a year now, as well as working my way through the first circle, and I thought it was about time I introduced myself. I'm a soon-to-be second circle A.D.F. member (we're in the initiation-design phase). I did my first circle vigil with Pat Taylor and company (see DP #3) at PSG last year. I'll be at the Free Spirit Gathering in MD this july where I get to try my hand at giving Druidism 101 workshops (thanks Isaac!) Nightfire is not a Druid, but he does function as my thaumaturgical technical consultant for Footenotes.

Well anyway! I hope I hear from some of you, especialy those living in the northeast, or maybe we'll meet at some gathering this summer. (I'll be the one in the white beret, ho ho!) I thought I'd start Footenotes off with...

PORTALS

Definition: Inter dimentional doorways, usualy temporary but with an indeterminant life-span.

Purpose: Since they act as a doorway, they are useful for apportation (either physical or astral). That is,

When you astral travel, you don't necessarily leave this physical time/space plane. If you wish to do some inter-dimentional crusing, a portal can facillitate things. Secondly, they are useful for invocation and conjuration. When you invoke (request) the presence of a higher order being it's considered polite to open a door-way for them. Conjuration can run into more problems than it's worth, partly because even though beings who are conjured (command appearance) are of lower psychic energy than you, they don't necessarily like being ordered around. If you try ordering around a higher level being they're likley to 1) ignore you or 2) retaliate. (ie. you DON'T tell Thor to get his butt over here!). A third area of portal use is exorcism, trying to get psychic garbage out of here.

NOTE: Any unnecessary opening of portals can be very dangerous, since you can't be sure of what might be at the other end when you open it.

Proceedure: EMERGENCY METHOD a.k.a. Hole Punching

If you wield enough psychic oomph, it is possible to punch a hole in time/space (athame is the perferred tool)

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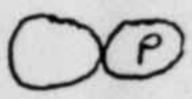
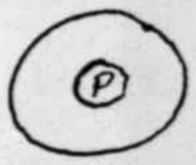
This is only an emergency method because; 1) It's not energy efficient. If something nasty pops in from the other side you'll want to have enough energy left to be able to deal with it. 2) The edges are jagged. 3) It tends to weaken time/space fabric in the vicinity. 4) You cannot control its strength via life-span. In other words, you may need it open for half an hour but can't be sure if it will last a few seconds to a few months. Again, all these problems can be overcome if you have enough power/psychic oomph.

PREFERRED METHOD can be done by group or individual. First put up two circles. The first is standard protective device for you or your group. The second separates you from the portal opening. These can be ajacent or concentric circles.

A) 

B) 

You/your group should focus energies to construct a sphere (white) within the other circle. The leader should describe the growing/forming sphere as it's being constructed in order to help focus the group's energies. When appropriate size is reached (agree on this in advance.) Visualize 1/2 the sphere moving directly into the desired plane. DO NOT move the halves apart in 3 dimentions. Alternately you can

create a sphere at this end and an identical one at that end and swap halves of each. this is more difficult to do but is easier to conceptualize.

Proceede to use portal for its intended purpose. If it was to help invoke a higher order being, and the correct person does show up, you can then drop the barrier between your circle and the portal's circle.

CLOSING: Perferred method

Slide the 2 halves of the sphere back into place. Draw energy out of the sphere until it disapates. Finish ritual and take down all remaining circles as usual.

Punch Method:

Draw sides of hole together. This takes alot of energy. In an emergency you can put up a gate in front of the portal and then proceed to close it. Or design the portal with a few second life-span in the first place. This requires practice but needs no special closing. Be sure that it did in fact disapate as planned. DO NOT leave open portals lying around. Ever!

Getting Out Stubborn Portals (or the magi's wash day miricle) Occaisionaly you may construct a punch portal and find that you can't get the bloody thing closed! Or you may get called in on an emergency and discover an old (and therefor strong) portal which needs closing.

CELTIC/LACING METHOD

Ever notice all those beautiful celtic designs created by weaving one or two strands together in an intricate pattern? Well, they can be used to close portals. Anchor four corners of the design in space around the portal. This is done by using psychic energy bolts (shove and twist, like a screw or a tent stake.) Lace strands of energy (one is best) around the bolts in a design. Be as fancy as you want, but be sure they will function like a shoelace. Then PULL! Anchor the ends to the ground, which is a nice stable surface and will hold the portal's sides together until the time/space fabric can heal itself.

I'd be glad to hear any constructive feedback on this. Most of my (and Nightfire's) experience comes from closing portals that others have accidentally opened.

Stay Well!

Beth

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Grey Cat the temple of danann

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Fearn (April 1986) 6000 Y.O.W.

HERBS -- to the modern day Neo Pagan this word conjures up visions of white-clad Druids slipping through the midnight forest to harvest the sacred Mistletoe; of wise women in long black dresses gathering the secret flowers of the misty English countryside; of naked Witches, met by moonlight, chanting spells over the ominous Mandrake.

Well met by moonlight my friend! The mistletoe hasn't lost its power, not the mandrake its deadly cry; the flowers of the hills cure the diseases of mankind to this day.

The powers of herbs have not waned in our chemical age though knowledge and skill in their use has dwindled. Yet, even in the little boxes of a city life, it is possible to learn again the secrets of the green world, to weave a net of magick with Wormwood and Rue; to minister to a cold with Chamomile, Everlasting, Mullein and Meadowsweet. Amongst the cold hard surfaces of enameled steel and formica, the living green of Gaia can bring healing, hearts-ease and the mystery of the unseen worlds.

So much for the high-pressure sales talk! With Michael Ragan's help, I have put together a correspondence course titled HERBS FOR MAGICK AND MEDICINE. In it we have tried to approach the goal of giving our students sufficient groundwork to enable them to use and study herbs successfully and meaningfully. And, with special arrangements with Isaac Bonewits (he asked me to do it, and I was delighted) we want to offer the course to all members of Ar nDraiocht Fein, and readers of The Druid's Progress.

Tell them "something like the medicinal differences between European and American Mistletoe, or the varied uses of Woad...", Isaac said. More important than my telling you these things, the course is designed to enable you to find this information for yourself -- and to arrive at the knowledge of how you might use them. This is a course in Herbalism, rather than a course on the herbs themselves (although I do discuss several useful plants).

Making incense, doctoring colds and headaches, herbs for public and private ritual, eight ways to make your own essential oils; the ten monographs which make up this course go into detail on the methods and techniques of herbalism in a logical and orderly form. It includes more methods of herbal preparation, for both medicinal and magickal use, than are found in any other publication we know of. Detailed lists of correspondances are included -- but the discussions on the "theory of correspondances" and on some ways of discovering correspondances for yourself are far more important. Everything from how to choose an herbal to how to call snakes is included.

This is not an "easy" course -- herbalism isn't easy. There is an examination with every monograph and these must be satisfactorily completed. A project is also a part of each monograph and students are expected to do the projects and to report on the results. The course is set up in this way so that we can award each diploma with the feeling that it will really mean something. Completing this course is not just a matter of a certain amount of money and some casual letters; our graduating students are well prepared to pursue their interests in herbs successfully and safely.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Grey Cat, a writer, teacher and student of European and American herbal lore, was born in the hill country of Tennessee. After years of city life, expanding her horizons and, not incidentally, making a living wage, she returned to the hills and began intensive studies of the old ways. She has written a number of articles which have appeared in various Neo-Pagan and mainstream publications. She fills in her spare time with gardening, designing and building (with the irreplaceable help of her talented mate) a house, weaving, designing vestments, and defining and exploring the new field of theoretical philosophy.

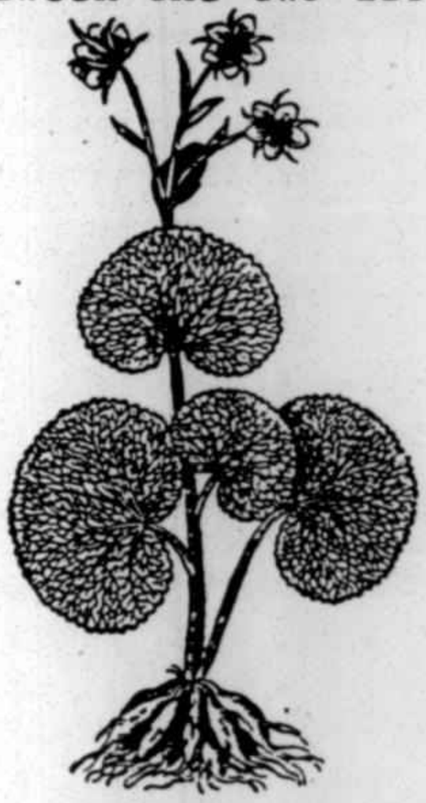
Michael Ragan, Ard File of the Temple of Danann, anthropologist, author, teacher and lecturer on Witta and the occult was born in California. An investigative Scorpio mind has led to a life-long study of life -- and beyond. In a military career he rose from private to major, serving with distinction around the world. He has devoted the remainder of his life to advancing the old ways. Realizing that many individuals have no ready source for personal instruction in these subjects he has prepared correspondence courses in Astrology and Irish Witta as well as working with Grey Cat on this course in Herbalism.

The course does not require a background in Witchcraft, Druidism or any other general or specific neo-Pagan tradition. No great familiarity with magickal work, ritual, diagnostics or chemistry is required. All ritual and other suggestions are designed to be used in harmony with practices already used by the student. Each student receives personal attention from the instructor and a special effort is made to answer student's questions.

The fee for the course is $125.00 which includes a non-refundable $10.00 registration fee. This fee is payable in monthly installments of $10. Those paying the fee in full in advance are given a 15% discount, making the cost $105.00. Additional reading material is not necessarily required in order to pass the course. However, most students will want to plan to purchase at least a couple of good herbals in order to pursue their own particular interests. A number of appropriate books are recommended in the course.

To register for this correspondence course, please complete the information below and send the form, along with $10 registration fee to the Temple of Danann. If you have any further questions about the course, please feel free to write.

Oh! on Mistletoe: while most herbals, medical and magickal, do not differentiate between them, American mistletoe, Phoradendron flavescens, raises blood pressure while European (Viscum album) tends to lower it. Both are considered poisonous but the American is thought the more dangerous. Both are used for convulsions and epilepsy as well as certain heart disorders. My research tends to find that there is no measurable difference between the two from the magickal standpoint.



1 Thora Valdenſis.
Broad leaſed Wolfs-bane.

As for the "varied uses of Woad", except for painting one's naked body, waving a spear, running around yelling like a nut (a generally successfull method of scaring Roman legionaries into a tizzy), woad is used as a dye. It is listed under the herbs of Saturn but no specific uses are suggested for it. Medically it "is so astringent that it is not fit to be given internally."

The illustrated plant, Wolf's Bane (from Gerard's Herbal) gives one a little more scope. As one of the Aconitum plants, it is a possible ingredient of the legendary flying ointments -- and many a poisoned cup. It is protective and the seed, carried wrapped in a lizard skin, allows one to become invisible at will. It is extremely poisonous although it is used medically (very carefully).

To register for the course, please fill out the form below and send with the registration fee ($10) to the Temple of Danann.

May the Gods be with you,
Grey Cat

REGISTRATION FORM

I request acceptance in the Temple of Danann course on Herbs for Magick and Medicine.

Signed_____ Date_____

Full Name_____Sex___

Address_____

Zip

City of Birth_____State___Date_____ Time_____A/P.M.

Make out your check or M/O to Temple of Danann and send to POBox 5364, Virginia Beach, VA 23455

LETTERS

Letter from Thurgin Hillsitter, c/o Box 4544, Rockford, IL 61110:

Greetings! This is just a quickie to request some membership forms, for what looks to be the makings of a proto-grove, and to relate a story re: the ADF symbol.

When I bought my house, there was a 10-12 year old Ash in my front yard. It was nearly dead, and I tried everything, both mundane and magickal, to save that tree. Nothing worked. I finally decided to cut it down, and put it out of its misery. I cut it up, to use as first wood for our camping trips. I figured that I would light the first fire on our trips with at least one log from the tree, to do honor to the Spirit of the Tree.

I left the stump, figuring I could remove it later. I then, as I usually do, promptly forgot all about it. Several days after I sent my membership form to you, my wife called me outside. There, growing from the stump of the old ash, was a brand new one! At the time, I was pleased, but the REAL excitement came when I received DP#3. There, on the cover of the Druids' Progress, was precisely the same thing that was happening in my front yard! Well, to make a long story short, I took it as a sign that I had made a good choice. I have two other people quite interested in ADF, and we are having our first meeting on Sept. 7, '86.

Here's a saying I found in the book, Gaelic Without Groans (John Mackechnie, Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh 1980): Abair ach beag is abair gu maithe -- 'Say but little and say it well!'

*** *** ***

Letter from Richard James, 109 Vaughan Road, Toronto, OT Canada M6C-2L9:

In DP#2, Frank Duffner wrote a letter in which he briefly mentioned "a council of the existing Neopagan and Wiccan community in Toronto". This council was an attempt to apply a loose standard to the initiates of the members of the council, by having everyone agree not to initiate unless 3/4 of the other members thought it was a good idea.

This council didn't work, at least not in its original form as a Pan-Traditional group. This is why: The original council included a few Alexandrians, a few Gardnerians, two or three people of S.F. fandom sorts of traditions, and a half-dozen priest/esses of The Wiccan Church of Canada. Of these, the W.C.C. had a far more rigorous training program and much more demanding standards of potential initiates. Since they also formed about half of the council, it rapidly became apparent that they would block virtually all of the potential initiates of the other traditions. So, one by one, everyone else dropped out of the council agreement. This occurred with various degrees of bad feeling, that the W.C.C. was trying to exert undue control over the pagan community in Toronto.

There is something to be learned from this experience.In a world as anarchic as Neopaganism in North America, quality controls cannot be imposed. Even those who think they agree with standards for Pagan priest/esses, are free to later change their minds and walk away from those standards. One probably can only generate standards by example, by providing spiritual leadership which others want to emulate, and not that they have to.

Herbs of the Crystal Springs

Ellen Evert Hopman, Box 219, Amherst, MA 01004-0219

The island of Iona on the west coast of Scotland was a sacred island temple of the Druids long before the advent of Columba. It is an ancient power center having seven chakras ranging along its length, each corresponding to a particular initiation or unfoldment of human evolution.

To reach the island the initiates were cast out to sea in leathern coracles to arrive eventually at the sacred island of glass. The elders knew that by releasing the boats at a certain spot, in a certain season the initiates would safely land but to the initiates it was a great act of faith.

The Gods alone had control over the final outcome. Watchers would see if the coracle went to the right or the left of a certain rock on the southern tip (first chakra). If the initiates landed at the correct spot they were handed the sweet cup or cup of joy, a drink made with honey, and were declared 'illumined ones'.

This information and much more can be obtained from a collection of tapes kept at the Findhorn Community's retreat house at Iona. I must add that having made a pilgrimage to each power (chakra) center, and having stilled myself to receive its energies, my inner voice confirmed the channeled transmissions regarding the history and use of the island.

I have notes on the rest of the Findhorn tapes which have to do with different Druid initiations, the Hare (Earth), the Fish (Water), the Bird (Air), the Grain of Wheat, the Entombment for Three Days and Nights (Fire), the Hall of Ascending (the twice born), the Cup of Joy described above (Ovate), the Druid (High Priest King), etc.

May we all develop our intuitive feelings and creative imaginations to re-create the energies and conditions here on earth that will bring back the Sun Kings, our elder brothers. May we invite them to walk again with us as friends.

On page four of report #1 you have printed an image of three human figures interlaced into a circle. If anyone can provide information as to its significance I'd be grateful. While meditating on the significance of Iona I had the following vision;

Flames descended unto my hands and before me a large ball of fire appeared. The fire became mandalas with white fire centres and kalideoscopes of changing shape. I was immediatly looking down into a large white lily with a foetus inside that multiplied into two, then three, foetuses. Their configuration was much the same as the above mentioned Celtic depiction, however, they were in <u>triangle</u> formation within the circle of the flower.

I am a Master Herbalist by trade. I teach the use of herbs, flower essences, and Homeopathic remedies to effect change on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual levels. My training includes a B.S. in education, two years as a teaching assistant at Temple University, and two and one half years of teaching in the public school system. I hold a Master Herbalist degree from William Lesassier, a Botanical medicine diploma from Brantridge Forest and a Naturopathy diploma from there as well. I have attended the professional course at the National Center for

Homeopathy and have been a practicing flower essence counselor (Bach and California Essence) for two years.

My spiritual grounding includes eight years of study with a Sufi master, a sojourn at Assissi in Italy (the rocks and silence in the mountains there are incredibly powerful), as well as yoga studies, Hindu traditions, and concentrated spiritual healing instruction.

From the time I was small I would head for the woods to regenerate and often unexplained feelings of ecstacy would well up at the sight of a certain bush or rock or tree. I would attribute these feelings to poetic inspiraton but I know now that at such moments I am exchanging a fierce love with the beings that dwell there.

My particular focus is to understand the many levels of meaning and experience latent in particular plant forms. I exercise my knowledge of the Doctrine of Signatures to seek out strange species and decipher their uses. I like to confirm my intuitions with the provings found in Clarke's Materia Medica when possible.

My life path: I seek the last step in the initiation of matter (Mater) in the tip of the pyramid which breaks off to conjoin the etheric to the material realm -- the beginning of the path of service and the last remnant of the path of Self -- the union of love with love.

Comment to Andrew F. Gillis: you complain of Starhawk's use of a candle-mass service to a minor Druidic goddess in her book of Wiccan Ritual. If we all praised the same gods and goddesses would we not have blessed peace?

I-O-N-A!

Have I the Wings and Will
To pass your Crystal Portals
to journey your Flaming Road
transmuting Body and Breath
and so become the Gift?
Could this One at this Moment
Span your arching bridge
shed her tears and fears
and so Lighten the Earth?
Could you be the Capstone
of the Pyramid of Ages
for whom I toiled and sweated
in pangs of Birth and Passing
(for lifetimes or for moments)
or are you the Mirror
of what I always was,
Precious Remembrance Stone
from the hands of the Beloved
Image of the Sacred Vow
of having and holding
and wedding Matter to Spirit.
I cannot feel where your Shores begin
so close are we in this Great Ocean
the Gulls of my Heart sing to you
and you visit me in Dreams.

July 1983 at Iona

From Susan Kirsch, P.O. Box 122, North Windham CT 06256 - - - -

NEWS FROM SHADOWPATH GROVE

Back in DP#3 I announced the start of a Study Group based on the Circles & Tracks system of ADF. That's only the tip of the iceberg for what we have here, now, in Northeastern Connecticut. I leafletted this area, back in January, about the start of the Study Group. Close to fifteen people showed up for the first "meeting". We met irregularly until Lammas/Lughnasad, when I decided to pull out my stops and get going on a regular basis; we started meeting every other Saturday evening.

STRUCTURE -- We are small - usually four-sixths of us show up to a meeting. We haven't completed a one-year cycle, but all of us generally show up for the meetings closest to the Equinoxes and Solstices.

We are a Grove within a Study Group; people from the Study Group are welcome to join the Grove if they so desire. We also have people from out-of-state who are affiliated with our Grove and are welcome to attend Grove/Study Group meetings.

A large part of why we meet is to be Pagan and social - we have a strong pot-luck tradition going. We also network information and resources, and have worked out several beneficial barters. We share books, tapes, services, garden produce, support, and friendship. Several of us are Co-Counsellors, and so have readily-available access to Co-Counselling partners. We use a C - C format, frequently.

- - - - - And the MEAN FOGHAMHAR CAMPOUT

I owe a debt of gratitude to the Study Group and Shadowpath Grove for pulling together the physical work of preparation for this event. We blazed a trail, created a camp-site, cleared trees and bushes, installed a latrine, erected a raincover shelter, and generally made sure that the basics for a good outdoor event were in place.

This particular Mean Foghamhar was -- well -- interesting. I'm pretty stationery, but I'd asked Isaac to attend. Anybody who moves from New York to Kansas City to Berkeley, traipses all over the country to Pagan festivals, produces a newsletter, and celebrates a birthday all within six months, ought to be committed. I take that back -- he DESERVES to be committed and take a nice long rest. But anyway, Isaac showed up, as did ArchBard 1986 Karl Steinmayer, ViceArchDruid Silverleaf, friends and Druids from the New York City area; people from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Upper New York State.

I was prepared for the Grove Dedication - we'd decided that when those of us who were entering First Circle made that committment, we'd "formally" declare ourselves a Grove. We'd cast Runes to find a name for ourselves when hard thinking didn't produce anything we all liked. Then I learned about delegation, 'cuz the Fall Equinox Ritual got delegated to me and Karl, prepared or not.

Friday night was general arrival-and-get-acquainted time: a shared supper, people putting up tents, finding out where things were, talking and storytelling around the fire (or the Coleman lantern). Saturday morning began with an unofficial Java-crucian Ceremony for us followers of the Goddess Caffeina and Her Consort, Cremora. Druidism 101 had attracted several people who wanted to hear more about Druidism than they had read from DP or heard from some of us, so our group expanded to include visitors. After that, a group of people conducted a sweatlodge as part of their dedication to First Circle - a pre-vigil purification. Some of us went for a hike, and learned quite a bit about local fungi. We found Indian Pipes in yellow and red, and the New England forest was in its early fall gold and green. The afternoon was sunny and warm. We enjoyed the beautiful fall afternoon, the leg-stretching, and "sightseeing" of hundred-year-old stone bridges and streams with bright yellow leaves drifting down the current.

Most of us assembled after the walk or the sweatlodge to talk about Fall and the Equinox, and to stimulate thinking about the ritual to be held Sunday at dawn. We talked about Lugh and Morrigan, the seasonal deities; about the transition from summer-freedom-movement-sunshine to winter-introspection-resting-cold; about bulbs and transplanting and committments that take a while to be fulfilled. We shared food and drink and thoughts, and gravitated toward the fire to bear each other up through the night to the next dawn.

With nightfall came rain - subtly at first, and then out-and-out definite drops. We'd held guided meditations and told some pretty tall tales around the fire, and sang, and shared memories and experiences from our individual summers and other histories. But with the coming of the rain, we took cover under the tarp or in tents. Karl and I plotted out the Equinox ritual, using the outline of a basic Druidic ritual but tailoring it to ourselves, the season, the grove dedication, and the people involved.

We'd thought that the rain would give us a break, but NO.....when we gathered under the tarp before dawn, it was still dripping. We asked each participant to go out into the woods, in the rain, and take some time to commune individually with their ancestors/predecessors, with the local spirits, and with Deities of their personal choice. With a gentle rain falling around our sheltering tarp, we called everyone in and began our ritual....with slight modifications from our original plan!

D1 and D2 began a chant to help those present focus, and to call the rest of the stragglers: "Siuclin a Wanannan -- Sit with us, Manannan
Siuclin a Wanannan -- Sit with us, Manannan" (repeated ad lib)

D1: "We are here to honor the Gods. At the Fall Equinox, we mark the gradual ending of the year and a new beginning, the planting of a grove".

D2: Karl led an original, poetic version of the Tree Meditation.

D2: (a call to Manannan, as a Gatekeeper and Keykeeper, to open the Gates)
Both:"We invoke Manannan, Opener of Every Gate
You shall reach us, you shall teach us and reveal our fate" (repeated many times, all joining in)

D1 and D2 each took up a chalice, one with whiskey and the other with water, and held them, charged them, and shared them with each other and the entire circle during the following:

D1: "From our Ancestors and those who have gone before us, we ask for wisdom and illumination". (Passing of the Chalices)
D1 and D2, chanting, with all joining in: "It's the blood of the Ancients
that runs through our veins
And the forms change
And the Circle of Life remains."

D1: "We call to the Spirits of Nature, and of this place. From you we ask for Vision, Protection, and Knowledge." (Passing of the Chalices)
D1 and D2, chanting and joined by all: " Fur and feather and scale and skin,
Different without but the same within
Great of body but one of soul
Through all creatures are the Gods made whole."

D1: "We call to the Gods and Goddesses of our Predecessors, to ask their blessings on all of us here, and on all of our endeavors." (Passing of the Chalices)
D1 and D2 chanting, and joined by all: "Mother, I feel you under my feet
Mother, I hear your heartbeat (repeat)
Father I see you when the eagle flies
Spirit gonna carry me higher and higher" (repeat)

D2: "Now is the time to come forward to offer the best of ourselves to the Gods."
(At this point, each individual read a poem, sang a song or a chant, [one was in American Sign Language as well as in English], played a piece on an instrument, or simply said what they needed to say. One Grove member offered an eloquent, silent Sword Salute to the quarters and the Deities.)

D2: "We have made our sacrifices to the Gods, and for a final time we send our energy that They may partake of our essence, as they partook of our sacrifices."
(Passing of the Chalices)

D1: "The Gods have given us their bounty and blessings. With these, we do dedicate ShadowPath Grove, and we of the Grove offer a toast to the Gods and to ShadowPath Grove." (Chalices passed to Grove members)

D1: "I thank each person who has attended this Rite. Your energy and presence has made it what it is -- it would have been a completely different creation without any of you."
"We thank the Gods and Goddesses for their presence, their blessings, and their bounty during this season. Lugh and Morrigan, we honor you and thank you at this Fall Equinox."
"You Spirits of this place, of the world around us, we thank you for the vision you have given us, and the protection you have provided us. We thank you for the beauty of the Fall."
"We thank the Ancestors and Predecessors of all of us, for their illumination and wisdom that will guide us on our way."

D2: Karl read his original, poetic reversal of the Tree Meditation.

D1: "Open your eyes slowly - make eye contact with those around you."

D1 and D2: "THE RITE IS ENDED"
Chanting together and joined by all: "Sit with wisdom
In this hallowed place
Sit not in sorrow, our roots shall e'er embrace
May Strength be your Brother
And Honor be your Friend
And Luck be your Lover until we meet again."

ShadowPath Grove and those who attended Mean Foghamhar Campout wish to thank the authors, known and unknown to us, who wrote the lovely songs and chants we used.

***A note on adaptation: With some of the chants/songs, etc., we changed wording. Although Ogmha is generally invoked as Gatekeeper, we felt that Manannan, a more "watery" Deity, was more appropriate. Also, since Manannan keeps the keys to the Gates, we called upon him, since those who possess keys can go anywhere.

Some of the chants, particularly the processional and recessional, were adapted because we started and ended sitting and not walking. Rain makes for great improvisation.

POEM FOR MEAN FOGHAMHAR

I bid good evening to summer
Soon, a chance to rest, to sleep and dream
To go within - to stop myself
After months of motion.

The day wanes, day by day.
Nights wax until I think they
Claim victory of Sunlight.
Time to prepare, to prepare -
To store, gather, and plan.

And in the darkening year
Let me not forget the touch
Of hand to hand, the Spark
And the brilliance of meetings.

Susan Kirsch
ShadowPath Grove

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Ymbe Godabēnum 1 (About the Gods' Priests) 15 May 1986
JOHN LAVIOLETTE 925 HARRISON AVENUE, LINCOLN, CA 95648

GREETINGS, DRUIDS AND ARCHDRUID! To start off my first zine, a short personal sketch: I have conciously been a Neopagan for 3½ years now, but my contact with other Pagans has been next to nothing: I've only celebrated the Gods with a handful of friends who discovered Paganism around the same time. My major interest is thus to learn to work with others, rather than concentrating on solo work.

My talents and studies, for those who are interested or want to make use of them, are: intermediate French; beginning Old English (westseaxna þēode) and Middle English; intermediate BASIC; moderate knowledge of Norse and some Greek mythology; beginning medieval history; moderate skill on tinwhistle and recorder. Right now, I'm trying to break into the fantasy short story market. I'm struggling through the first few lessons of Teach Yourself's Irish and Icelandic books and trying to pick up basic piano skills. I'm currently between a Humanities and an Anthropology major.

ABOUT DRUIDS' PROGRESS #1 through #3:

On the circle system: it's great so far, but isn't it a bit too hierarchic? Yes, we are trying to produce competent clergy, but we're also trying to bring Druidism into the present: we need a religion that doesn't put a rigid structure in place of personal growth. Also, doesn't the system expect more work from members than they will actually be able to give back in service to the outer circles? Third Circle isn't the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree -- it's the equivalent of thirteen degrees. A 5th Circle member would have to be an expert in all areas of human knowledge and activity -- something no one other than Leonardo da Vinci has even remotely approached. No wonder 6th Circle is undefined! Some suggestions for change:

(1) For "minimum duration in circle" read "minimum experience equivalent per track"; make minimum duration-in-grade two years for each circle inside the first;

(2) Define certain tracks as "core studies" -- track 1 (Survival and Physical Health,) track 2 (Therapy and Coun-

selling,) track 9 (Drama and Liturgy,) track 13 (Interdisciplinary Studies,) the Druidic Studies track (if added,) and two other tracks, one of which must govern the student's specialty; 3rd Circle entrants will have studied all 13 tracks; to enter 4th Circle. students improve their skills in Core Studies plus 4 tracks related to their specialty; 5th Circle entrants must master their Core Studies;

(3) Special advancement: either (a) probationary entry into inner circles for those who can pass tests in Core Studies plus half their remaning requirements, with full testing 1 year later; or, (b) petition for immediate testing to be given to those who show extraordinary advancement or ability.

On initiations: the initiation material is good -- but I can't do my 1st Circle initiation yet, since I don't have access to unspoiled (or even semi-spoiled) nature areas; I may be able to have it near the end of May, or, at the latest, December.

One theory useful for designing initiations or other rituals is Van Gennep's functional description of rites of passage (Van Gennep, Arnold: The Rites of Passage, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.) According to this theory, initiations and other rites of passage (including cyclic and magical rituals) pass through three stages: <u>seperation</u>, <u>transition</u> (or <u>limnality</u>,) and <u>incorporation</u>. In seperation, the celebrant(s) leave the normal world by donning of ritual costume (or ritual disrobing,) seperation from living area (possibly into unfamiliar surroundings,) brief change in lifestyle, sensory deprivation, etc. In Transition, events take place in an Otherworld contrary to the normal world: the celebrants might not speak (or speak in ritual language;) they might change roles or break rules of behavior; or they may participate in other unusual activities (chanting, frenzied dancing, etc.) Incorporation reverses the process of seperation. An initiation normally emphasizes seperation -- not everything abandoned is regained: the initiate lives in a new place or has a new lifestyle. An installation emphasizes incorporation of the main celebrant(s) into a new role in addition to any old ones. The cyclic ritual (holy day) emphasizes transition -- seperation of the worshipers from the real world, celebration of the Gods, and return to the real world. DP#2's ritual script has parts A through C as seperation, D through I as transition, and J as incorporation.

COMMENTS ON OTHER ZINES:

On rituals that sound like Methodist sermons (Cynndara Morgan's zine in DP#3): Well, yes, it isn't very exciting, is it? Perhaps as we grow our rituals will be written better, with striking contrasts, strong metaphors, and powerful images. I can't be critical, though; I can write competent poetry, but I continue to throw together boring prose rituals (even though I know better.)

On the pentatonic scale in Celtic music (Thomas Cross's zine in DP#3): I haven't found a copy of it yet, but look for Corwen, E. Cecil, "The significance of the Pentatonic Scale in Scottish Song," Antiquity, 14 (1940): 347-362.

On the poetry in DP#3: all of it is good, especially "Thorvaldsaga", which captures the ancient Norse spirit excellently. I hope to see more poetry in the Druids' Progress; for my part, I'm sending my own meager attempt -- a nice butundramatic poem I originally wrote for my mother in honor of Mothers' Day (I somehow started to write poetry for my mother and grandmother on mainstream holidays; now they demand it of me.)

Eal lof byþ tō þæm ōsum!

-- John Laviolette

SONG OF THE MOTHER

Within the woods a secret grove lies hidden from all eyes;
Within the grove stand twisting trees, their trunks of largest size;
Within their boughs of leafy green, with not a single sound
A hundred birds of ev'ry kind sit staring at the ground.
Without a sound They gather 'round
To stare at silent ground.

Within the ancient ring of trees, a ring of standing stones,
Their grey-green rock wears mossy green, the wind about them moans;
Between the stones, with murm'ring tones there flows a gentle stream,
Its liquid notes so softly weave an ancient, languid dream.
That gentle stream With sparkling gleam
Evokes a languid dream.

The stream flows by a grassy mound, and on the blades so green
The cool, enchanting water sprays its bright and silv'ry sheen;
And on that mound a mighty oak with brown embracing boughs
Seeks out the brightly shining sun, its fires to arouse.
The oak, with boughs That never drowse,
Its fires will arouse.

Beneath the tree with pale-gold leaves that glisten during day,
A woman sits, and on a lute her slender fingers play;
A sweet and gentle melody she plays upon the strings,
And as she plays, with vibrant notes she elegantly sings.
She plucks the strings; With voice that rings
She elegantly sings.

Her children come to hear her sing -- they cease their childish game
To hear her melody that puts the nightingale to shame;
The deer, the hawk, the white-tailed dove all join the silent throng:
From all around her children come to hear the Mother's song.
The merry throng, Both meek and strong,
Have come to hear Her song.

From dawn to dusk, from spring to fall, the Mother plays
Her tune
Beneath the shining, golden sun, beneath the silver moon;
So gather 'round, Her children all, and join the silent throng:
From far and near seek now the Grove to hear the Mother's
song.
The merry throng, Both meek and strong,
Shall hear the Mother's song.

Eal lof byþ tō þǣm ōsum!

15 May 1986
Lincoln, CA

Laura Petrochko
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Niverville, New York
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April 16, 1986

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I am writing a book about how one lives the mystical life while still living in the world. I would like to invite you to correspond with me to share your insights and to make suggestions for topics to be included. Also, I would be most grateful to receive referrals to other people whom you may know.

I define the mystical life as one which has as one of its main goals the achieving of union with the divine, with Reality interpenetrating form, or with the individual's deity (or deities), however they are perceived. This does not imply that it is the only goal, nor does it imply that you have already finally achieved that union. I am particularly interested in people who are living the mystical life in the mundane world, rather than in a cloistered environment or religious community. Over the years, I have heard many people talk about how difficult it is to maintain the inner vision while working at a steady job, raising children, coping with the pressures of commuting, and so forth. Yet, people do do it. I hope that in this book, it will be possible to talk about living with the search for god/dess, what the mystical experience is like, and strategies for keeping it alive and fresh.

There are a number of books which try to analyze the mystical experience and place it in various cultural and psychological contexts. That is not my purpose, nor do I plan to limit it to any particular religious belief. Instead, I hope that it will offer some inspiration to its readers and some new ideas on integrating the inner and outer life.

In asking people to talk about their mystical experiences, I am aware that I am asking to share the most intimate and sacred part of life--the relationship with the divine. I can assure you that any correspondence will be treated with the greatest respect. In addition, if you feel moved to write to me, but would like to have your comments kept confidential, I will honor your request.

If you have questions or wish clarification of anything in this letter, please do write to me. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Laura Petrochko

Laura Petrochko

The Flamingo Tradition

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The Flamingo Tradition (Flam-Trad) is a nature/fertility religion. The Revealed Bird was first flown to us at the Rites of Spring festival where plastic flamingoes (sacred icons) were placed in front of a tent as totems. Worship is therefore most appropriate out-of-doors.

The sacred icons were brought by the Patriarch Steve. It was discovered that anyone making love in their presence would encourage them to have a good time too, thus producing more flamingoes which soon infest the participants' lives. This constitutes initiation into the Flam-Trad, known as a Hatching. Campgrounds where the sacred couple is present are known as Hatcheries (the first Hatchery is called Club Flamingo), and covensteads are Nests.

The act of Hatching; that is, the fertility rite itself, is known as Pecking Off; should group sex occur, a Pecking Order must be chosen. We are an eclectic tradition and have hatchlings who are Gardnerian (Flam-Gards), Druidic (Flam-Drus), Shamans (Flam-Shams) and an O.T.O. hatchling (Flam-Crow). Not all of us belong to another specific tradition, they're our Flam-Wicks. We are known collectively as Flamingo Kids.

The Flam-Trad is patriarchal in nature. The ritual is directed by the HP, who wears black (color of the Sacred Beak), except during scrying rituals, when he wears yellow (color of the Sacred Eye). Two women assist him, one in black (HPS of Beaks) and one in pink (Maiden of Feathers). The HP also has a male assistant - the Caddy, wearing knickers or Bermuda shorts and a Hawaiian shirt. All other participants must wear one of the sacred colors, or are sky-clad. Everyone should also wear sunglasses and visors or straw hats.

Unlike other forms of Paganism, we do not cast Circles or use altars. We cast nests (pronounced "Mest" - the casting is called "Making a Mest") and use beach towels.

The ritual begins with a sacred reading:

> "We are gathered together in this nest (read Mest) to worship the Revealed Bird. On pink wings they have flown to us, with yellow eyes they have looked upon us, and with black beaks they have spoken the blessed words:

In the Beginning there was only the Sand and the Sun. With the coming of the Ocean, there was created the Beach. And the Sun rose from the Ocean and the waters heated, creating steamy Mists. From these Mists arose the Flamingoes."

All respond: "Awk Awk"

The HPS of Beaks (HPB) then begins making the nest by tossing palm fronds about the perimeter. If palm fronds are unavailable, accepted substitutes include the green plastic from Easter baskets. The HP follows, tracing the perimeter with a golf club of the appropriate degree (see below), brought to him by the Caddy, and speaking thus:

"I consecrate this nest to the State of Florida, that it be forever tropical; keeping out all temperate and subtemperate climates and making this a place of relaxation and sunbathing. Wherefore do I tee off in the unspoken Names of the Pink Ones. Awk Awk."

All respond: "Awk Awk"

The Maiden of Feathers (MOF) follows with the pink Feather Duster.

(Some Flam-Trads use croquet mallets rather than golf clubs. They prefer whacking off to teeing off, and find great significance in the vari-colored stripes of their mallets; they often compare balls. In a croquet-style ritual, the ritual tools would include the "Sticky Wicket". This is always standing or leaning against another object, never lain down on the beach towel, since there is no rest for the wicket.)

The HP and Caddy then go to the quarters, lighting the beakers of suntan oil and teeing off to the appropriate Watchtowers as follows:

EAST: St. Maritz
SOUTH: Miami (the Hialeah chant may be sung, see below)
WEST: Palm Springs
NORTH: The Sacred Canadian Breeding Grounds

It can be seen that the seat of power in the Flam-Trad is in the North. Hialeah, is the accepted pilgramage site for those unable to reach the Holy Land in the North.

Next, all members of the Nest are consecrated. They file behind the beach towel, alternating gender, and are dusted

all over by the MOF. The HP and HPB take turns consecrating Hatchlings of opposite gender by smearing them all over with cocoa butter. The MOF then plucks one feather from her Duster and sticks it to each annointed body. It is now time for Libations; the symbolic Pecking Off.

Libations use one of the Waters of Life: Strawberry Quik (preferred), Strawberry Daquiri, or pink chablis. The libation is served in beakers. Pate de foie gras may be eaten. Eggs are also a favorable offering. Preferrably, these are Deviled eggs, harkening back to the Roasting Times, when Flamingo Pagans were considered agents of the Evil One, the Big Buzzard.

We all know that Buzzardism has nothing to do with the Flam-Trad and is a Christian concept. It was popular during the Middle Ages and saw a revival in this century after the release of the movie "The Jungle Book".

An historical note: During the Roasting Times, suspected worshippers of the Pink Ones were thrown into a pool, if they proved "Flambouyant", they were immediately panned.

Nest Structure and Heirarchy: The first degree (Wood) is gained through Pecking Off as described above. This is a private ritual, although, since it usually occurs at campsites, other hatchlings can discreetly monitor the activity to make sure it is a fitting offering to the Pink Ones. Applause is appropriate when hatching is completed. Hatching can only occur in the presence of the original Pink Ones brought by the Patriarch Steve or other fertile icons. Their Names are a mystery. How they became fertile, and how they fertilize other icons (thus allowing the Trad to spread) is rated PG (see below). Those wishing to become Hatchlings who have not yet Pecked Off are considered Inflammable. Many in their Inflamcy choose to surround themselves with sacred replicas in preparation for their Hatchings.

The second nest (Iron) occurs at First Molting. {Note: In the Flam-Dru trad, all nests use Woods.} The appropriate passage of time is a year and a lay. The Inner Nest (Putter) is achieved at Second Molting and is referred to as the Putting Green (PG). Mysteries known only to the Inner Circle are rated PG.

Those in the PG may leave the nest to form their own hatchery, this is known as Flying Off, and a First Flight is a great honor.

The Council of Elders currently consists of First Hatchlings and members of Club Flamingo - the First Hatchery.

Theoretically, the Council should have 13 members, so that Elder mysteries are rated PG-13.

Every tradition has its "bad eggs". If we are forced to ask anyone to leave, this would be referred to as a Laying Off.

Beware of false Hatchlings! Many seek Hatchling status and will offer false Pecking Off. These Flim-Flam artists must not be trusted.

While the Flam-Trad is an Oral Tradition (one of the accepted forms of Pecking Off, by the way), a B.O.S. (Book of Scratchings) may be kept in one's own hand of writ. This may be done with a quill pen, but quills must never be used for a mundane purpose, as they are sacred to the Pink Ones. Of course, such items as our secret handshake and sacred dance steps could not be written down anyway. The enthusiastic Inflammable may learn the Flamenco, or learn to play the castanets as devotions.

Forms of Address: The High Priest is considered the Father; he is called "Popsicle". The HPB is therefore "Momsicle". The MOF is referred to as "Moffie". The Caddy can be called simply "Caddy" or, "Boy". In croquet nests, he is not the Caddy at all, but the Wicket-Man. He is called "Hot Stuff".

Splinter Groups: Beside Flam-Gards, Flam-Drus (whose Arch-Bard is Jimmy Buffet), Flam-Crows, etc., other sects have formed, centering on the worship of mortal Saints or heroes. These are:

*Transvetite Flam-Trads (Pink Flamingoes); who give homage to Divine. (Worship of Tab Hunter is also acceptable.)

*Flam-Trad East (Brooklynites); who give homage to Matt Dillon and consider themselves the only "true" Flamingo Kids.

*Flam-Trad South (Flam-Vice); who give homage to Don Johnson. Flam-Vice wear white jackets over sleeveless t-shirts in one of the sacred colors.

Lifestyle: Flamingo Kids consider their religion to be an integral part of their lives, not an occassional hobby. The Great Wing has touched some among us with inspiration as to right livelihood. The following are considered sacred to the Revealed Bird: golf, croquet (see Alice in Wonderland for further explanation), sunbathing and shopping. Shopping is best done using the material of the sacred icons - plastic, in rectangular form. When these rectangles become exhausted, they must be either shredded for Nesting material or placed into hibernation. We must signify to the Pink Ones that our shopping is worshipful be crying out the invokation "Charge It" when engaged in this activity.

Sexuality is vital to our religion, and the HP and HPB have revealed to us the forms of sacred birth control (SBC). This doesn't imply that other forms are forbidden. For women, Flamingo Pills are SBC. For men, condoms. The reason that condoms are sacred is rated PG-13, but they do have the additional advantage of preventing FTD's (Flamingo Transmitted Diseases). Should an FTD be contracted, flowers should be sent in sympathy.

Magic: Like many Pagan traditions, we use a system of color magic. Rituals are designed appropriately. Examples follow.

Black: Cooking, especially outdoors (charcoal). The Mysteries. High Magic. Verbal communication.

Yellow: Scrying and divination. Healing of jaundice, hepatitis and bladder problems. Warm weather (the sun).

Pink: Written communication ("While You Were Out" pads). Healing of skin diseases (sunburn and Calamine lotion) and gastrointestinal problems (Kaopectate and Pepto Bismol). Air travel. Housecleaning.

Caddy (green or brown): Foot travel and travel by golf-cart. Healing of back problems. Greenery, rodents and comedy (see the movie Caddyshack for further explanation). As the Wicket-Man, the sacred color is orange and all fire-related magic falls in this category.

Remember that the Flam-Trad is something you should feel - over-intellectualizing about the religion is birdbrained.

The following authors contributed writing, ideas, mirth and/or Pecking Off (not necessarily in that order):

In order of Hatching:

The Patriarch Steve, Popsicle, Flam-Gard*
Sharon, Momsicle, Flam-Gard*

*Note: The Patriarch and his Pecking Partner (PP) are not considered hatchlings, since they were never Inflammable, but are the Alpha and the Omega, always were hatched, are eternally hatched and are the source of all hatchings.

Deborah, Moffie, Flam-Gard, First Hatch
Isaac Bonewits, Flam-Dru, First Hatch

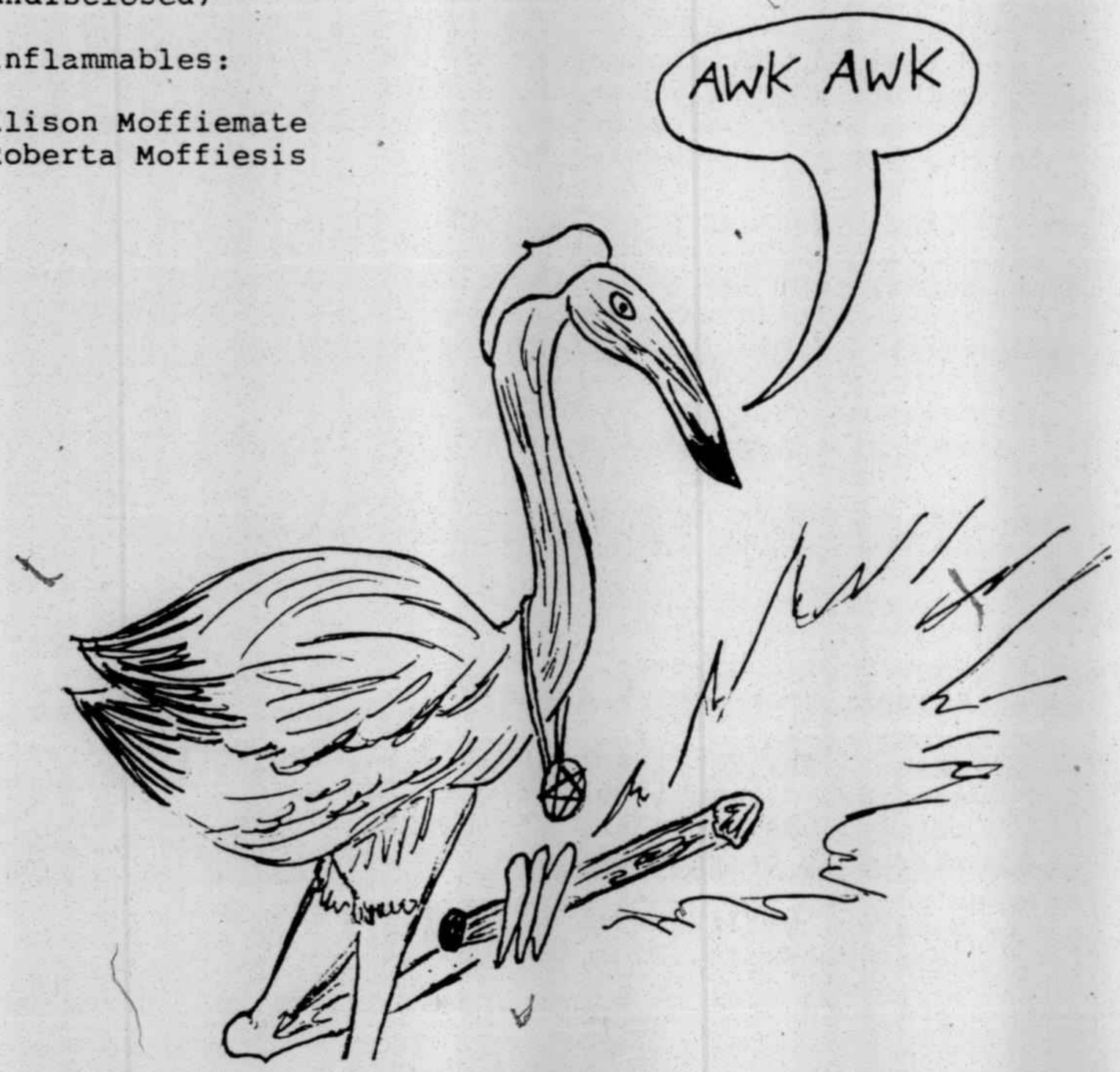
Second Hatch (all Second Hatchings occured at the Midsummer festival, more or less simultaneously albeit in separate tents):

Hal, God of Beer, Flam-Gard
Sue F., Flam-Wick
Shenain, Flam-Dru
Barbara, Flam-Wick
Retep, Flam-Sham
Kathy, Flam-Wick
Quantas, Flam-Gard
Koala Charlene, Flam-Gard
Rambo John, Caddy, Flam-Gard (PP previously listed)

Susan Kirsch, Flam-Dru, Third Hatch, (PP previously listed)
Mark, Flam-Wick, Fourth Hatch (PP undisclosed)
Dwerry, Flam-Crow, Fifth Hatch (PP previously listed)
Mommy Shannon, Flam-Gard extraordinaire, Fifth Hatch (PP undisclosed)

Inflammables:

Alison Moffiemate
Roberta Moffiesis



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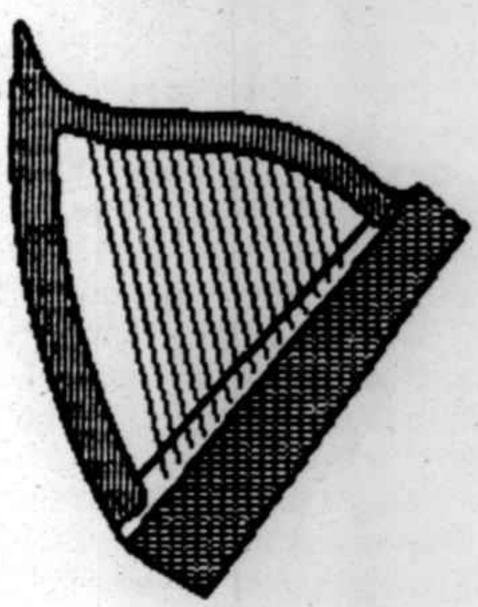


The Mad Bard

Or

Harpers

Bizarre

Our Personal Perspectives

Each of us has been drawn to Druidism by various and different factors. Largely our decisions have been based on our philosophic mind sets (concepts with which we have become morally and spiritually confortable as a result of learning and life experiences). The way Isaac perceives Druidism may be quite different from the way we perceive it, depending upon which religious concepts either of us places the greater emphasis. This does not imply that our perceptions are any truer than Isaac's (so long as both perspectives fit into a Druidic religious scheme) only that our philosophical interpretations may be different.

Knowing our interpretations of Druidism will not only help you get better acquainted with us, but will also help you to understand our "slant" and positions on certain issues.

We consider ourselves to be semi-traditional Druids. We tend to boil complex issues down to basic components; therefore we see the primary divergence between Judeo-Christian-Moslem (JCM) and Neo-Pagan philosophies as a point of law - that of ownership. JCM religions maintain that nature is a product of creation or craft, therefore the property of the "creator". Title of ownership was transferred to mankind (Gen 1:29) who then had free legal reign over nature. Neo-Pagans maintain that nature is a product of procreation, a being, not subject to ownership. Title was never transferred. Our use of nature is a loan! We are obliged to request permission for use and to repay our debts.

We believe nature is the embodiment of the Gods; natural law the will of the Gods. As such we not only revere nature but study and respect natural law. There are no true absurdities, only seeming absurdities resulting from our intellectual and technological limitations.

We ascribe to the principles of integrated thought. We must not only balance the sequential, regimented deductive powers of the left hemisphere with the spatial, artistic, holistic powers of the right hemisphere, we must attempt to integrate the input from both hemispheres to produce perspectives that reflect the 'whole mind' and therefore the whole of humankind.

We believe good and evil are not a matter of inheritance, but of intent. Objects, beings, and knowledge, in and of themselves, can be neither good nor evil; only through the manipulation of these things, based upon intent, can good or evil manifest. We maintain a position of neutrality on most issues and reserve judgement to deliberate actions taken for or against nature.

We feel that idealism has gotten out of hand. Although ideals plus directed action can produce desired effects, ideals are but products of the human mind. Destroy humanity for the sake of an ideal and the ideal dies also. Preserve life, and the ideal (though supressed) can be nutured to florish in future times. The awesome destructive powers we have developed make idealism a dangerous game. Remember, martyrs are popular only because others survived to enshrine them. We should not lose sight of our ideals, but we must learn to moderate our actions where ideals are concerned.

Finally, we refuse to either accept guilt or level condemnation to ours or others religions for past mistakes. If we were to judge all religions according to their histories, we'd all be athiests.

Obviously, not everyone will share our convictions. Abstract concepts are sometimes difficult to articulate, so try to absorb our views 'holistically' rather than jumping on us over word choice or definition. (In other words blast us; don't nit-pick!) Also, we are open to other perspectives which might broaden our philosophy -- so, let us know how the rest of you think.

- Sable & Tony

DEALING WITH SMALL RITUAL SPACES

Climatic conditions in Minnesota quite often preclude use of outdoor ritual space during the dark months. Additionally, even when weather is favorable it is difficult to secure outdoor space that assures privacy. Occasionally, groves will be fortunate enough that a member will own heavily wooded, secluded land. Unfortunately, this land is no doubt a considerable drive from the urban center that houses the majority of grove members. Due to these problems, the Minneapolis Grove has adopted a few practices that make indoor or confined space rituals more workable and aesthetic.

The Sigil

Bonfires do not work well indoors. Aside from setting off smoke alarms and choking participants, they present a clear danger to life and property.

Outdoor bonfires, unless in secluded areas, tend to attract the local authorities (who have no qualms about interrupting services to ask for your fire permit). Neighbors, afraid you might be roasting more than marshmallows over that fire, or who are simply concerned that the fire may get out of hand routinely call police. Quite often, police are required to investigate any complaints. The fact that you have a valid fire permit on file with them will not guarantee they will not be stopping by. [As has been our personal experience].

Our alternative to the bonfire is the sigil. To construct the sigil, form a [3ft] circle of willow twigs, tied together with brass wire or natural cord. On top of the willow wreath lay two [4-5ft] sticks of oak or other sacred wood parallel to each other and 1-1/2 to 2 feet apart. Join these to the willow wreath in the same manner as above. This is the basic frame.

For each holiday, weave sprigs of appropriate vegetation into the willow circle, securing with green yarn. (You may want to remove the sticks to do this, but with practice you can create a nice effect without doing this; re-attach sticks when finished.) Lay the sigil on the floor in the center of the ritual space. If desired, you may place symbolic fire within the willow circle between the two sticks. For example: at Yule our grove dresses the sigil with pine, holly, and mistletoe and places a Yule log (12 inch long birch log holding 3 candles to represent ancestors, nature spirits, and gods) on the center of the sigil. At other times times we have placed a small flaming cauldron in the center. Caution: Always ensure that any flame within the sigil center cannot come into contact with dried vegetation. Use fresh vegetation, wet it down or spray with a fire retardant, and keep a fire extinguisher handy whenever having sigil fires indoors.

If possible, the sigil should be burned each year at Samhain in an outdoor ritual bonfire. As part of this service, you may want to include a wish ceremony. Each member of the grove writes a wish for the coming year on a piece of paper and places this along with a sacrificial token (grain, a special stone, or an original poem or song said over the wish paper) inside a square of appropriately colored liner.. Each participant attaches his/her wish bag to the sigil before it is placed in the fire.

Processionals

Processing 2 by 2 through narrow hallways can present problems - not to mention that one is lucky to get through half the processional song between the kitchen and the basement. Additionally, it can be difficult for the D1 and D2 to get behind people in cramped spaces to form the walking sigil.

Our indoor alternative - process single file to the ritual space. D1 & D2, who are in the lead, take up positions in the center of the circle. Back to back, facing east and west, each holds his/her staff horizontally over his/her head so that the staves are parallel to each other and pointing north-south. D1 & D2 remain in this position until the participants have formed a circle and sing the processional

chant three times. Thus, the sigil is formed by a wreath of people with the staves forming the overlapping sigil sticks.

Triad Cauldrons

Small space and few numbers of participants necessitates free hands. Although the triad banners used at PSG during the summer solstice ritual created a beautiful effect, they tend to be unworkable in very small groups, in limited spaces, or indoors where the uprights cannot be anchored into the carpet. Indoor alternative - use 3 mini cauldrons or earthenware bowls. Place dirt into the earth cauldron, water or shells into the sea cauldron, and incense or feathers into the sky cauldron. Form a triangle within the circle with the cauldrons.

Other options: Where the center of the circle does not allow enough room for both the sigil and an altar table, consider forming a horseshoe shape (a la Stonehenge) with the altar at the open end of the horseshoe.

Need the feel of the outdoors? Open a window. Druid rituals are usually quiet enough not to arouse neighbors. If you really need to get outside, plan a more mundane activity for immediately after the ritual. Build a snowman, go for a hayride, try a nature hike or just a run through the woods.

Sable

Walk with Wisdom

Sable has written a song that we of The Grove in Minneapolis use as a recessional. It was first printed in the Wodenwood newsletter. Some of us here in Minneapolis use "Walk with Wisdom" as a good-bye, liken to "Blessed Be".

The Grove here in Minneapolis is doing fairly well. On the Winter Solstice we held a very nice, though small, ritual. Last Summer some of us worked to clear an outdoor ritual/meeting place right in the city. It is a nice space.

What else I do

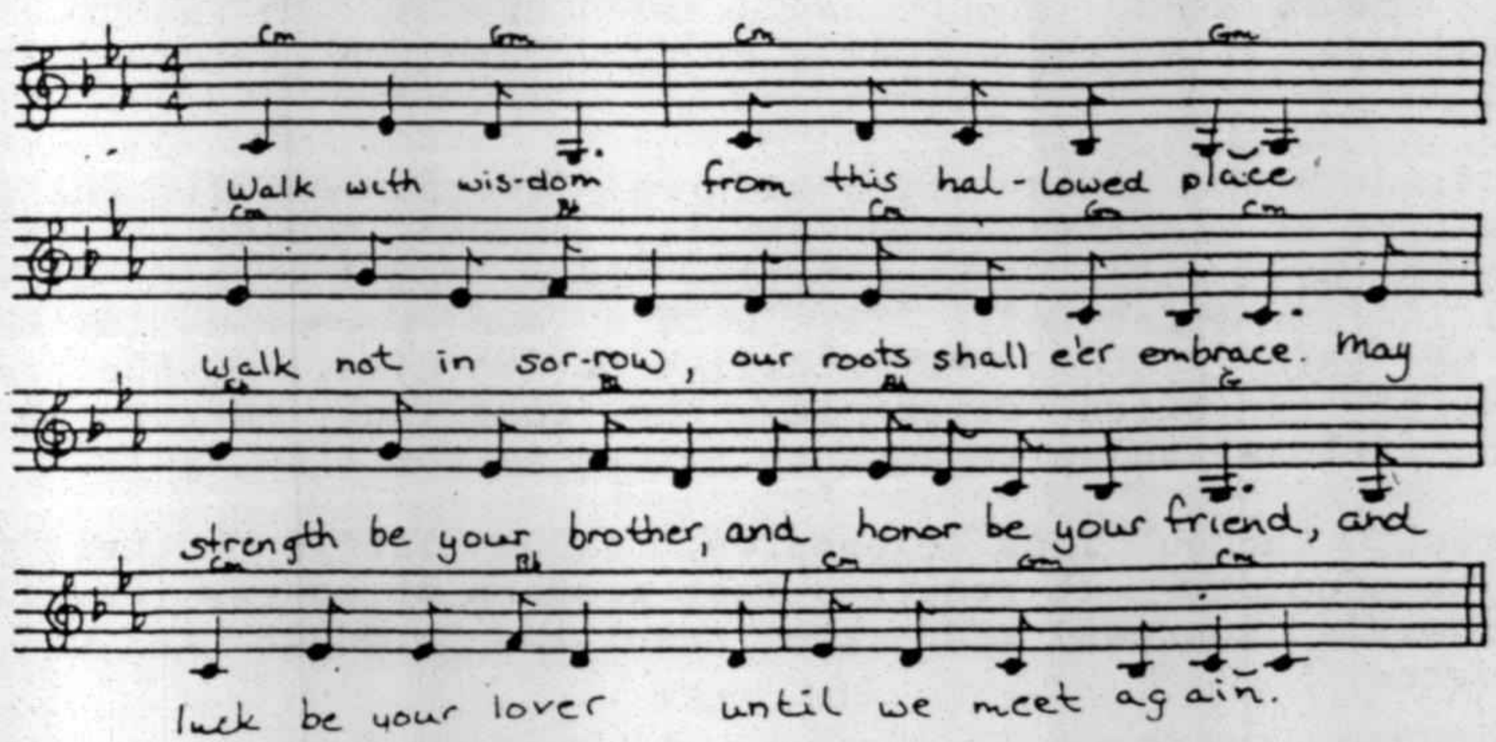
I am still attempting to learn the Harp. Yes, it is tough, Particularly for a person that never learned cords. My learning of Irish is on hold -- just don't have the energy. I wish I could find a tutor here in Minneapolis.

Sable and I publish Wodenwood, a Generic Neo-Pagan, Druidic leaning newsletter. (Available at $5.00 for 4 issues, P.O Box 33284, Minneapolis, MN 55433)

I work, in the mundane world, as a Computer Programmer/Analyst on a Wang. This 'zine was done on a Commodore 64, using "The Newsroom" program and printed on a C. Itoh Prowriter printer.

-Tony

Walk With Wisdom

Slowly, with purpose. By Sable

Natural Passage

P.O. BOX 33284 MINNEAPOLIS, MN. 55433

Who are we?

We are a group of people dedicated to reviving the custom of natural (ecological) burial.

What is "Natural Passage"?

"Natural passage" is a system whereby, after death, the body's nutrients are given back to the Earth for return to the life cycle.

Why Natural Passage?

Throughout our lives we take sustenance from nature. Our high technology and standards of creature comfort put considerable stress on natural resources and nonrenewable energy sources. To illustrate how grave is this drain on land and resources: the U.S., with 5% of the world's population, consumes 30% of the world's resources.

Natural passage is a means by which we can give back some of what we have taken, reclaim land for nature, and provide new life from death.

Why not traditional methods?

Modern burial convention requires that trees be killed, land be ill used, energy be wasted, and considerable expense be incurred by the deceased's family. This system continues our drain on nature after our deaths.

Local and state laws often require elaborate containment systems. These may consist of tightly sealed caskets, cement vaults or slabs to prevent soil or water contamination from communicable disease or embalming fluid (formaldehyde). The body's own bacteria is the only benefactor of this system. Eventually, it too dies. By the time these high-tech burial canisters decompose, the resulting matter is nearly inert. No nutritional value remains to return to the life cycle.

Cremation, though less expensive, fares little better from an ecological standpoint. It requires vast amounts of energy (usually taken from nonrenewable sources) and the resulting product is of little ecological value.

Our Proposal:

Imagine a nature sanctuary, filled with trees, flowers, and native wildlife -- living memorials to those interred beneath the soil.

Work toward these life cemeterys would begin with the purchase of unused farm or pasture land. Sack cloth or a simple pine box would serve as the repository for the deceased. Visitors would be encouraged to donate living plants (rather than cut flowers) to be transplanted at the burial site. A young tree could be planted in place of a headstone. New graves would be dug with low impact machinery so as to minimize damage to surrounding vegetation. When all the plots have been filled the 'life cemetery' would become a nature preserve, serving as an eternal monument to the renewal of life.

How will this be accomplished?

First, we need dedicated people to organize a core group and begin the necessary paperwork for establishing a legally recognized non-profit organization.

Next, we will need to increase public awareness and gain general public support for natural burials. This will be accomplished through education and advertising. Additionally, we hope to solicit support from other organizations sympathetic to our cause. Ecologists, naturalists, animal rights activists, and certain religious groups might be sources of support.

We must lobby to enact legislation and/or relax laws and ordinances so that natural burials will be permissible when the deceased has not died from communicable disease and the body has not been embalmed. Additionally, laws requiring the embalming of bodies transported over state lines must be relaxed.

Finally, we hope to purchase land for 'life cemeteries' to be maintained and preserved as nature sanctuaries.

How you can help.

Our immediate need is not for money but for people willing to devote time and energy toward legal research and networking. We do not know the exact costs that will be incurred for printings, mailings, and legal paperwork; but we expect they will be minimal. Only after we have legal recognition do we plan to launch a contributions campaign. Hopefully, most of these contributions can be put toward the legal battles ahead and toward a fund to purchase land (while we will gladly accept any monetary contributions toward defraying printing costs, please understand that, at the present, they will not be tax-deductable).

If you support the concept of natural passage please fill out and return the enclosed form. Understand that this form does not necessarily mean that <u>you</u> have chosen natural passage, only that you support the philosophy and would like to see Natural Passage as a legal and viable option for those who prefer it. If you so mark, your name will be matched with others from your geographic area so that state chapters may be formed. (Many of the legal obstacles occur at either the local or state level, so having an active chapter in each state is imperative.)

- -

_____ I Support the concept of natural passage. Please put me on your mailing list.

_____ I would like to become a working member of Natural Passage. Please send my name to others in my area (and their names to me).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City,St: _____

ZIP Code: _____

Telephone # (Optional) (_____) _____

Thank you for your support.
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Donations towards the continuation of this work are gratefully accepted.

'IGOLOCHKOY' RUSSIAN PUNCHNEEDLE EMBROIDERY

by Shevon
Earthsong Community, Maryland

At my first Pagan Spirit Gathering this year, I sported one of my more unusual textile creations. The pattern was the blouse and skirt from Folkwear's Mexican Huichol Wardrobe, embroidered with Celtic knotwork in the waistband, and various Native American and Wiccan symbols in the skirt and blouse, all worked with a Russian punchneedle technique. Central in the design was a bardic harp, used as a reminder that all the symbols are to be regarded as poetry rather than dogma or theology.

This truly international garment garnered a deal of attention; the Archdruid was positively drooling over it. The possible applications for Russian embroidery are almost endless -- costumes, liturgical vestments, banners, altar cloths, jewelry, purses, bags, scarves, pillows, shawls, dollhouse rugs, etc. So, by popular demand, I present this zine giving some history and how-to for Igolochkoy.

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What is Igolochkoy?

The word means "small needle", is pronounced "ee-go-LOTCH-kee", and refers to embroidery worked with a special needle to create a raised texture on fabric. Designs can range from the large and three-dimensional to the intricately and delicately detailed. Unlike other embroidery techniques, this one allows for graceful curved designs. Also, since the thread is worked only from one side of the fabric, the technique can go twice as fast as more convential ones.

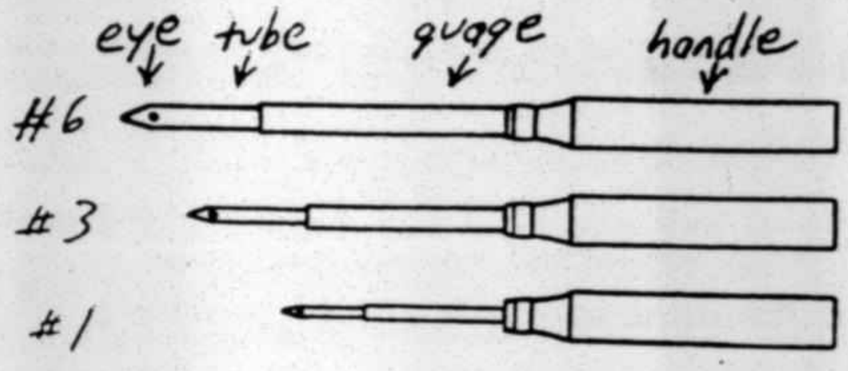
History

The most versatile, intricate, and refined applications of punchneedle embroidery come from the Russian Old Believers ("Starovery" in Russian), so-called because they were excommunicated when they refused to accept changes made in the 17th century in the liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The resulting persecution forced many of them to flee to various parts of the world including Siberia, China, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Australia, and the United States. A community numbering nearly 5,000 today resides in Oregon; approximately one million still remain in the Soviet Union. Wherever they went, they were able to isolate themselves so completely that they have preserved authentic traditions, religion, and customs of the Russian peasantry as they were practiced hundreds of years ago.

Other cultures in Eastern Europe and Asia also use punchneedle embroidery but mainly as a decorative art; the Old Believers make it part of their religion, working it into their icon panels, as well as their brilliantly colored clothing (shocking pinks and yellows are common). Designs usually represent flowers and birds.

The Needles

The needles come in three sizes and, shown actual size, look like this:



The smallest, #1, is the authentic version used by the Old Believers; the larger sizes are more recent adaptations. The best kinds are made from stainless steel and brass, not plastic. They are expensive items ($8.50 per needle) but are guaranteed for five years and will last virtually a lifetime. The needle itself is a hollow tube with an eye at one end; thread passes through both tube and eye. The guage around the tube is plastic and can be cut shorter to create a larger loop and deeper pile. The following chart describes the threads and fabrics used for each size needle.

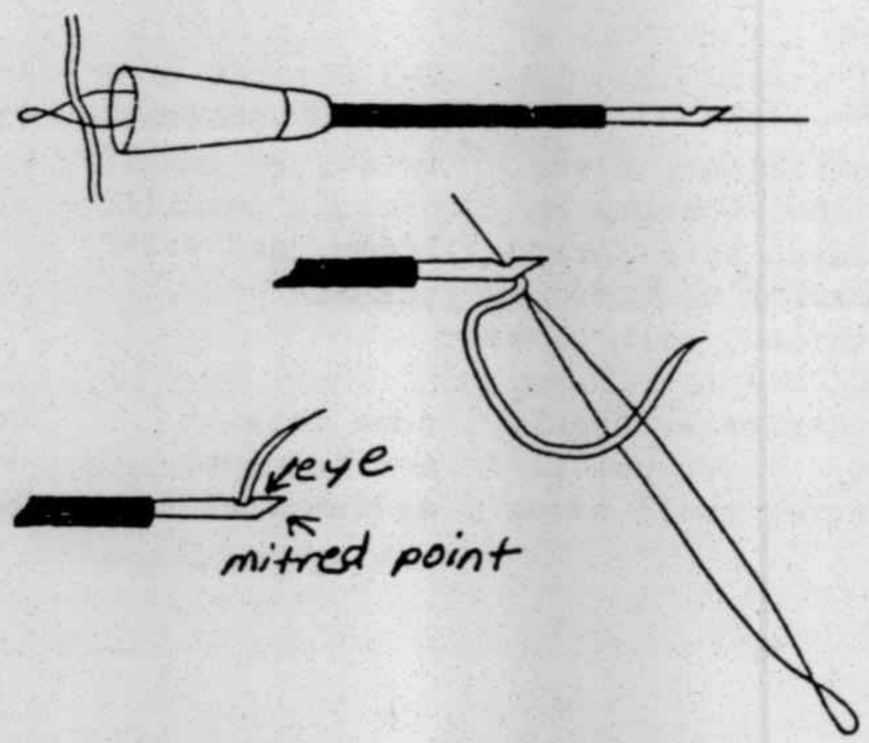
NEEDLE SIZE	#1	#3	#6
TYPE FABRIC USED	lightweight, tightly woven	light to medium weight, tight to medium weave	heavy weight, medium to loose weave
POSSIBLE THREADS	1 strand of 6-strand embroidery floss (DMC, Coates, or Susan Bates brands) sewing machine thread, silk thread	2-3 strands of floss, buttonhole twist, #8 pearl cotton, metallic, linen, and silk threads	4-6 strands floss, #5 pearl cotton, linen, silk, and some wool threads
RESULTING DESIGN	intricate, highly detailed; use to cover small areas	some detail; use to cover medium-size areas	coarse, little detail; use to large areas

Other Tools: Threader, Hoop, Scissors

Old Believers threaded the needle with their mouths, but using a thin wire threader (usually packaged with the needle) is much easier. You will also need an embroidery hoop and scissors. The hoop should be 5" or 6" inches in diameter. Larger hoops may not hold the fabric tight enough and are hard to handle; smaller ones require more changes of position. I recommend the Susan Bates hoop with the Grip-Lip; follow directions carefully so the fabric will be held drum-tight and you can "ping" it with your fingers. For the scissors, sharp flat 4" embroidery scissors are best. They are used to cut loose threads on the back side flush with the fabric (there is no need to knot the threads) and to trim loose ends on the front side.

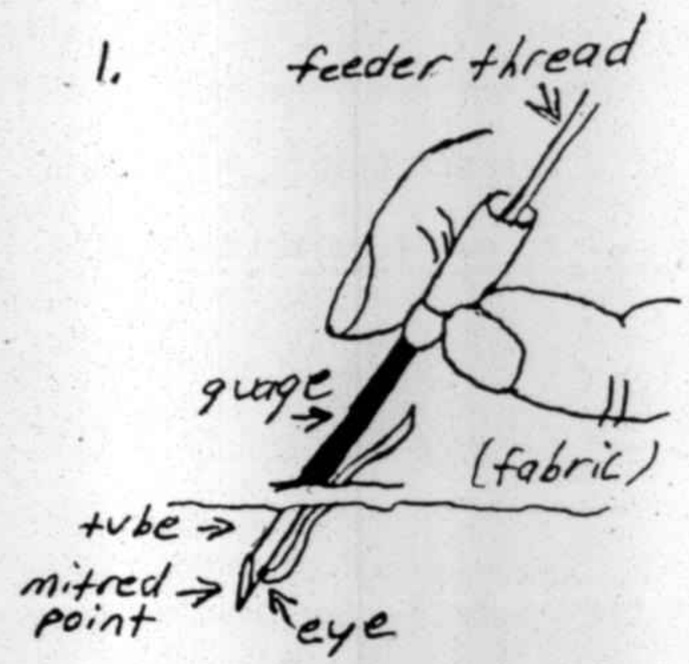
Threading the Needle

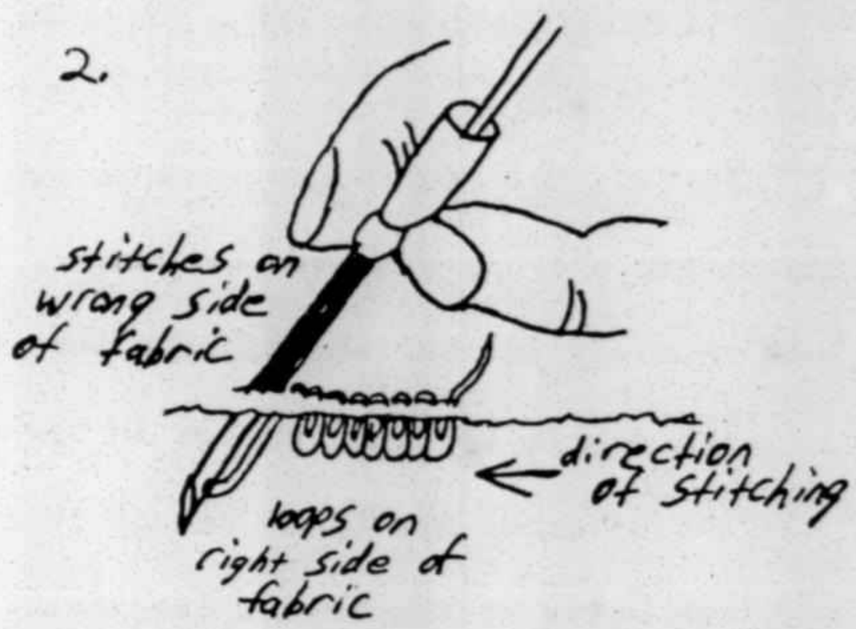
Cut thread into lengths up to 3' long. Insert thread into loop at end of threader. Insert threader through tube of needle, then guide threader through the eye (be careful not to loop thread around the point). Leave a short length of thread coming out of the eye and remove threader. You are now ready to stitch.



How To Stitch

Your design will be drawn onto the wrong side of the fabric. After you have stretched the fabric into the hoop, hold the wrong side of the fabric towards you. Hold the needle by the handle, allowing the feeder thread to flow freely over your hand. Punch the needle through the fabric until it stops (when the guage contacts the fabric). A popping sound made by the first stitch is normal. Raise the needle out of, but not off, the fabric. Move the needle forward across the fabric, one needle width, punch it through again, etc. That's it -- you need only learn one basic stitch. The mitred end of the point should "look" in the direction you are stitching; the eye should "look" back at the stitches just made. Once you get the feel of it, you will be surprised at how fast your work will go.





You may be able to see that the concept of working from the wrong side to form loops on the right side is somewhat similar to the technique of rug-hooking.

Work the outline of the design first, then fill in the spaces. Leave a little space between rows to avoid fabric-puckering. Because the threads "pouf" out a little when formed into loops, you should not be able to see fabric between the rows on the right side. When you change the position of

the hoop to work on other areas of the design, don't be afraid to place the hoop over already-punched areas; washing the finished piece will make the threads "pouf" out again.

Finishing

To stop stitching, hold onto the last stitch and gently slide the needle away, or stitch until there is no more thread in the needle. Cut all threads on the back side as close to the surface as possible, and trim all loose ends on the front side. Unlike other sewing techniques, leaving short ends of thread does not strengthen punchneedlework; rather, loose ends have a tendency to catch and pull out. Washing the finished piece shrinks the fabric, strengthening its hold on the stitches. You may also apply a thin coating of fabric glue to the stitches on the wrong side to further ensure that they won't pull out.

Troubleshooting

Because the needle guage stops the stitch at a pre-set point, an even, consistent pile is achieved. However, if the loops do not form correctly or hold securely in the fabric, make sure that:

the fabric is tight enough in the hoop

the stitches are close enough together

the weave of the fabric is correct for the needle size

the needle is correctly threaded

the thread is the correct thickness for the needle size

there are no kinks or knots in the thread

the opening in the needle handle is not obstructed by your hand

thread flows freely over your hand into the needle

Special Effects

You can achieve a richly-colored velvet texture by "shearing" (cut long loops like a lawnmower), "clipping" (cut open each individual loop, if pile is not long enough to shear), or "sculpting" (shape masses of long loops by

snipping around the sides toward the center until a rounded shape is formed, especially effective on designs done with #6 needle -- try silver dandelions!).

Transfer Patterns

There are a number of ways to draw designs to be needlepunched onto your fabric. One is to use iron-on transfers made with blue ink. A number of pattern books are commercially available from Dover and Craftways books (follow directions given in the books), or you can create your own designs using a special heat-transfer pencil available from Birdhouse Enterprises (see Sources listed at end of article). Because punchneedle work completely covers design lines, you need not worry about lines showing through your fabric. Since iron-ons create dark blue lines, they are generally suitable for transfering onto lighter colored fabrics.

For darker fabrics, draw the design using a tailor's chalk pencil, or trace over your design with a dressmaker's carbon, colored side down, placed between your draft drawing and the fabric (press hard!) Both items are available at sewing stores and fabric shops.

Resources for Punchneedle Supplies

Gail Bird
Birdhouse Enterprises
110 Jennings Avenue
Patchogue, NY 11772
Catalog: 50 cents

The "first lady" of Igolochkoy, she promotes it in various cities around the country, and stocks everything from needles, threaders, guages, hoops, and scissors to kits and transfer pattern books.

Marinda Brown
P.O. Box 1165
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Author of Ideas and Inspirations: A Punchneedle Techniques Primer ($8.95 plus $1.50 postage and handling); also carries needles.

Igolochkoy
1641-A San Pablo Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94702
Send SASE for info

Craftways
1465 4th Street, Dept GP-8
Berkeley, CA 94710
Send SASE for info

Bibliography

Bird, Gail. Russian Punchneedle Embroidery. New York: Dover, 1981.

Cook, Jean. Folkwear 128: Russian Settlers' Dress Lore and Authentic Detailing. Historical notes included with dress pattern. San Rafael, CA: Folkwear, 1982.

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BEARING UP UNDER THE CROSS

by Starhawk

A few years ago, one of the heated debates in our local nonviolent action group centered around the question of what physical objects could be brought to a blockade without potentially inciting violence. A Christian Affinity Group wanted to march carrying heavy wooden crosses, and others were fearful. A cross, after all, could be used as a weapon.

The debate was followed with some amusement by Pagans. We know that the cross has been used as weapon for hundreds of years--against us, against Jews, Africans, Native Americans and other Native Peoples. And it is still being used as a weapon today.

The last year--even the last few months, have seen an alarming rise of the Right-Wing Fundamentalists and a shifting of their focus to directly target Witches and Pagans. Their tactics range from the pseudo-respectable to the outrageous, from bills proposed in Congress to take away our tax exemptions, to smear campaigns and death threats.

They appear alternately ludicrous and terrifying--but we cannot afford to respond with either sneers or panic. As a community, Pagans need some sense of common strategy if we are to preserve--or more accurately, to gain--the religious freedom this country supposedly guarantees us. Here are some ideas we might keep in mind.

Fundamentalists and Christians are not identical groups: Christianity is today a term so broad as to be almost meaningless. The Churches themselves are undergoing serious schisms and splits--perhaps most obvious in the Catholic Church, in which the freedoms unleashed by Vatican II and the moral challenge posed by liberation theology have proved impossible for the hierarchy to retract. The Churches today are facing demands from within and without that they live up to Christ's finer teachings and work for justice, peace, and the survival of the planet. And many Christians are rising to that challenge with enormous courage and selfless dedication. In Nicaragua and all of Latin America, Christianity has become a revolutionary force. In this country, I, along with Lucumi Priestess Luisah Teish, have taught for several years in a program headed by a Dominican Priest named Matthew Fox. Fox is attempting to recover the tradition within Christianity that focuses on Creation rather than sin and redemption, and has withstood attacks by both other Catholics and the Church hierarchy for hiring Witches. Many Christian feminists are deeply sympathetic to our movement. And many, many people--whatever their beliefs or politics, dislike Fundamentalism because they dislike being told what to think and do.

These people are our potential allies--and we need allies. The Pagan movement and Women's Spirituality movement are growing very fast but we are still small and have nowhere near the numbers or financial resources of the Fundamentalists--nor do we have the sympathy of the President, the military, etc.

We need Allies: We can mobilize Christians as our allies first of all by not polarizing the issue as one of Pagans vs. Christians. Let's not even call them "Christians"--it's an insult to Jesus. Christians are not the enemy. Nor do we have to make Fundamentalists the "enemy" and demonize them. We simply need to join together with all people who are committed to the principle of freedom of religion.

Secondly, Christians--and others--need basic information on Witchcraft and Paganism. We all know the level of lies, propaganda and general bullshit we face. We also know that constantly having to put out the most basic information about oneself is burnout work. Other oppressed groups--women, blacks--have at times taken the stance "Don't expect us to educate you about our issues--educate yourselves if you want to be our allies". But most people in this country aren't aware that Witches actually exist, let alone see us as an oppressed group. We need patience--sometimes approaching the superhuman powers with which we are popularly attributed, as well as perseverance and each other's support.

As part of educating the public, we need to make people--especially Christians--aware that persecution of Pagans is a moral and political issue--just as is persecution of any other group. We are not a joke. The call to defend our freedom places a moral demand on them. If church officials refuse to let one of us speak because of the hate mail and harassment they will get from the Fundamentalists--they are failing to make a moral choice. Would they do the same for Jews, or Blacks?

We have other potential allies among those groups that are also targets of the Fundamentalists: lesbians and gays, Native Peoples, Jews, Unitarians, Hindus, Buddhists, and those who follow Afro-Caribbean and other Native and tribal religions, atheists and agnostics, feminists, humanistic psychologists, the New Age movement in general, and many, many other groups. Some groups are in a position to support us--others are themselves struggling for survival and need our support. If we expect others to be allies in our struggle for freedom, we must also be willing to support others. That means also educating ourselves about other groups, other cultures, other viewpoints on history--so as not to burden them with the same draining task we're stuck with of endlessly explaining who we are. (Oddly enough--while eternally explaining your own culture is exhausting, learning about other groups and cultures is personally enriching and often fascinating.)

We need to be comfortable about who we are: None of us grew up in a Pagan society. We've all internalized negative images of Witches. Many of us have been thought weird all our lives. (Some of us are weird.) Nevertheless, we can learn to be weird and proud. We have every right to be who we are, do what we do, and call ourselves whatever we want. We might be willing to explain, but we never need to apologize. We may have been forced to hide for centuries--and still be forced to do so today--but we have every right to celebrate our religion openly and publicly.

We need to know the opposition: Distasteful as it is, we've got to occasionally tune in to the Christian T.V. stations, read their literature, and analyze their beliefs and strategies.

We need to support each other: We need the personal support of our friends and loved ones, we need to appreciate each other for the stands we take, we need practical support at times--for example, when the Fundies turned out to picket Z. Budapest this summer in San Jose, Pagans came out to support her. We need to magically support and protect each other. And we need to support and strengthen our organizations.

Tell the truth and shame the devil: People in this country are spiritually hungry. The Fundies offer one menu, we set a different table. We do not need to proselytize--that has never been our way. But we can put forth clearly that our spirituality has a strong sense of values and ethics which are different. None of us like to believe we have beliefs--but there are values we hold in common: we do believe that the earth is sacred, that human beings are born with inherent value regardless of what they believe or which religion they follow or what color or sex they are, that sexuality is sacred, that pleasure is good, that we are responsible for our actions and for helping to heal and preserve the balance of life. I can't help but see that as a healthier diet than one of original sin, eternal damnation, guilt, and fear of Satan (the Fundies are the true devil-worshipers--think of the amount of energy they feed that thought-form).

The conflict we are facing is, in essence, one of value. We owe it to ourselves, to our country, to the earth, to be clear about ours--and not to let fear, ridicule or threats keep us from speaking our truth.

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It starts with an "A"

Karl Steinmayer
#47 Lakeside Manor Apts., 1 Fellows Road, Oakdale, CT 06370

Greetings!

At PSG 86, Isaac gave me the position of Archbard for ADF. After much thought about the post, and with much consultation with Isaac, I have decided to ask everyone to help me collect as much "pagan" music as is possible. We hope that with this material we will be able to produce a Bard's songbook and manual. This will take many years, and also may sources, which brings me to the main thrust of this letter.

I need music. I need songs. I need poetry. I need stories. I need chants. I need anything which will relate to the job of Bard. This material will then be categorised, rated, and then (hopefully) dissemenated to all aspiring Bards as a general background.

There are four basic divisions into which this material will fall.

1. Pure Instrumental
   This will be music only, no vocals.
   It may be written for any instrument.

2. Vocal and Instrumental
   This is for songs with a definate musical accompanyment. (Any instrument)

3. Vocal
   This section will be for A Cappella songs, chants, and poetry. Definately no accompanyment.

4. Vocal/Stories.
   This is a basic catch-all for stories, legends, myths, jokes, harmless but juicy gossip, etc.

A general list of types of songs and material would be something like: folksongs, filksongs, occult, pagan, general and specific diety/season/holiday/elemental, saterical, humorous, and bawdy. Oh yes, and druid songs, of course.

When sending in anything, please try to follow these guidelines.

1. All songs, stories, chants, etc. must be written or typed. please be legible.

2. All pure musical must be in musical notation. If you can't do it, have someone do it for you. All melodies for songs, chants, etc. should have musical notation. If no notation is available, either send a cassette tape of the melody, or be consigned to the poetry section.

3. If possible, give key, guitar chords, recommended tempo, and any notes for playing the music.

4. Cassette tapes are always welcome, and very useful. Send them whenever possible, but don't let them become the only information.

5. Give the name(s) of the composer or author, and check for copyright! If you can get permission to use the material, great. If not, we will have trouble using it.

You may send this material to myself at the following address:

Karl Steinmayer
c/o
The White Lotus Kung Fu Center
79 Central Ave.
Albany, N.Y. 12206

I will try to keep everyone informed as to how the project is coming through zines in the D.P. If people have questions or requests, please write, although I am a slow correspondent.

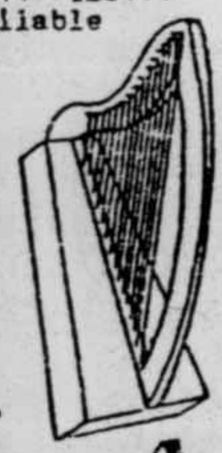
Hope to see everyone at PSG 87 for the Bardic competition, where a new Ardbard will be selected for 1987. Have fun until then, and keep playing.

Harpily yours,
Karl F. Steinmayer,
Archbard of ADF, 1986

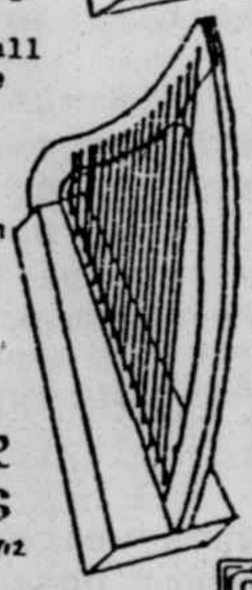
celtic harps

Lightweight, solidly built, full, bright sound, small but with enough range to play, comfortable to hold, made of OAK, looks like a 400 year-old antique in brand new condition and.....INEXPENSIVE??? YES!!! Introducing two new models, avaliable as of Febuary.

THE DRUID: $300.00 + Shipping. 20 Wire strings, played with finger nails. 24 inches tall. G below middle C to E2. The Wire-Harp is the traditional harp of the Druid and Celtic Bard. The sound blends beautifully with the human voice and makes this the ideal harp for a singer or story-teller.



THE MINSTRAL: $400.00 + Shipping. 26 Nylon strings, played with or without nails. 30 inches tall about 12 lbs. More range, more resonance, C below Middle to G2. A little easier to play a more "musical" tone makes this the harp for Musicians. String spacing only a fraction less than "concert". Sharping levers: $25 extra.



TEACH YOURSELF TO PLAY THE FOLK HARP, by Sylvia Woods; $8.00

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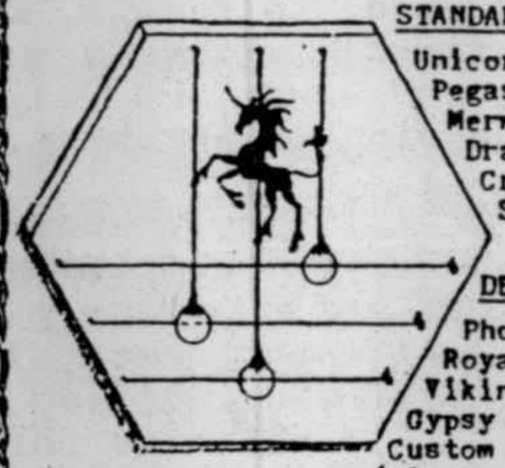

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3107 Arbor rd., Lakewood, ca. 90712
(213) 421-4525

The Tree Meditation

Words: Karl F. Steinmayer copyright 1986
Written for the summer solstice ADF ritual at PSG 86

When e'er we stand in a sacred place
Beneath the Sun's or Moon's bright face,
In a circle's rim or a shady grove,
Our spirits go to the Gods we love.

Let all our minds go clear and free,
And form the image of a tree,
A youthful sapling of the glade,
Whose budding branches cast no shade.

Around this tender, supple youth,
Are seen its sturdy forbears growth,
Those forest elders strong and wise,
Who nurture those of lesser size.

So close your eyes, and in your mind
Become one of the spirit kind.
Cast off your cares and disbelief,
And enter tree from root to leaf.

Relax and breathe and center well,
Then let the peace within you swell
Until it is a thing profound.
Now send it deep into the ground.

In every little tender root
Feel water flow, and then transmute;
The sap will flow through every vein,
Our links to Ancestors regain.

Now let the sap rise in a flood,
And race to every branch and bud;
Each branch extend into the air,
Each leaf unfold in green so fair.

The gentle zephers toss each bough,
And to you calming breaths endow,
While rays of golden summer light
Give warmth and lend their power's might.

Let water rise and fire descend,
And lively air the branches bend;
Thus firmly planted in the earth,
The elements give us rebirth.

Now let the leafy green entwine,
And form our sacred grove devine.
With branch and root our circle form,
And magic from mundane transform.

The Tree meditation con"t

We all are rooted just the same,
We feel the same supernal flame,
We drink the water free to all,
We hear the gentle airy call.

Now let us feel our spirits surge,
And into one great spirit merge
To let the Lord and Lady know
That we are ready here below.

And let us all link hand to hand,
Before all of the Gods we stand,
And in this hallowed space we start
To show all that is in our heart.

The Tree meditation part 2

Our sacred grove the Gods do love,
The Earth beneath, the Sky above,
But now this ritual must end,
Toward our home and hearthstone fend.

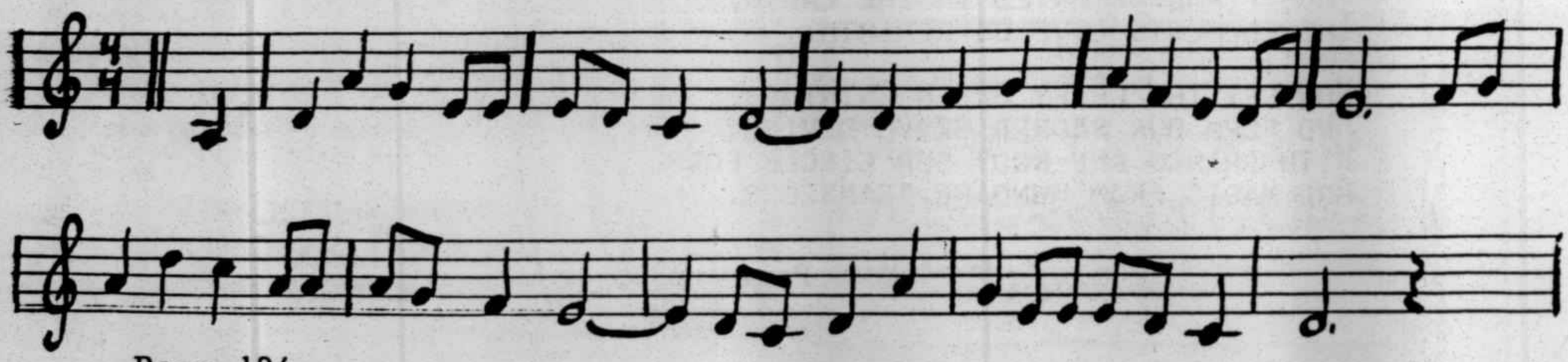
Again we clear our mind and heart;
The branches shrink and pull apart.
The roots untie and backward turn,
And spirit fire less brightly burn.

Let water sink, let fire go,
Let gentle zephers homeward flow,
And as if in a cleansing rain
Become a silgle tree again.

Then from this solitary tree
You soul breaks loose, a being free.
Your body calls, your spirit flies,
Returns, You slowly open eyes.

Tempo :108

Tree Meditation



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Note new address, as of Fall 1986, is the one printed on these inside covers:

P. O. Box 9398, Berkeley, CA, USA 94709-0398

THE TREE MEDITATION CON"T

WE ALL ARE ROOTED JUST THE SAME,
WE FEEL THE SAME SUPERNAL FLAME,
WE DRINK THE WATER FREE TO ALL,
WE HEAR THE GENTLE AIRY CALL.

NOW LET US FEEL OUR SPIRITS SURGE,
AND INTO ONE GREAT SPIRIT MERGE
TO LET THE LORD AND LADY KNOW
THAT WE ARE READY HERE BELOW.

AND LET US ALL LINK HAND TO HAND,
BEFORE ALL OF THE GODS WE STAND,
AND IN THIS HALLOWED SPACE WE START
TO SHOW ALL THAT IS IN OUR HEART.

THE TREE MEDITATION PART 2

OUR SACRED GROVE THE GODS DO LOVE,
THE EARTH BENEATH, THE SKY ABOVE,
BUT NOW THIS RITUAL MUST END,
TOWARD OUR HOME AND HEARTHSTONE FEND.

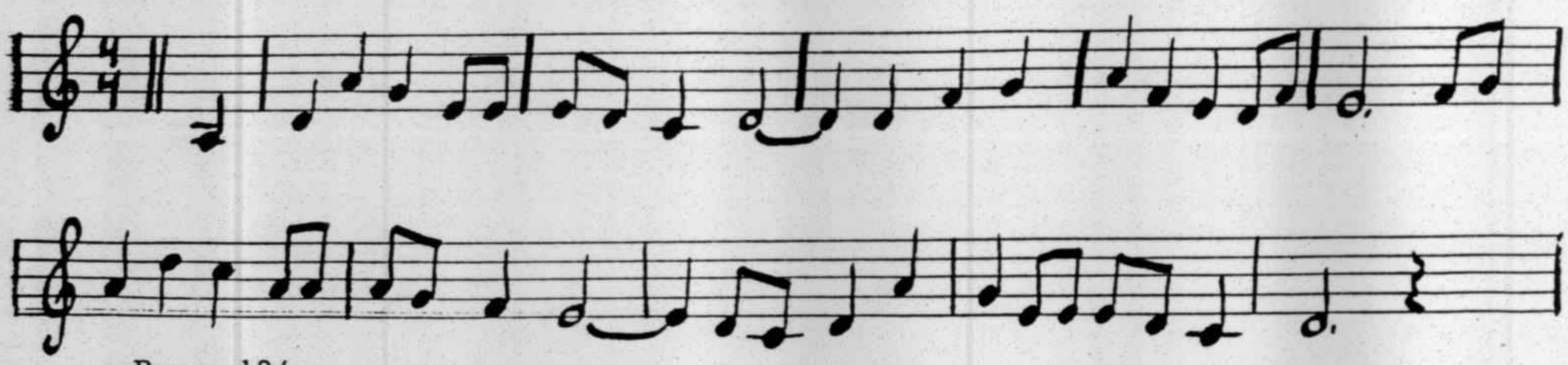
AGAIN WE CLEAR OUR MIND AND HEART;
THE BRANCHES SHRINK AND PULL APART.
THE ROOTS UNTIE AND BACKWARD TURN,
AND SPIRIT FIRE LESS BRIGHTLY BURN.

LET WATER SINK, LET FIRE GO,
LET GENTLE ZEPHERS HOMEWARD FLOW,
AND AS IF IN A CLEANSING RAIN
BECOME A SILGLE TREE AGAIN.

THEN FROM THIS SOLITARY TREE
YOU SOUL BREAKS LOOSE, A BEING FREE.
YOUR BODY CALLS, YOUR SPIRIT FLIES,
RETURNS, YOU SLOWLY OPEN EYES.

Tempo :108

Tree Meditation



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