

**The third edition of the
"Un-official Welcome Pamphlet"
for
Prospective Reformed Druids
and
Proto-Grove Planners**

UWP 3 Draft: Version 6.0 (8/1/2010)

Providing a taste-sampler of our thoughts,
writings, and rudimentary structuring.

A combination of three or four previously separate publications,
but do not infer that it is necessary for all Druids to start or join a Grove.

And no we're really not as well-organized as this pamphlet may make us appear.



Formatted for **double-sided** printing and binding.

From the Propaganda and Proselytizing
Public Relations Department of the
Habitat Grove, just one rather loquacious Grove of the RDNA
**Speaking only on its own behalf,
and not on behalf of the whole Reform.**

“Remember, it’s not how complicated you can make it, that’s all too easy,
but how simple you can keep it, and be content.” –Peter.

2010 Edition
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All essays and nearly all RDNA documents in the UWP 2 are un-official and represent purely the opinions
authors.



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The Editor of this work was primarily Mike Scharding of the Habitat Grove, mikerdna@hotmail.com who may be difficult to reach due to overseas deployment. Please do not expect a quick reply. I'll try to reply back within a week or two. I am grateful for the tips I picked up in ADF, Keltrian and OBOD membership and grove organizing guides for the 3rd UWP edition. The fourth edition should be out by 2017 or 2018.

Note: Most references to "Druids" in this book are meant to refer to "Reformed Druids", unless otherwise implied. We do get sloppy sometimes or it becomes rhetorically difficult to continually use "Reformed Druid" instead of the abbreviated "Druid". Members from strict reconstructive organizations that try to re-create older forms of Celtic spirituality, may object to groups like RDNA, ADF and Keltria using the term "Druid" for non-clergy membership. Our tradition is 45 years old and we do not intend to stop now, nor do we mean to limit other groups from employing more stringent terminology within their own groups.



Make notes. This is a work in progress. I'm quite interested in additional input or suggestions to improve this work.

Section One: Introductory Materials

Dear Prospective Druid

Welcome. I say it again. Welcome.

Due to the frequency of a large number of people asking to join the Reformed Druids over the years, and my overseas deployments, I have consolidated a few essays to ease the burden of correspondence on my ever more limited time.

You should know that it is quite unofficial, and you do not need to read it. Really, you can chuck it and wing it on your own, and you would probably be fine.

Somehow, you finally ran across the RDNA and are still interested in them. I see the RDNA as a simple rag-tag band of philosophers, rebels, dreamers and lovers of wisdom, all seeking Awareness through the study of the Earth-Mother, which is Nature. It's not the best fit for all folk, probably, but we kind of like it.

We began in 1963 at Carleton College in Minnesota, as a humorous protest against mandatory attendance of religious services, and have expanded since then with questioning and pursuing many other ideas. We have since spread new Groves in many parts of North America and also to Asia & Europe in recent years. There are 30 or so Groves and Proto-Groves with maybe 400 members active in those Groves, and a scattering of about 3600 solitaries, most of them a bit hermetical and hard to locate.

My name is Mike, I'm a young member of the Reform, joining in 1989 at Carleton. My hobby is collecting the history of the RDNA, but I am not the official gatekeeper, nor the leader of all Reformed Druids, not by any means. I'm just an archivist, and I've been an Arch Druid of a few local Groves, and trained quite a few people. I speak only for myself, and even then I often disagree with myself.

I hope this publication will give you a greater sense of some general trends that I personally think our group does and doesn't do, just to get you started. Discerning its path will get more complicated as you learn more. This is a very confusing and bizarre group for many newcomers, and it still confuses me too. After a bit of time, you can freely decide for yourself, based on your own observations. If you contact other members, and I recommend you seek their advice also, they may give you quite different opinions on our group.

The first such collection of orientation packages by the RDNA in 1966 was the "Blue Book" for incoming Arch-druids at Carleton to pass on materials as each class graduated. This kept getting misplaced over the years, and in 1974 the "Druid Chronicles (Evolved)" was released by Isaac for the NRDNA to be a more reliable

collection for all members. These two earlier collections and my own massive 1996 and 2005 "ARDA" collections were encyclopedia to be explored at leisure later in one's Druidism, rather than step-by-step guidebooks to begin with.

Therefore, I endeavored here (in UWP3) to keep this booklet focused on practical points, and under 120 pages, something that can be read in a week, rather than delving into some more mystical or philosophical tangents, trivia and debates that some members have contributed to our dialogues. I hope you will find it helpful for your first couple years as a new member or grove organizer.

Many people from many traditions participate in Reformed Druidism, not just Neo-Pagans. Finding a comfortable path is not easy or quick. Many members will change paths several times before settling in with a main tradition. We recognize that for many in the Reform, the RDNA has been like a temporary religious way-station, where people of many traditions, bound by a reverence for nature, desire for simplicity, and a wry sense of humor, congregate and interact to a varying degree and for varying amounts of time.

Some Reformed Druids, like myself, have found it a convenient permanent base from which to sally forth, confront and investigate the world, but it's not my only religious outlet. For some, the RDNA is sufficient, in and of itself, for all their needs. And, yes, for others, it is a mistaken choice, soon abandoned or forgotten as they proceed to greener pastures.

Our tradition appears to be relatively unfocused, because we have no group-wide agreement on what "religion", "gods" and other terms mean. It is an endless dialogue in progress. Our group facilitates the spread of questions, rather than the accumulation of answers. What do we do in the Reform, besides pondering everything? The answer is usually; "Whatever you need to do, in your own Grove, or by yourself."

You are more than welcome to be a member of the RDNA and another Druid group, or any known religion or philosophy, at the same time. There are indeed traditional ordination ceremonies (i.e. 1st, 2nd, 3rd Orders) for those who wish to undertake greater responsibilities, but there are many valued members who choose to be casual acquaintances; who contribute and exchange their thoughts and deeds, but do not attend services or undergo ordinations.

Please go where thou wilt, be it in our direction for awhile or elsewhere. Take your time in choosing which route you may wish to do, ride around the wheel of the seasons a few times until your decisions become clear and fruitful. Whatever happens, try to keep a sense of humor and wit, and enjoy this journey you are on.

Yours sincerely, Mike the Fool
Arch Druid of Habitat Grove
Day 1 of Samhradh, Year LXVII
(May 1, 2010 c.e.)



The following is an old, but useful, one-page summary.

What is Reformed Druidism?

Reformed Druids of North America

By David Frangquist in a Flier for Fall 1965 at Carleton

Origins

Reformed Druidism has its beginning at Carleton College in the spring of 1963 as a protest to the college's requirement that all students attend a certain number of religious services or meetings. One of the ways of fulfilling the requirement was by attending services of one's own religion. The Reformed Druids of North America proposed to test the degree of freedom permitted under this clause.

Druidism was ideal for this attack. It had a perfect combination of exotic ritual plus some relevance to the so-called Judeo-Christian tradition. If religious credit were granted, the religious requirement could be exposed as totally ineffective. If, on the other hand, credit were denied, the college could be charged with bigotry. The initial attitude of the college was, "If we ignore them, they'll go away." But the RDNA not only refused to go away, it grew, acquiring an advisor, and becoming a registered college organization.

In June, 1964, the religious requirement was repealed. Even though the Druids rejoiced at this triumph, they recognized that their job was not over. For many members the movement had come to represent a valuable part of their spiritual lives. So there was the importance of continuing the RDNA as a protest against all coerced religion.

Principles

Druidism boasts its lack of institutionalized dogma. Each Druid is required only to adopt these Basic Tenets:

(1) One of the many ways in which the object of Man's search for religious truth can be found is through Nature: the Earth-Mother.

(2) Nature, being one of the primary concerns in Man's life and struggle, and being one of the objects of creation, is important to Man's spiritual quests.

(The phrase "objects of creation" does not necessarily imply a single Creator, but it does imply an important link between the spiritual and the material realms)

In Reformed Druidism, the material realm, Nature, is personified as the Earth-Mother. The abstract essence of the universe, in opposition to the material world, is referred to as Be'al, from a word which the ancient Celts applied to an abstract supreme being. The "object of Man's search" is called "awareness," and it is defined as "unity with Be'al".

Ritual

In accord with the Basic Tenets, all Reformed Druid worship must be directed toward Nature. For this reason, many customs and rituals of the Ancient Druids, who were essentially Nature-worshippers, are retained.

Druid worship must, in so far as possible, be held in the out-of-doors; an oak Grove, or a hill or other prominence, is ideal. According to ancient Druid custom, the officiating Druids, and others who so wish, ought to be clad in long white robes; the robe of the Arch Druid having a distinctive decoration or color. The waters-of-life are usually passed to all present as a symbol of the link man has with Nature. Incantation and other ancient Celtic ritual is also used; but in "Reformed" Druidism, human sacrifice is out.

In order to focus attention on Nature, various aspects of it retain the names of their corresponding Celtic gods and goddesses.

Dalon Ap Landu - the Grove

Grannos - healing springs

Braciaca - malt

Belenos - the sun

Sirona (goddess) - rivers

Taranis - thunder & lightning

Llyr - the sea

Danu (goddess) - fertility

Festivals

Druid festivals correspond to the important dates of the old Druid year. Celebration always begins at sundown the previous evening, and includes bonfires and revelry appropriate to the season.

Samhain - Nov. 1: "Halloween" begins the period of Geimredh.

Midwinter - the winter solstice; day of the "Yule log"

Oimeic - Feb. 1; begins the period of Earrach.

Beltane- May 1; "May Day," begins period of Samradh.

Midsummer - the summer solstice

Lughnasadh (Brón Troghain) - Aug. 1; day for gatherings and feasts, begins the period of Foghamhar.

The phases of the moon also ought to be followed closely. A new venture should be begun only when the moon is waxing, an old one consummated only when it is waning. The night of the full moon is a time of rejoicing; while the night of the new moon is a solemn occasion, calling for vigils and meditation.

Organization

Each organization (known as a Grove) has three officers: an Arch Druid, who must be a third order priest or higher, to direct worship; a Preceptor, who must be at least a second order Druid, to handle business matters; and a Server, to assist the Arch Druid.

To become a first order Druid, a person must partake of the waters-of-life, and affirm his acceptance of the Basic Tenets (listed under Principles above).

To become a second order Druid, one must pledge himself to the service of Druidism, as well as have an understanding of basic Druidism.

To become a third order priest, one must dedicate himself to a life of Druidic inquiry, the beginning of which is an all-night, outdoor vigil.

Higher orders of the priesthood (up to the tenth) are reserved for outstanding insight and dedication over a period of time. They are similar to academic degrees in that they represent personal achievement, but carry no special authority. Each order of the priesthood is dedicated to one of the eight aspects of Nature mentioned under Ritual.

Purpose

On a superficial level, it might now seem that the purpose of Reformed Druidism is merely to delve into the strange customs and rituals of the ancient Celts, and to have some fun doing it, and also to serve as a new and different type of protest movement.

But, on deeper examination of the RDNA, it might be said to have two important purposes: (1) It offers a reasonable alternative for the person who cannot stomach organized religion, or who feels that it is somehow deficient; and it hopes that its exotic forms of worship will appeal to the rebel. (2) In communing with Nature, it seeks to promote a spirit of meditation and introspection, aimed ultimately at awareness of religious truth.

The Two Basic Tenets

By Mike the FOol

A lot of ink has been spilt over what Reformed Druidism is about, and what qualities are most admirable in a Reformed Druid, but there is a general agreement on the minimal standards of what makes a Reformed Druids: the belief in the Basic Tenets.

The founders of Reformed Druidism believed that all religions began from the observation of Nature, including Ancient Druidism, therefore our first teacher has always been Nature. Therefore, the Reform has only required two Basic Tenets of its members for the last 40 years.

In the original Carleton College Grove constitution in 1963, the basic tenets were simply indicated as:

1. North American Reformed Druids believe that one of the many ways in which the object of man's search for religious truth can be found is through Nature, the Earth-Mother.

2. North American Reformed Druids believe that Nature, being one of the primary concerns in man's life and struggle, and being one of the Objects of Creation, is important to man's spiritual quests.

But this apparently wasn't very inspiring. So, a year later, in the flowery prose of the "Druid Chronicles" publication in 1964, they are mostly vividly described and elaborated by Frangquist as:

1. The object of the search for religious truth, which is a universal and a never-ending search, may be found through the Earth Mother, which is Nature; but this is one way, yea, one way among many.

2. And great is the importance, which is of a spiritual importance, of Nature, which is the Earth Mother; for it is one of the objects of Creation, and with it we do live, yea, even as we do struggle through life are we come face to face with it.

However, most Druids can't even remember this, much less recite them clearly, so we nowadays sometimes use a shorthand:

1. Nature is good.
2. Likewise, Nature is good.

Myself, personally, I like summarize it as 'Nature is Nature'. Which is less debatable for me, but I most like the version in the Chronicles as the most expressive.

[Note: The OMS side-order sub-group of the RDNA & RDG will sometimes postulate a third tenet: "'Thou art God.' It's not a message of cheer and hope. It's a defiance--and an unafraid unabashed assumption of personal responsibility." --Mike to Jubal, SIASL by Robert A. Heinlein. But that's only for OMS.]

So, I feel that belief in the two Basic Tenets means you are a generic Reformed Druid. Some folks believe that just the affirmation of the Basic Tenets also makes you a First Order Reformed Druid, but others also require the partaking of the Waters of Life at a Grove service. Becoming a Reformed Druid doesn't necessarily mean that other Reformed Druids have to like you or that you're particularly more amazing than before.

See Chapter 1 of Customs in the Druid Chronicles at the back of this booklet for a more confusing explanation.

For isolated Druids, who don't have access to a Grove, I've invented recently the optional Zero Order, a.k.a. the Order of the Acorn, for those who believe in the Basic Tenets, but lack access to Waters. You are welcome to use that or ignore that in this packet.

Top 14 FAQ on the RDNA

By Mike the Fool

1. **Do I need to drop my previous religion?**
No, please don't do so on our account.
2. **What does it cost?**
A little bit of time, effort and patience.
3. **Do they have the answer to every question, problem and need in my life?**
No. More likely we'll give you more questions, point out more problems and reveal unknown needs in your life.
4. **What do I have to believe?**
The Two Basic Tenets, see the next column.
5. **Is the RDNA a bunch of dangerous wackos?**
Dangerous? No. Wackos Perhaps. ☺
6. **Where is the nearest group?**
www.rdna.info/wheregrove.html Besides the USA, we also have groves in Japan, France and Canada. If none are close, make your own Proto-Grove or find another Druid organization for association.
7. **What resources does the RDNA offer?**
The Earth, our fellowship, and whatever is in "Quick Resources" article of this UWP.
8. **Will I be able to cast fireballs, cure cancer with a wink, level mountains, seduce all women, read minds, control the weather, etc?**
I haven't seen anyone do this yet. Good luck to you though.
9. **Does your group trace back directly to the Ancient Druids, have access to secret tomes, or the secrets of Atlantis?**
No, and I'd be quite doubtful of anyone else who claims that.
10. **Are you Satanic devil worshipers?**
We don't worship Satan or the monotheistic variants. If every other name for the Divine equals "devil" for you, then you've already decided the answer. I've not met any Reformed Druids who thinks evil or destructive or misanthropic concepts are worth emulating, worshiping or praising.
11. **Do I have to become a tree-hugging vegan?**
No.
12. **Do I have to be Irish or Welsh to join?**
No. You just need to be human. We're possibly the least Celtic-ly inclined "Druid" group.
13. **Why is the RDNA better than other religion or Druid organization?**
We don't say that we are. We are humbly what we are.
14. **How do I join?**
You already have. Keep reading.

Quick Facts

Founded: 1963 at Carleton College in MN
Est. Size: 4000+ members, 400 active, 120 past priests, 20-30 groves
3 Current Branches: RDNA, NRDNA & RDG
Known offshoots: ADF, Keltria, MOCC, OWO
Annual National Budget & Assets: None.
Official Scripture: None.
Headquarters & Nominal Leader: Arch-Druid of Carleton College
Status of Women: Equal at all levels.
Charitable Tax Free Status: RDNA & NRDNA=None currently, but RDG is applying for 501(3)(C) tax exemption.

You Might Be a Reformed Druid

Signs of Druidical Inclinations by Mike the Fool, 2010

- If you think the two Basic Tenets address a neglected part of your spiritual quest...
- If you think there is more going on behind tangible reality...
- If a sunrise gives you hope...
- If you don't feel alone in the woods or by the seaside...
- If you see a bird feeding its chicks, and think of your children's upbringing...
- If you've ever watched the shadow of a tree slowly rotate around the base or sat long enough to see the stars spin during a night...
- If you've ever thought twice about pruning a tree or cutting the grass...
- If you've ever thanked your meal for its sacrifice...
- If you've ever greeted a tree or a rock...
- If fall makes you think of death, winter makes you dream of stories, spring brings thoughts of renewed life and summer is a frisky time...
- If seeing an owl tearing apart a mouse, gives you a moment of reflection on your own mortality...
- If you get a warm chuckle at mankind's hubris and vanity in matters of religion...
- If you've been taught "right and wrong", but wish to follow an honorable path for reasons other than threats or bribes...
- If you know that while there are differences, there is also common ground in all faiths to work together...
- If you ever wondered where was the reverence for Nature in her own right...
- If you thought the creation part of Genesis was a bit skimpy...
- If you'd like to ask folks some hard questions and take away some frank answers...
- If you've wondered why people pray inside concrete boxes...
- If environmentalism means more than recycling beer cans...
- If you've ever felt the pulse of power in a song or poem...
- If you usually figure out the weather better than the news...
- If you devoured books of mythology, magic and monsters...
- If the idea of sitting around the fire all night with friends, food, folk music, a bottle of whiskey and fantastic stories sounds like "your kind of church"...
- If you got a sense of humor that's irrepresible...
- If you've wondered how the peoples of ancient times felt about life, society, the divine and the arts...
- If mandatory religious practice or belief disquiets you...
- If you like to figure things out by mixing advice, research, trial and error and happenstance...
- If you have the courage of opinion to stand by what experience has taught you...
- If you sometimes lose track of the boundaries between religion, philosophy and culture...
- If the thirst for knowledge and wisdom consumes you...
- If you find an exception to every rule and a connection to every random fact...
- If you're interested in the Celts, but not averse to going farther afield in your studies to patch together a framework...

...Then you might be a Reformed Druid.

Symbols of the Reform

By Mike the Fool, 2005

The most common symbol of the Reform is the "Druid Sigil" seen below on the left. Just a circle with two lines going through it. It was apparently created in 1963 by David Fisher, possibly from a dim memory of a similar Freemason symbol, or that may be just a coincidence. There is no official meaning to the symbol, and it has been adopted by several off-shoots of Reformed Druidism, such as ADF, Keltria, MOCC and White Oak.

In ancient days, Druids were reported to wear white robes (see Pliny), but in recent days, several racist organizations have paraded in white robes, so many Druids prefer to use other colored robes to avoid confusion. I prefer plaid. Some Druids do not wear robes or ceremonial clothing, due to the bother, or finding it silly.

Since many Reformed Druids are quite infatuated with Celtic culture, a number of symbols from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Brittany and elsewhere have been adopted and employed. It would be too difficult to list them all, but the tri-line of Awen or the three legged spinning triskele are sometimes employed. The triskele was originally a widely-used symbol of the sun in ancient times in Europe and India and beyond. The Three Rayed Awen tri-line symbolizes the three drops of wisdom from Ceridwen's cauldron that fell on the tongue of the bard Taliesin. Three is an important mythological number for Druids.



Druids are also quite the aficionados of oak trees, so the oak leaf and acorn are quite common in Druidic pictures or paraphernalia.

Sometimes a Druid will show off and write in the Ogham alphabetic script, looking like a line with many scratches on it. Celtic knot drawings are also quite common.

The Waters of Life are shared at Reformed Druidic services during the summer half of the year, and the Waters of Sleep in the winter half. So, chalices and whiskey and water appear quite a bit.

Various Orders have ribbons or badges for their members. For example, Third Order Druids wear red ribbons in summer and white ones in winter.



Ancient Druids waited in caves for the first light of the year to shine through the entrance. Sometimes they got a bit bored.

Druid: What's in a Name?

by Mike the Fool, 2005

You probably realize that without the word, "Druid", in the RDNA, you probably would never have found such a small quirky group like us by using Google. Why do you suppose we, and other modern groups, use the term "Druid", when we are not predominantly Celtic oriented? This is a crucial and recurring topic for you to consider in upcoming recruiting and public representation. What gives it that "buzz" factor?

The RDNA selected the term, "Druid", for a handful of reasons rather than "eclectic free-thinking outdoor celebrant". In the 1960s, they were attracted by its venerable age, outdoor connotations, rebellious reputation, academic prowess, and the amazing lack of theological baggage. These were actually the same reasons for the 16th century revivalists that you will read in the following article.

Most Reformed Druids are resistant to unevaluated continuation of all inherited traditions, but those they do endorse, they hold onto quite tenaciously. Sometimes a new revolutionary movement will tap into an ancient symbol or historical event to give it some immediate gravitas. If you don't like modern religious movements, why not look to a movement that existed before them? Many mainstream movements also re-examine their own roots to search for un-traveled alternatives that didn't come to fruition.

One advantage of going back further in time, is that there is less and less information about the symbol you are drawing upon, and consequently, more and more room for guess-work and imagination to fill in the gaps. Although they studied 20 years and were quite gifted, ancient Druids never wrote down anything, being a predominantly oral culture of pre-medieval Europe. Thus little was reliably known about the ancient Druids and most was third-hand information by hostile Romans or later unsympathetic Catholic monks. So the RDNA Founders felt they would not be challenged on their own innovations as much as if they had adopted ancient Roman or Greek formats. When they obviously differed from what was known, such as a prohibition on bloody sacrifice, the RDNA emphasized the word, "Reformed".

If they were simply picking an ethnicity close to their own roots, they probably would have picked Norse or German archetypes; or perhaps have chosen Lakota or Ojibwe local Native American practices. They picked an ostensibly Celtic window-dressing because the Celts were historically envisioned as the anti-thesis of both the pagan Roman Empire, its Roman Catholic successor AND the stuffy English empire of the later medieval era. Like most neighboring & conquered minorities, for 2500 years, the Celts were seen as rural, closer to Nature, traditional, barbaric (in either a Noble Savage or Cruel sense), lovers of arts, tribal, rebellious, heroic, disorganized and emotional; the opposite of the modern civilized urbanite. As the RDNA was opposing the organizational tendencies in religious matters, it seemed an attractive label for their purposes.

Finally, there was the outdoor element. Druids thought "outside the box" in this sense. The environmental movement was still in its infancy, but the boundless reaches of the sky and horizon was a symbol of fighting limiting definitions of religion. Alcohol was also not permitted in buildings, but was unenforced in the nearby "wilds" of the arboretum. Nature was seen as the neutral childhood teacher of all religion to the Founders, so they went back to the source, and the Druids seemed another appropriate fit. As people became more involved in earth-oriented spirituality, this grew in prominence with the RDNA.

Knowing better the general attraction to the term, Druid, and how it inspires you, will greatly help in your recruiting and expression of Druidism in the years to come.

Less is More

a.k.a. "The 15 Lousy Lessons of Merlin the Schlep"
Notes by Mike on general traits in Reformed Druidism
A personal opinion. -2010

Reformed Druidism is a gentle protest against organized religion. We're not really anarchists, just simplists. Perhaps, we are a bit un-ambitious on the world-domination scene?

Describing what the RDNA is and does takes only a few moments, which many find surprising. So surprising, that good Arch Druids seem to spend a great deal of their time repeatedly explaining what Reformed Druidism **is not** to their new members. In a Taoist or protean sense, what is not there can make something useful (like a doorway in a wall) or an un-carved block of wood. Many folks are rather surprised that the RDNA doesn't require or practice a lot of definitions, external distinguishing practices or personal life micro-managing that other religions do. The more one studies the religious activities of the world, the more one realizes the diversity of possibilities and the revolutionary stretchiness of the term "religion".

As you will remember, Reformed Druids are often members of other religions while practicing Reformed Druidism, so if such things are necessary to them, they are often already being provided by their other mainstream or fringe religions, so there is no need for inclusion of such a practice in their Reformed Druidism.

You may notice exceptions among each individual or grove to these rules of thumb. So after any paragraph you could add, "... unless you really think it is necessary in your grove, you are moderate about it, and it doesn't hurt anyone."

Many other types of Druid organizations (e.g. ADF) are more "developed" in our "weak" areas, possibly due to their Druidism being the members' primary religion, the need to portray themselves as a "serious" group, and necessities of being a legally recognized tax-exempt organization. However, as with many Neo-Pagan groups, those Druid groups still tend to be less so in a particular category than many "mainstream religions".

Not Celtic-Focused. The name Druid can be a bit deceiving. While a few trappings, the calendar and the outdoor nature celebration are derived from Celtic customs, in fact, any inspirational source is okay, and about 66% of members choose a Celtic focus. You need not be of Celtic ethnicity to join, and most are not. Racism is not welcome or approved.

Not a Religion. Ok, we ourselves are rather split on this one. Some say it's a religion and follow it as such. Some say it's a philosophy or outlook or practice that is complementary to nearly any other religious outlook. Some say some rather silly things. Others ignore the question as unimportant and not tending towards edification.

Not Neo-Pagan. Well, actually, about 40% of us are Neo-Pagans, especially the active ones, and we do resemble Neo-Paganism very closely (which came after our founding), but most of us don't define ourselves, or the entire Reform, as such. We generally do include Neo-Paganism among our many possible sources of inspiration. The NRDNA and RDG, however, are more firmly in the Neo-Pagan camp. As a rule, Druids are mischievously difficult to pin down. It's quite possible to have groves or individuals with atheist, Christian, Buddhist, Shinto, or Judaic orientations, among an infinitude of possibilities.

No Established Dogma We don't take anybody too seriously, especially ourselves. We really like Nature, think a lot, and sometimes share our thoughts in writing, but agreement is not expected or intended. We do have Two Basic Tenets and a handful of customs that are widespread; the calendar for example.

No Required Ritual Attendance is unnecessary to maintain a self-identity as a Reformed Druid, in principle, although a grove may require a certain number of meetings for grove membership. Members of some Groves occasionally meet on the 8 festivals and the moons, but we are split on whether ritual is more distracting to Druidism or if Druidism is more distracting to ritual... Regardless, we recognize that a lack of ritual can become a ritual, in and of itself! There are ways to get together other than liturgies, but liturgies do occur and are important to many.

No Strong Priesthood Sure we've got priests, but no established common seminary program (including this pamphlet), just a period of observation and loose mentoring, and a traditional pattern of ordination. Non-priests can lead services or activities of their own devising. The RDNA has generally hobbled its own priests, for their own good. Members can certainly approach the divine without the aid of priests too. While some due earned respect may accumulate for an industrious and experienced priest, there is no tradition of servitude or unquestioning following in the Reform.

No Membership Requirements We're not exclusive, such that any person of any background can join, if they respect the other members. There is no official excommunication or defrocking; Nature knows Her own. Groves and Branches have the right to determine who can join their local groups, although openness is common.

No Cross-Membership Restrictions You can simultaneously belong to other groups, so that even if other groups don't like you being part of Reformed Druidism, we have no disagreement with you belonging to other groups.

No National Organization We used to have one, but it wasn't useful, so it's mostly defunct, except in the sense that its continued existence prevents the establishment of a replacement. A lot of the action happens locally, although we may consult with other groves and members via online and person correspondence. There are no national conventions or meet-ups.

No Buildings When nature is so wonderful, why hide inside a building? Some folk may own property that they share, but few Groves have had a corporate ownership of facilities or funds. Most groves have a handful of sites, sometimes rotated by season or availability or purpose of meeting.

No Money or Fees It's sad, but we're always in the red, relying on generosity to pay for the sacramental whiskey and such. Most fees that I have seen are quite nominal and are for feast costs, mailings or site usage. Groves may require a fee, but none is normal.

No Regular Publications No official monthly journals and such, you're on your own. There is A Reformed Druid Anthology of past writings, but since there's no money in it, few publish much. Mike is currently publishing the free newsletter The Druid Inquirer eight times a year. RDG publishes The Druid's Egg. But that's it.

No Proselytization We're not secretive, but how do you effectively advertise a lack of something? People generally find us, stay for awhile, and move on when they're ready. That's cool. Groves rarely grow bigger than 10 members, growth is just not a high priority.

No Uniforms Occasionally somebody dresses up in medieval clothes, but casual clothes are cool. Homemade ritual gear is impressive, though. Dress appropriately for the weather, and local tastes.

No Bad Stuff Well, we've succeeded, so far, at least. Like the vast majority of Neo-Pagans; we don't do blood/animal/human sacrifice (although we occasionally offer a carrot or zucchini) because we are "Reformed" and we think that's yucky. Likewise, we don't do such un-cool things like brainwashing (who wants a clean mind?),

orgies (which is obviously a fast way to get STDs), take money/property, or abuse our members (who'd want to be in such a group?). We treat our members with respect, and they freely come and go. If you hear of such things going on, we would be concerned, and if it's illegal then such a person should be reported to the authorities. I have devoted a section of UWP to dealing with this area, hopefully preventatively.

Other Things Oddly Missing

Some religions pride themselves on setting up beliefs or requirements that separate or distinguish their members from other groups. What distinguishes us is our general disinclination to distinguish ourselves, if that makes any sense.

For example, there are no edicts on mandatory clothing, grooming guidelines, diet, racial preference, gender orientation, language use, marital preference, birth control, politics, preferred living location, a sense of historical wrong, a sense of distinctness or bitterness to other groups/religions.

As a group, we don't have defined beliefs on creation, eschatology (or scatology), before-life and afterlife details, sin, morals, ethics, magic, god, destiny, fate, free will, or metaphysics.

If you or your grove needs these things, numerous religions and philosophies will gladly rush upon you to provide polished answers to these areas, and your group could adopt, invent or encourage them, I suppose, or not. I'd recommend trying to do without for a while and see if you can get along without them.

However, the more mandatory things you add, the more likely you are developing a new distinct and intriguing religious system and moving away from Reformed Druidism. This is how ADF Druidism came about as SDNA progressively adopted more and more material, rules and bylaws over about 8 years. If you see this shift happening, it might be better to declare a schism and label yourself in a way that is less confusing. The birth of a new religion can be a messy, but beautiful, process.

It can be difficult, and one often forgets, but when running an RDNA grove, one has to explain to new members what general Reformed Druidic custom is, what is local grove tradition, what is personal preference, and what is accidental convenience of the moment. Go your way, but try to assist the fledgling Reformed Druid of a different bent in your midst who might better flourish without your particular accretions.

Sounds Like There Isn't Much to Define the RDNA

Yep. It does seem that way. Yet, we're still here, without all those things after 45 years. Guess some things aren't so necessary for everyone? How do you know a Reformed Druid then? I guess I know most of them when I see them, read their works, or if they say they are one.

What does Reformed Druidism provide? A label. Questions. Companionship with similar searchers. Shared experiences. Hopefully some wisdom and awareness.

If I haven't thoroughly confused, disheartened or scared you off yet, then you're probably going to want to become a Reformed Druid; or rather, you realize that you've been a Reformed Druid for a long time, and just didn't know it.

So let's get started with your resources for the trip.

Becoming a Druid Checklist

While not at all necessary, I recommend you do the following things during the first year or two, while getting started. **Take your time**, though, and grow into your proper role. Remember that the Ancient Druids took 19 years to finish training.

Tap INTO LOCAL NATURE

- Find 2 or 3 nearby sites of natural beauty near your home, place of work and/or schools, and visit regularly.
- Carry a piece of your grove-site with you, a rock, twig, etc.
- Use the Proto-Grove liturgies on the 8 major Druid festivals, until you join, or found, a full grove.
- Note and track the lunar, migrational, and local natural cycles.
- Learn to identify the name and properties of the common trees and most prominent plants at your grove sites.
- Note the names of the largest, most active conservation societies in your area.
- Set up a personal shrine or place for contemplation in your home and set up a suitable schedule.
- Make (or buy) a set of ceremonial clothes, or a set of rugged outdoor clothes, if you'd like.
- Learn some seasonal songs or music.
- Look for balance, equilibrium and moderation in life.
- Take better care of yourself and those you love.

LEARN A LITTLE

- Keep a journal/blog. Writing solidifies & magnifies ideas.
- Set out some reasonable goals for the first 5 years.
- Write a basic code of personal ethics, if not yet.
- Read through this UWP once. Maybe skim every 6 months.
- Read the Druid Inquirer newsletter. Skim some back issues.
- Visit RDNA, RDG, ADF, Keltria, & OBOD websites so that you know the possibilities and the field of modern Druidism.
- Read 2 or 3 academic books on ancient Druidism or Celts.
- Watch National Geographic or Discovery channel programming on Cable TV more often.
- Read a text book on the religions of the world.

MEET SOME FOLK

- Seek out and talk with smart and wise people in your social circles, not just Druids.
- Consider forming a Proto-Grove with some associates.
- Join RDNA talk and/or RDG talk conferences.
- Figure out who are the most active or prominent Reformed Druids, past and present. Learn from their best traits, and avoid their worst traits.
- Visit another functioning grove after a bit of correspondence.
- Get ordained to the first order (or higher). If you don't think this will happen easily, join the "Zero Order of the Acorn" in the meantime.

After the first year or two, it's just "Wash, Rinse and Repeat" expanding and deepening on what you've built. As you start to get a handle on things, try to help others, whether or not they notice.

You'll notice ups and downs as you deal with other important issues in your life, besides Druidism. Don't let it completely get dropped on all aspects, but be prepared to cut back if it interferes with your normal life.

Recommended Reading List

This is just a starter, the Resource List has more advanced ones to draw upon. Might take a year or two to finish. You might ask why so much reading on Celts and Indo-Europeans, if we're less oriented that way than other groups, on average? Partly, it's because anyone bearing the title "Druid" should know enough to field the inevitable historical and cultural questions by curious relatives and more orthodox-oriented new members. Just because you know a lot about ancient Celtic practices, doesn't mean you have to follow them; we are "Reformed" after all. Feel free to devote the bulk of your study to the ethnicity, culture, philosophy or religion that enthalls you and your grove; but save a good portion of time and energy for the study of the Celts.

As mentioned before, there is a maddeningly large amount of important data missing on Celtic religious habits, structure and lore. But there is also enough supplementary material, that you can "play the game" of trying to reconstruct the missing formal religious stuff by plugging in folk-custom survivals, parallels from other nearby pagan religious systems in Europe and India, a bit of guesswork and surreptitious invention (say that last part quietly!) Finally, even if you could reconstruct ancient Druidism pretty accurately, you'd have to update it for two millennium of social/historical changes to meet modern sensibilities and tastes.

I generally recommend people start with the more academic, highly verified texts, before indulging in more fanciful visions. There's surprisingly little known, so it won't take long to build a base. Once you know the factual base, you can quickly judge books (and groups) based on the types of assumptions and fantasies that pop up. Nothing wrong with "getting creative", but if you hide it, then it can be confusing to new members, who'll get toasted by hard-core Celtophiles later on during internet-debates.

Proto-Indo-European Religion Theories

It's becoming widely accepted that there are certain commonalities between the various pre-Christian cultures and religions in Europe. Therefore, if a practice is common in most other parts of Europe, but you don't know how the Celts did it, then you could conceivably copy that piece of the puzzle from the Slavs or Nordics. ADF was the first Druid group to embrace this.

[In Search of the Indo-Europeans](#) by J.P. Mallory

[Myths & Symbols in Pagan Europe](#) by H.R. Ellis Davidson

[The New Comparative Mythology](#) by C. Scott Littleton

Any book by Georges Dumézil

World Religions and Comparative Religion

You don't have to be an eclectic relativist to be a Reformed Druid, but it often happens. One of the best ways to "think outside of the box" is to look outside the box you were raised in. There are a lot of current and past religions that will floor you with their odd and weird ways, and charm you with their quirky fun ideas. If nothing else, it will give you ideas to construct with, and ammo to argue with tunnel-visioned evangelists.

[The Religions of Man](#) by Huston Smith

[Comparative Mythology](#) by Jaan Puhvel

Any book by Mircea Eliade.

Ancient Druids & Celtic Religion

This category is rapidly metastasizing out of control, especially in the more "inspirational" works. These are some of the most respected works in the field, agreed on by all big Druid groups.

[The Druids](#) by Stuart Piggott

[\(A Brief History of\) The Druids](#) by Peter Ellis

Pagan Celtic Britain by Anne Ross

The Celtic Heroic Age: Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe and Early Ireland and Wales edited by John Koch

The Druid Source Book by John Matthews

The Celts by Nora Chadwick

The Celtic Gauls: Gods, Rites and Sanctuaries – by Brunaux

Celtic Literature and Customs

While little may have survived about the direct teachings and training of Druids, the Celtic lands on the fringe of Europe kept up oral traditions, a unique legal system and folklore until the 19th century. Their stories fascinated their English and French conquerors who otherwise scorned and subjected these peoples. Some older historical collections of epic sagas may well capture pre-Christian epochs and provide useful fodder for research.

Carmina Gadelica – Alexander Carmichael

The Tain translated by Thomas Kinsella

Celtic Heritage by Alwyn & Brinley Rees

Celtic Myths and Legends by T.W. Rolleston

Ancient Irish Tales by Tom Cross

Celtic Myth and Legend by Charles Squire

Celtic Women by Peter Ellis

The Mabinogi and Other Welsh Tales - by Patrick Ford

Earth, Air, Fire and Water: Pre-Christian Elements in British Songs, Rhymes and Ballads – By Robin Skelton

Dictionary of Celtic Mythology (or Irish Mythology) by Peter Ellis

Modern Druidism and Neo-Paganism

Druids are one of the more clear subsets of modern Paganism, and they do things a bit differently that was known to be done by the ancient Druids. Some groups like UAOD, AOD, and OBOD derive from Fraternal societies of the 18th century. Groups like RDG, ADF, Keltria and MOCC derive their origin from the autochthonous self-invention of the RDNA. Other groups like Druidactios, DCSG, Celtic Wicca varieties and such are difficult to pin down, and may often claim unbroken lineage of doubtful veracity. It's a wide field, and since you'll bump into these many subsets of self-titled Druids, you should know the field. Not all Druids are Neo-Pagan (esp. RDNA & OBOD) but Neo-Pagans and Wiccans vastly outnumber us, and we get lumped in with them, willing or not. Like them or not, much can be learned from Neo-Pagans, and they are good folk to party with.

Drawing Down the Moon by Margot Adler

Bonewits' Essential Guide to Druidism by Isaac Bonewits

The Druid Renaissance by Phillip Carr-Gomm of OBOD

New Age and Neo-Pagan Religions in America by Sarah Pike

Being a Pagan (or People of the Earth) by Ellen Hopman

Complete Idiot's Guide to Celtic Wisdom by McColman

A Druid's Herbal for the Sacred Earth by Ellen Hopman

The Book of Druidry by R Nichols of OBOD

A Reformed Druid Anthology 2 by www.rdna.info/arda.html

Liturgical Structure & Dealing with Lay Folks

Running a grove has its ups and downs, just like a mainstream congregation. It's hard to find non-biblically based seminary materials for the aspiring Druid priest. Self-help, management, and public relations materials might assist. The more you chat with your "peers", the more useful tips you'll pick up.

Rites of Worship (or Neo-Pagan Rites) by Isaac Bonewits

Working with Difficult People by Muriel Solomon

The Solitary Druid by Robert Ellison

Simple Table of Contents of A Reformed Druid Anthology 2

The RDNA has a long, proud literary history. ARDA2 is the largest printed resource made by any Druid group. I'm not sure any of it is divinely inspired or transmitted, but some of it is intriguing. 42 years of advice (1963-2005) and ideas from past Reformed Druids are there, to use or ignore, as you see fit. Available free online at www.rdna.info/arda.html. ARDA 2 is divided in three separate volumes (900 densely-crammed pages each):

The Main Volume Parts 0-5, 7-10
The Green Books Part 6 (with 12 sub-sections)
Magazine Volume Parts 11-14

Naturally, you don't have to read any of this, or even agree with it, but it is interesting reading, nonetheless, on a long winter's night.

Part Zero: Preliminary Information & Study Guide - IV
Part One: Druid Chronicles: How the RDNA started- 1
Part Two: Books of the apocrypha: Essays on Druidism- 23
Part Three: Liturgy of the Druids - 213
Part Four: Traditions & Customs & Calendars- 491
Part Five: The Great Druish Books - 593

Writings of the Hassidic Druids

Part Six: Green Books (**separate volume**) - 609

Green Book 1 The Original -G1
Green Book 2 Europe & Africa -G21
Green Book 3 Asia & Monotheist -G89
Green Book 4 Ill-AD & Odd Essay -G89
Green Book 5 Chicken Soup for Druids -G197
Green Book 6 Eight Books of Songs/Poetry -G319
Green Book 7 Seasonal Selections -G431
Green Book 8 Order of OMS -G505
Green Book 9 Plants, Animals & Food -G531
Green Book 10 Research Resources -G585
Green Book 11 Druidic Board Games -G759

Part Seven: Druid Miscellaneous - 613

Part Eight: 40 Year General History of RDNA - 631

Part Nine: Texts of Latter Day Druids - 683

Part Ten: Oral Histories of Well Known Druids – 745

(Parts 11,12,13 &14 as a separate volume)

Part Eleven: Druid Magazines -
The Druid Chroniclers 1978-1979 -M1
The Pentalpha Journal 1979-1980 -M23
The Druid Chroniclers 1980-1981 -M107
A Druid Missal-any 1982-1990 -M123
Standing Stones 1993 -M421
A Druid Missal-any 2000-2004 -M425
Magazine Conclusion -M762

Part Twelve: Conclusion -M763

Part Thirteen: "Gatorr, Fighting Rabbit" DVD -M765

Part Fourteen: CD-ROMS of ARDA files. -M771

Quick RDNA Resource List

Although we are a highly dis-organized group in theory and practice, a number of useful optional resources have accreted and are currently available for you to utilize at your convenience. You can probably learn most of life's important lessons from participation in Nature and society, if you keep your eyes and ears open. So let's take a quick tour here

Nature

Let's face it, Druids are crazy about Nature, and it is our primary source of inspiration and it is as cheap and accessible as just going out your backdoor or looking out the window. There is a tendency for Druids to get bogged down in bookish pursuits and debates, but try not to forget our oldest and greatest teacher, Mother Nature.

Universities, night schools and parks have classes or clubs (bird watchers, clean-up crews, arbor day planters, etc) organized in studying or exploring the local natural resources.

My Personal Homepage

Not to be egotistical, but I feel that's a very useful place to find all these resources listed on this page. Other Groves and individuals have homepages too, but mine is ridiculously big.

<http://www.rdna.info>

Another useful page by RDG is <http://reformed-druids.org/>

Reformed Druid Groves

It's rather difficult to keep track of Groves and Proto-Groves, because they don't report regularly to any central authority. So they tend to disappear and form without warning. Some Groves have their own websites too. I keep a list of those I am aware of at

<http://www.rdna.info/whereGrove.html>

Reformed Druid Magazines

We have rather successfully eschewed written dogma and the often numbing effect it has on personal exploration, but we have published some of our past thoughts for future reflection.

We've been publishing different newsletters for about 32 years. There is currently a free on-line 30 pg. magazine called "The Druid Inquirer" which is published eight times per year since 2008 at <http://www.rdna.info/news.html> whose editor, Michael, is mikerdna@hotmail.com The Reformed Druids of Gaia publish "The Druid's Egg" magazine since 2003 at <http://druidsegg.reformed-druids.org/archive.htm>

Proto-Groves often send in short news updates every 6 weeks there to let people know they exist, and invite people to join in on their projects. It is a useful way to note progress and trends in other Groves on a seasonal basis, and pick up useful tips.

Reformed Druid Internet Conferences

If you'd like to talk with folk in Groves and Proto-Groves and interested solitaries about issues of setting up a group, general Druidical topics and just gossip, then you might join an unofficial conference on yahoo.com called RDNAtalk at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RDNAtalk/> with 350+ members.

The Reformed Druids of Gaia operate a website of their own at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rdgtalk/>

But you're welcome to figure it out on your own, as we all must in some areas. Don't worry, it sounds organized, but it is just loosely managed chaos, really. :)

There are about 8 or 9 other small Reformed Druid conferences on side topics or by local Groves to better organize

themselves. I list them on the list of Druid Groves mentioned above.

Links to Other Druid Groups

The RDNA encourages you to study with and belong to multiple groups, as you'll learn much from all of them. Besides, we're not cool enough to deserve all your attention. For a more comprehensive list of other groups visit <http://www.rdna.info/drulinks.html>

If you are determined to be strictly Celticly aligned, you may do that in the RDNA, which allows a great diversity of Grove-themes, but do not expect the rest of us to be so inclined. If such an orientation is important to you (beyond just your own local Grove, on an organizational level) then one of your spin-off Druid groups such as "Ar nDraiocht Fein (ADF)" at www.adf.org or "The Henge of Keltria" at www.keltria.org may be more to your liking. The Order of the White Oak at <http://www.whiteoakdruids.org/>

Historical Materials (a whole lot of them)

Reformed Druids do not have "scriptures" but we love to write our personal thoughts and share the stuff we make. I have collected three very large volumes (800 pages each) of all this marginally useful paraphernalia from our 43 years of creativity. I have called this collection, "A Reformed Druid Anthology", most people simply say ARDA 1 (1996) and ARDA 2 (2005).

<http://www.rdna.info/arda.html>

In there you'll find a hundred essays on perennial topics of "what does Reformed Druidry mean?", a hundred sample liturgies by different Groves, dictionaries of arcane and obscure terms, more elaborate calendar systems, various interviews with prominent folk, lengthy collections of great stories, wise proverbs, funny jokes and moving songs, and of course, 27 years of past newsletters and magazines. You could literally spend years sifting through this flea-market for ideas, suggestions and tips. You could also add to the collection with your ideas, or you can happily ignore it.

Academic Links for Study

To get more guidance on the study of ancient Celts, modern Neo-Pagan movements, modern Druidry, and such, then check out <http://www.rdna.info/acalinks1.html> It was assembled in 2001, and quite out of date. Volume 10 of the Green Books in ARDA2 is also useful. It's useful to establish a foundation of the basic facts before launching into fantasy. A number of book lists of reputable sources may help clear the cobwebs.

I'd recommend you dig into the following recommended lists by other modern Druid groups:

<http://www.keltria.org/Publications/Bookstore.htm>

http://www.officiant.com/whiteoak_druids/bibliographywhiteoak.cfm

www.neopagan.net and <http://www.adf.org>

www.druidry.org by OBOD

Simple Druid Mailing List

Two or three times a month, I send out a short letter to announce various new RDNA publications or news; feel free to join by asking me to mail you (mikerdna@hotmail.com). You do not have to read them, many don't and do just fine.

Your friends, family, neighbors and teachers

Although they aren't self-labeled Druids, it doesn't mean they don't have a lot to teach you about life and society. Don't be shy or reclusive. Talk and LISTEN to the people around you, involve yourself in community affairs, and be a good involved citizen. The more resources you have access to, the easier it will be to overcome problems, cope with difficulties and deepen in wisdom and Awareness as a Reformed Druid.

Other Non-RDNA Resources

You need not look solely within the RDNA and to the wild undisciplined lessons of Nature for inspiration. Many other groups have blazed trails into the uncertain worlds that we are exploring. ADF, Keltria & OBOD have seminary or study programs. Rather than re-inventing the wheel in all matters, perhaps you can borrow a few lessons from them and the following groups.

Universal Life Church (ULC)

This group founded in the 1950s or 1960s has a free mail-in application to be ordained a minister in an eclectic not-necessarily-Christian open religion. They affirm that you should only do what is right. That's it. As a result they have figured out all the registration rules for all 50 states and the district of DC. Rather than trying to figure out the incorporation rules for a tax-exempt organization, follow their simple church rules and get it done quickly and professionally. Other services and ancillary training programs are optional for minor fees.

Home page is <http://www.ulc.net/>

Covenant of the Universal Unitarian Pagans (CUUPS)

We all know how vague and ecumenical the Unitarians Universalists are. This is a sub-set of the UUs, devoted primarily to increasing interaction among UU's more pagan-flavored members. Like ULC, it is an option for those seeking seminary training and setting up a state recognized church.

Home Page is <http://www.cuups.org/>

Cherry Hill Seminary of Vermont

Even if you are registered as a priest for various ministerial practices, and have a tax-exempt church; perhaps you'd like to have more pagan-oriented training to perform your functions better? That's what Cherry Hill does, and you can either attend condensed coursework in person, or take several courses on-line for reasonable tuition fees.

Homepage is <http://www.cherryhillseminary.org/index.html>

The Witch's Voice (Witchvox)

This is one of the largest and wide-ranging on-line websites for Neo-Pagans and Wiccans in the world since 1997. Not all Reformed Druids are pagan, but the networking, informative essays, news reports, links are quite valuable here. It is very professionally run and frequently updated.

Homepage is <http://www.witchvox.com/>

Your Neighborhood Minister, Priest, Mullah, Rabbi

Okay, so some of them might be hesitant to talk with a Druid, but most clergy of mainstream religions have had both a great deal of graduate school training and a lot of hands-on experience dealing with congregations. Many of the more tolerant folk belong to "inter-faith" or ecumenical local councils.

Currently Existing Druid Groups and Friends

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Taken from www.neopagan.net

Introductory Comments:

The Paleo-Pagan [Druid](#) organization(s), if there were any, vanished long ago. This does not, naturally, stop some modern Druid groups and individuals from claiming to be surviving "underground" Paleo-Pagan Druid organizations or the offspring thereof, but then, we don't have to pretend to believe them either.

[Meso-Pagan Druid](#) orders are among the oldest fraternal groups still in existence, and were once very popular across the USA and Canada. Closely related to the Freemasons in history, liturgy, theology, and overlapping memberships, they have kept the ideals of Druidism alive for over two centuries. Their activities are generally open to all sincere participants, save that the older ones tend (in the U.S.A. at least) to have separate gender-based groups ("Ladies Auxiliaries").

[Neo-Pagan Druids](#) are reviving the best aspects of ancient Earth-centered religions in a modern context. Their activities are generally open to all sincere participants, regardless of ancestry, gender, sexual orientation or membership in other Pagan or Druidic groups.

In recent years, a number of Neo-Pagan (and a few Meso-Pagan) Celtic groups who do not wish to call themselves "Druids" but who do value scholarship and high art have started calling themselves, "Celtic Reconstructionists." A few are listed below.

You can do live chatting about Druidism with others by using **IRC** (Internet Relay Chat) and special "java chatters" on Druidic websites such as those listed here, and join **private emailing lists** about Druidism and Celtic Studies on several of those same websites..

If you decide to send regular (or "snailmail") letters to any of the groups listed here, expect to wait a few weeks for your reply, as each of these groups is run by a handful of volunteers working part-time. And it doesn't hurt for you to include a bit of cash or an International Postal Reply Coupon to help them with their postage and printing costs.

For detailed descriptions of most of the groups listed below, as well as warnings about groups to avoid, read [Bonewits's Essential Guide to Druidism](#). For even more links to other groups, or updates to the ones below, visit the site of [The Druid Network](#).

Druid Groups, Celtic Recons, and Others As of 2008

Ancient Order of Druids in America

P.O. Box 1181, Ashland, OR 97520, USA

www.aoda.org

info@aoda.org

An Ceile De (Celtic Christians)

Duncauld, Cauldhame Kippen Scotland FK8 3HL

www.ceilede.co.uk

Ar nDraíocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

P.O. Box 17874, Tucson, AZ 85731-7874, USA

www.adf.org

adf-office@adf.org

Avalon Center for Druidic Studies

(formerly Avalon College of Druidry)

www.avaloncollege.org

alferian@avaloncollege.org

Avalon Mystery School

www.avalonmysteryschool.net

Axe and Oak (Recon Pagan discussion board)

excoboard.com/exco/index.php?boardid=337

British Druid Order

P.O. Box 635, Halifax, England HX2 6WX

www.druidry.co.uk

sparrowhawk@britishdruidorder.co.uk

Cathbad's Wild Ideas (Author's site)

www.wildideas.net/cathbad

Celtic Christian Web ring

www.webring.com (requires search)

Council of British Druid Orders

Liz Murray, Liaison Officer, BM Oakgrove

London WCIN 3XX, England

cobdo.org.uk

battlechieftain@cobdo.org.uk

CR (Celtic Recon) **Journal**

www.livejournal.com/community/cr-r

Daughters of the Flame

www.obsidianmagazine.com/DaughtersoftheFlame

Daughters_of_the_flame@yahoo.ca

Druid Clan of Dana

Olivia Robertson, Fellowship of Isis

Clonegal Castle,

Enniscorthy, Ireland

www.druid-clan-of-dana.de/DCODwelc.htm

info@fellowshipofisis.com

Druid Network

P.O. Box 3533, Whichford

Shipston on Stour Warwickshire

CV36 5YB England

www.druidnetwork.org

office@druidnetwork.org

Druid Order of the Sacred Grove (not DCSG, see below)

www.geocities.com/jaronmcllyr/Homepage.html

druid-order-sacred-grove@yahoo.com

Henge of Keltria

PO Box 4305, Clarksburg, WV 26302 USA

www.keltria.org

Keltria-Office@keltria.org

Imbas (Celtic Recon)

www.imbas.org

imbasm@imbasm.org

Insular Order of Druids

www.insular.org.uk

contact@insular.org.uk

International Grand Lodge of Druids

www.igld.org

john.butler@fsma.com.au

Ireland's Druid School

www.druidschool.com

info@druidschool.com

Loyal Arthurian Warband

www.warband.org

pendragon@warband.org

Nemeton (e-list)

technovate.org/web/nemeton

Ord na Brighideach

www.ordbrighideach.org

Christie@ordbrighideach.org

Ord na Darach Gile: Order of White Oak

www.whiteoakdruids.org

membership@whiteoakdruids.org

Order of Bards Ovates & Druids

OBOD, PO Box 1333, Lewes

East Sussex BN7 1DX, England

www.druidry.org

OBOD@druidry.org

Reformed Druids of North America

The Archdruid, Carleton College

Northfield, MN 55057 USA

www.rdna.info

groups.yahoo.com/group/RDNAtalk/ (e-list)

mikerdna@hotmail.com

Sisterhood of Avalon

(No connection to Monroe, see below)

PO Box 842, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147, USA

www.sisterhoodofavalon.org

BoardSecretary@sisterhoodofavalon.org

Summerlands

The Summerlands, Inc.

7015 University Drive NW,

Huntsville, AL 35806 USA

summerlands.com

searles@summerlands.com

Other Websites of Interest to Druids

[Amulets by Merlin](#) is the company and website of Merlin Windsor, "The Official Jeweler to the Archdruid of North America." <G> He's the artist who made the oak leaves and acorns Green Man necklace, with matching bracelet and earrings, that many have seen me wear at festivals, as well as my designs for jewelry (including an oak-wreath awen). Though there are many fine jewelers in our Neo-Pagan community, Merlin is one of the best — In My Humble Opinion, of course! *[Ed- Also sells Druid Sigils!]*

If I'm going to mention Celtic jewelry, then I have to tell you about [Ancient Circles](#), a superb source of Celtic-design textiles (including some fabulous capes), jewelry (pendents, earrings, brooches, torcs), calendars and other arts. They are well worth paying a visit to!

[C.E.L.T. Corpus of Electronic Texts](#) is a website maintained by the University College Cork in Ireland. It contains many historical Irish manuscripts and other documents in electronic format for searching or download, as well as links to other text sites and Irish Studies resources.

[The Celtic League](#) is an international organization devoted to the preservation and support of Celtic cultures and languages. If you're going to call yourself a "Druid," then you ought to be paying attention to the issues this organization addresses, even if many modern Celtic activists are hostile to Paganism.

[Celtic-art.com — The Art of Courtney Davis](#) is the website for one of the world's greatest Celtic artists. Mr. Davis is the artist behind the many Dover Clip Art Books that so many of us use as graphics resources (see how many examples you can find on this and other Druidical websites), and is a renowned illustrator of books on Celtic topics. He deserves Druidical respect and honor for helping to make Celtic Art once again the glory that it was. If you want to learn how to draw Celtic art of your own, you can do much worse than to start with his instructional books.

Lisala's [Celtic Studies Resources](#) website is well worth visiting for anyone interested in real scholarship about Druids and Celtic Studies. Lisa is a professional medievalist, specializing in Celtic Studies. Her FAQs, essays and reviews are amusing, pithy, and deadly accurate.

Not recommended for serious Druids: **Druidic Craft of the Wise** ([why](#)); **Divine Circle of the Sacred Grove** ([why](#)); anything connected to **Douglas Monroe** and his **21 Lessons** ([why](#)).

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Ancient Druids and Pre-Modern Druids

Although the RDNA has many differences from the ancient Druids, it would be well for you to know more about them so a few books at www.rdna.info/celtic.html are good starts and available at www.amazon.com. Until you do your own research, the following essay will also give you the basic facts on how other groups in the 16th-20th century also appropriated the image of Druid for forming organizations, such as the still surviving OBOD and UAOD I have mentioned earlier in UWP.

The following article is:
extracted from "*The Other Druids*" by Isaac Bonewits,
In the 1976 DC(E) with later amendments in brackets

It will come as a surprise to no one that the Reformed Druid movements in North America were not the first attempt to resurrect Druidism. There are, in fact, dozens of groups that have been started over the centuries in an attempt to carry on or reinvent what their founders thought were the principles and practices of Druidism. Although none of the Branches of the Reform have any historical connection with any of these (up to the present, anyway) with one minor exception considered near the end of this article; nonetheless, a brief review of the histories of these groups will prove of interest to most Reformed Druids.

{ "The term "Pagan" comes from the Latin *paganus*, which appears to have mean "country dweller, villager, or hick," and not necessarily in a polite way. The Roman army seems to have used the term to mean "a civilian," and the Roman Church later used it to refer to those who were not part of "the Armies of the Lord," i.e., those who were non-Christian. After 1500 years of propaganda, the term became synonymous in many people's minds with "atheist, devil worshiper, or heathen" (heathen, of course, means "people of the heath, where heather grows.") Today, most people who define themselves as Pagans use the word as a general term for "native and natural religions, usually polytheistic, and their members." }

{ "This is the sense in which this author uses it. The term "Paleo-Pagan" refers to the original polytheistic tribal faiths of Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas and Australia, when they were still practiced as intact belief systems. "Meso-Pagan" refers to those movements founded as attempts to recreate or revive what the founders thought of as the (usually European) Paleo-Pagan faiths of their ancestors; but which were developed by those founders within the basically monotheistic or dualistic worldview of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. "Neo-Paganism" refers to the recent attempts to revive what the founders perceived as the best elements of Paleo-Paganism (of varying ethnic origins) within the context of modern humanistic ideas of psychological growth needs and mutual human interdependence. The first term was coined by this author, the second by Robin Goodfellow, and the third (as "Neo-Paganism") was rediscovered by Tim Zell." }

But first let us go over what we know of the original Paleo-Pagan Druids. This can be accomplished swiftly, we actually know very little of them. The ancient Greek writers who mentioned the Druids were, according to Stuart Piggot's *The Druids* (which is the best book in English available on the subject,) for the most part suffering from either the Savage Barbarian ("Hard Primitivism") or else the Noble Savage mystique ("Soft Primitivism.") The accounts of Julius Caesar are mostly war propaganda, heavily weighed down with atrocity tales designed to make the Celts look terrible and the Romans look wonderful. The same comment, of course, holds for the writings of the early Christian missionaries, some of them

encountered Druids in Ireland and Scotland, and found them to be far less gullible than the populace. Indeed, it seems that the overwhelming majority of books written about the Druids, until the 20th century, were far more fancy than fact.

The really hard facts and probabilities about Paleo-Pagan Druidism can be summed up briefly; the Druids practiced a system of Priestcraft that was perhaps similar in *some* ways to that of the Brahmins in India. They were active throughout Gaul and the "British" Isles, and *perhaps* in other Celtic territories as well. They were the victims of a series of successful genocide campaigns waged against them by the Roman Empire and the Church of Rome. First to taste defeat were the Druids of Gaul, around 54 c.e. and those of Britain around 61 c.e. (all by the Roman Legions.) The Christians managed to obliterate Druidism (or at least drive it completely underground) in Ireland, Scotland and the outer Isles during the fifth and sixth centuries c.e. How long Druidism may have lasted (either above ground or underground) in Wales and other outposts is unknown, but it was probably not for very much longer.

As a social class, they seem to have been just below the warrior/nobility class in power and prestige, though they apparently had the political and religious power to be noncombatants and to start or stop wars. Their training could take as long as twenty years and seems to have included poetical composition, memorization techniques, law, ritual practice, weather predicting and other specialties. There appear to have been several subcategories, all vaguely called "Druid." For example; the "Bards" were in charge of music, poetry, singing and dance; the "Vates" or "Ovates" were in charge of prophecy and divination; the "Brehons" (whom some say were not Druids at all) were judges and law-givers; etc. Druids per se were primarily teachers, magicians and priests. All of these categories seem to have overlapped, along with healing, animal husbandry, time keeping, astrology and the transmission of oral traditions.

They definitely were respected authority figures and this may relate to the fact that the word "Druid" is from the root "dru-" meaning "oak tree, firm, strong." Therefore, it is possible that "druidecht" or Druidism may relate much to the concepts of "firm knowledge givers," "dogma knowers" or "sources of orthodoxy" as it does to "oak worshipping priests." This would make it an interesting contrast to "wicacraeft" or "Witchcraft," which seems to mean "the craft of bending" or "the twisting skill" (standard terms used for magical workers, but seldom for religious authorities.)

Druid places of worship seem to have been mainly oak Groves. They practiced animal (and *perhaps* human) sacrifices and may have performed divination from the remains. They were touchingly fond of mistletoe, especially if it grew oak trees. They appear to have been polytheists (probably "conditional polytheists") rather than monotheists or duotheists. They believed in an afterlife very much like the fleshly one (not, it would appear, in reincarnation or transmigration, except for Heroes, Wizards and Gods) and made it a special point to bury tools, weapons, animals and food with the warriors and kings for use in the Celtic equivalent of the "Happy Hunting Grounds" believed in by some Native Americans. A favorite day for rituals (as well as for cutting mistletoe) seems to have been the sixth day after the night in which the new moon was first visible. They did not appreciate either the Roman Paleo-Pagans nor the Roman Paleo-Christians that much.

That just about sums up what we really know for sure about the Paleo-Pagan Druids. There are no real indications that they used stone altars (at Stonehenge or anywhere else); that they were better philosophers than the Greeks or Egyptians; that they had anything to do at all with the mythical continents of Atlantis or Mu; that they wore gold Masonic regalia or used Rosicrucian passwords; that they were the architects of (a) Stonehenge, (b) the megalithic circles and lines of Northwestern Europe, (c) the

Pyramids of Egypt, (d) the Pyramids of the Americas, (e) the statues of Easter Island, of (f) anything other than wooden barns and stone houses. Neither is there any proof that the Ancient Druids were "Pre-Christian Christians;" that they understood or invented either Pythagorean or Gnostic or Cabalistic mysticism; or that they all had long white beards and golden sickles. We don't even have any proof that they were the only magical workers among the Paleo-Pagan Celts (or among the tribes conquered by the Celts.) And although there are sporadic references to a "seminary" for higher training of Druids in "Albion" (which could have meant either the physical country of Britain or Wales, or else the Gaelic "Otherworld," i.e., "Higher training between lives"); there is no proof for this nor any really developed inter-tribal communications network of Druids.

With that background in mind, let us attempt to trace the revival/survival of Druidism in the Celtic and Gaulish territories. As near as we can tell, Druidism as such had vanished as a public activity by the end of the sixth centuries of the common era. Bards, however, seem to have survived fairly well, at least in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the outer Isles. Whether they also managed to keep alive (as an underground cult) other aspect of Paleo-Pagan Druidism, as has been claimed, remains to be proven. It is also possible, though unproven, (and perhaps unprovable,) that some of the so-called "Family Traditions" of Witches in these territories kept alive some of the knowledge of the Ancient Druids.

We do know, that as far back as the 12th Century c.e., Bards in Wales were holding large competitions, to which the generic name "Eisteddfod" has been attached. One of them was held in 1176 c.e. in Cardigan Castle, sponsored by a Lord Rhys, but it was almost three centuries before another competition of any significance was held at Carmarthenshire in 1450. The next appears to have been in the north of Wales in 1523, at Caerwys, and another in 1568 where Queen Elizabeth (who was anxious to control the traveling minstrels she saw probably correctly - as a threat to British rule, examined the bards and granted license to some of them to travel and collect fees.

Throughout these centuries, the scholarship of learned men (women weren't allowed to write) concerning the Druids was abysmal. The same Greek and Roman commentaries were dug up and rehashed, over and over again, and fanciful theories were built upon them. Most of these "scholars" were not very romantic in their treatment of the Druids, on the contrary, writers seemed to vie with one another in "revealing" the foolishness, barbarity and vanity of Druid worship. This was of course the proper party-line to take for a scholar wishing to survive with either his reputation or his head in Christendom. It did not, however, improve the image of Pre-Christian religions in Europe.

It is said by some that in 1245 c.e. a gathering was held of underground Druids and Bards from several of the British Isles, and that a theological unity was agreed upon and a special group or Grove founded, called the *Mount Haemus Grove*, which is said to still be in existence, with an "unbroken line" leading back. Such claims need to be treated most carefully. There does seem to be a group by that name, recognized by some of the modern Druids in England, but this hardly constitutes proof of such an extraordinary claim. It may indeed go back a few centuries (probably to the id 1700) but that does not make it an unbroken heritage from 1245.

In 1659 c.e., the scholar John Aubrey, having done some archeological fieldwork at Stonehenge, made the suggestion that Stonehenge *might* have been a temple of the Druids. He developed this suggestion cautiously over the next few decades in his correspondence with his fellow scholars and in the notes for his never fully-published work, *Templa Druidum*. In 1694, a fiery young Deist named John Toland discussed the theory with him and became very enthusiastic over it. In 1659, excerpts from Aubrey's book were published, including his theory about Druids at Stonehenge, which then saw light for the first time.

In 1717, a young antiquary named William Stuckeley obtained a transcript of Aubrey's complete manuscript of *Templa Druidum*, including the portions never published. Stuckeley though the theory about Stonehenge being a Druid Temple was a terrific idea and began to develop it far beyond Aubrey's original concepts.

Also in that year, it is claimed, John Toland held a meeting at which Druidic and Bardic representatives from Wales, Cornwall, Brittany, Ireland, Scotland, Anglesey, Many, York, Oxford and London appeared and formed *The Universal Druid Bond* (U.D.B.) The UDB has supposedly continued to this very day (or rather, at least one current Grove is claiming to be part of a Universal Druid BOND says that it goes back this far) and the present name of the head group of the UDB seems to be *The Mother Grove An Tich Gata Gairdeachas*.

In 1723 c.e., the Druid Stone Altar was invented by Rev. Henry Rowlands in his monumental work, *Mona Antiqua Restaurata*. His Druids are Patriarchs right out of the Christian Bible, and the altars they use are cairns and the capstones of cromlechs (though he does at least allow the Druids to remain in their Groves, rather than forcing them to build huge stone temples.) These Druid Stone Altars quickly became part of the rapidly growing folklore of Druidism. Prior to 1723, Druids were required to use altars made of sod or tree stumps, adequate, perhaps, but hardly as glamorous.

In 1726, John Toland published his *History of the Druids*, in which he pictured the Druids as unscrupulous mountebanks and theocratic tyrants. This was rather surprising act for the man who had supposedly had, nine years earlier, helped to found a Universal Druid Bond and been its first "Chosen Chief." He did, however, put further forward the Stonehenge theory of Druid worship.

Scholarship of equal value was, of course, being produced in France as well. In 1727, Jean Martin presented Patriarchal Druid (Christian style) in his *Religion des Gaulois*. Throughout this century, on both sides of the Channel, Druids were being invented east and west, though in France these "Pre-Christian Christians" tended to be patriotic heroes resisting foreign invasion, while their English counterparts were the greatest mystics in history.

In London, throughout the century, "Druid" groups appeared along with Rosicrucian and Freemasonic organizations. In 1781 c.e., Henry Hurle set up *The Ancient Order of Druids* (AOD,) a secret society based on Masonic patterns (not surprising, since Hurle was a carpenter and house builder.) This group, like most of the similar mystic societies form at the time, was heavily influenced by Jacob Boehme. Jacob Boehme, 1675-1724 c.e., was a Protestant mystic, greatly involved with alchemy, hermeticism and Christian Cabala, as well as being a student of the famous Meister Eckhart. His mystical writings attempted to reconcile all these influences and had a tremendous impact upon later generations of mystical Christians, Rosicrucians, Freemasons, and Theosophists.

"Overseas, the link between Deism, Masonry and Druidism was once again established, in the small town of Newburgh, New York. G. Adolf Koch has an entire chapter on "The Society of Druids" in his book *Religion of the American Enlightenment*. Deism and downright atheism were popular during the 1780's and 90's among the American intelligentsia, especially those who had supported the American and French revolutions. In fact, a rather large number of the key political figures involved in both revolutions were Deistic Masons and Rosicrucians (see Neal Wilgus, *The Illuminoids*.) Koch tells the story of the Newburgh Druids thusly:}

"Some Influential citizens of Newburgh had organized themselves into an interesting radical religious body called "The Druid Society." Like its sister organization, the Deistic Society in New York, it was a radical offshoot of an earlier and more conservative society. A Masonic lodge had been established in

Newburgh in 1788, and it seems, as one attempts to piece together the fragmentary facts, that as the brothers, or at least a number of them, became more and more radical in the feverish days of the French Revolution, the metamorphosis from Mason to Druid resulted. The Druids held their meetings in the room formerly occupied by the Masons and continued to use a ceremony similar to the Masonic. It is interesting to note, too, that as the Druid Society dies out contemporaneously with the end of Palmers' activities in New York City (he was a famous Deist of the time-PEIB,) a new Masonic lodge was instituted in Newburgh in 1806."}

"Koch continues, "The question naturally arises as to why those apostate Masons chose the name of Druids. It seems that when they abandoned Christianity, with which Masonry in America had not been incompatible, they went back to the religion (as they conceived of it -PEIB) of the ancient Druids who were sun worshipers. It was commonly believed at that time, by the radicals of course, that both Christianity and Masonry were derived from the worship of the sun.. The Druids thus went back to the pure worship of the great luminary, the visible agent of a great invisible first cause, and regarded Christianity as a later accretion and subversion of the true faith, a superstition, in short, developed by a designing and unscrupulous priesthood, to put it mildly in the language of the day. " }

"It appears that Thomas Paine, among other radicals of the time, was convinced that Masonry was descended from Druidism. Koch refers us to an essay by Paine, *The Origin of Freemasonry*, written in New York City in 1805. In this essay he mentions a society of Masons in Dublin who called themselves Druids. The spectacular fantasies and conjectures that have been offered over the centuries to explain the origins of Masonry and Rosicrucianism will have to await another article to be properly discussed. Suffice it to say for now that the sorts of Druidism with which the noble Paine and his friends might have been familiar were far more likely to have been offshoots of Masonry than vice versa."

"As for the group of Druid Masons in Dublin, this author knows nothing else about them. Perhaps they were a branch of the UDB or AOD. I will speculate that they may very well have been intimately linked with the Irish Revolutionary politics, which might or might not have strained their relations with Druid Masons in England. There doesn't seem to be much data about Irish Masonic Druidism available in this county, but we do know a bit about developments in Wales."

Following the tremendously successful Eisteddfod organized by Thomas Jones in Corwen in 1789, a huge variety of Welsh cultural and literary societies mushroomed and flourished. In 1792, a member of several of these groups in London named Edward Williams, using the pen name of *Iolo Morganwg* (Iolo of Glamorgan,) held an Autumnal Equinox ceremony on top of Primrose Hill (in London.) Along with some other Welsh Bards, he set up a small circle of pebbles and an altar, called the *Mean Gorsedd*. There was a naked sword on this altar and a part of the ritual involved the sheathing of this sword. At the time, no one paid very much attention to the ceremony or its obvious sexual symbolism (which if noticed, might legitimately have been called "Pagan,") at least not outside of the London Bardic community.

Iolo, however, was not daunted. He declared that the Glamorganshire Bards had an unbroken line of Bardic-Druidic tradition going back to the Ancient Druids, and that his little ceremony was part of it. He then proceeds (almost all scholars agree) to *forge* various documents and to mistranslate a number of manuscripts, in order to "prove" this and his subsequent claims. Many people feel that he muddled genuine Welsh scholarship for over a hundred years.

In 1819, Iolo managed to get his stone circle and its ceremony (now called, as a whole, the Gorsedd inserted into the genuine Eisteddfod in Carmarthen, Wales. It was a tremendous

success with the Bards and the tourists, and has been a part of the Eisteddfod tradition ever since, with greater and greater elaborations.

Iolo's effects did not stop there however, for later writers such as Lewis Spence (who produced more fantasy about Celtic Paleo-Paganism than any writer of the last century,) Robert Graves and Gerald Gardner apparently took Iolo's "Scholarship" at face value and proceeded to put forward theories that have launched dozens of occult and mystical organizations (most of them having little if anything to do with Paleo-Pagan Druidism.)

By 1796 c.e., all megalithic monuments in Northwestern Europe were firmly defined as "Druidic," especially if they were in the form of circles or lines of standing stones. In that year, yet another element was added, in La Tour D'Auvergne's book, *Origines Gauloises*. He thought he had discovered a word in the Breton language for megalithic tombs, "dolmin," and by both this spelling and that of "dolmen" this term became part of the archeological jargon and of the growing Druid folklore.

At this point the folklore, also called "Celtomania," went roughly like this: "the Celts are the oldest people in the world; their language is preserved practically intact in Bas-Breton; they were profound philosophers whose inspired doctrines have been handed down by the Welsh Bardic Schools; dolmens are their altars where their priests the Druids offered human sacrifice; stone alignments were their astronomical observatories..." (Salomon Reinach, quoted by Piggot)

Art, music, drama, and poetry were using these fanciful Druids as characters and sources of inspiration. Various eccentrics, many of them devout (if unorthodox) Christians, claimed to be Druids and made colorful headlines. Wealthy people built miniature Stonehenges in their gardens and hired fake Druids to scare their guests. Mystically oriented individuals drifted from Masonic groups to Rosicrucian lodges to Druid Groves, and hardly anyone, then or now, could tell the difference. Ecumenicalism was the order of the day and in 1878, at the Pontypridd Eisteddfod, the Arch Druid presiding over the Gorsedd ceremony inserted a prayer to Mother Kali of India! This might have been magically quite sensible, and was certainly in keeping with traditional Pagan attitudes of religious eclecticism, except for the fact that the British attitude towards Indian culture and religion was not exactly the most cordial at the time (of course, if there were no British people leading the rite, it might have been a deliberate bit of Welsh nationalistic magic against England!.)

But before this, in 1833, the Ancient Order of Druids (the secret society founded by Hurle) split up over the question of whether it should be mainly a benefit (charitable) society or a mystical one. The majority voted for being a charitable society and changed its name to *The United Ancient Order of Druids* (UAOD.) This group, with branches all over the world, still exists as a charitable and fraternal organization rather like the Elks or Shriners. An example of their philosophy may be found in a collection of their sayings entitled *The Seven Precepts of the Prophet Merlin*:

"First: Labor diligently to acquire knowledge, for it is power.

"Second: When in authority, decide reasonably, for thine authority may cease.

"Third: Bear with fortitude the ills of life, remembering that no mortal sorrow is perpetual.

"Fourth: Love virtue, for it bringeth peace.

"Fifth: Abhor vice, for it bringeth evil upon all.

"Sixth: Obey those in authority in all just things, that virtue may be exalted.

"Seventh: Cultivate the social virtues, so shalt thou be beloved by all men."

Meanwhile, the minority group, still calling itself by the old

name (AOD,) also continued to exist, as a mystical Masonic sort of organization. The AOD may have been among the groups known to have held ceremonies (Summer Solstice rites were the only ones held by anyone it seems) at Stonehenge prior to 1900 c.e. (it was a popular pastime) and in any event, there were several such groups using the site. In 1900, one of the standing stones fell over and the angry owner of the land (Sir Edward Antrobus) decided to fence the monument and charge admission, the better to (a) keep a closer watch on it and (b) to earn enough money to repair the damage being committed by tourists. This caused a problem almost immediately, when a Druidic group was holding the very next Summer Solstice ceremonies and the Chief Druid was kicked out by the police (he laid a curse on Sir Edward, the effects of which are unrecorded.)

Although the AOD, in the form of one of its subgroups (the Albion Lodge at Oxford) gained a certain amount of notice when they initiated Winston Churchill in August of 1908, the rite was performed at Blenheim Park, not Stonehenge. The only Druidic group known for sure to have used the monument during the years between 1901 and 1914 was called *The Druid Hermeticists*. In 1915, Stonehenge was sold by the weary owner to someone else who immediately gave it to the British Government, at a ceremony in which Druids of some sort assisted. Since 1919 c.e., when Stonehenge became a national monument, at least five different Druid groups have asked government permission to use it, although other groups have celebrated at various nearby spots (because of political and metaphysical squabbles) and some group, of course, may have used Stonehenge without government permission or knowledge.

By 1949, only two groups seem to have been left using Stonehenge for the Summer Solstice rites; the AOD and the British Circle of the Universal Bond (BCUB.) In 1955 the AOD seems to have disappeared, leaving the plain to the BCUB. But the latter also had a problem, when a group succeeded in 1963-4, calling itself The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids (OBOD,) and decided to celebrate elsewhere (usually Primrose Hill.)

Things of a Druidic nature were occurring outside of Stonehenge, of course. In Wales, the National Eisteddfod Court runs an Eisteddfod every year (alternating between northern and southern Wales) and has the "Gorsedd of Bards" arrange the rituals for each occasion. Bardic and Druidic groups have also arisen in France, Brittany, Cornwall, the Isle of Man, Scotland, Ireland and in various parts of England. While the Welsh groups (Bardic, Druidic and Bardic-Druidic) spend most of their time and energy looking down their noses at all the non-Welsh groups (and even being so rude as to kick non-Welsh Druids out of their ceremonies); the others in turn spent tremendous amounts of time and energy on internal warfare.

Ecumenical movements, of course, have appeared and disappeared. The UDB, supposedly founded in 1717 by John Toland, claims to have survived since then under a succession of Chosen Chiefs, including such names as Toland, Stuckeley, Lord Winchelsea, Blake and Spence, among others. It appears to have been their English group (the BCUB referred to above) that suffered the split in 1963-4. Both groups, naturally, claim to be the only legitimate representatives in the UDB. There do appear to be a couple of dozen public Druid groups in France and the "British" Isles, many of them using the "Bards, Ovates and Druids" phraseology. One leader states that there may be as many 400 independent Druids not affiliated with groups. Such estimates, like those of underground Witches, Occultists and Pagans, must remain speculation since (thanks to religious bigotry) the estimates cannot be tested without risking the lives of those so exposed.

Section Two:

Proto-Grove Set-up Primer

What's a Proto-Grove?

When a group of people get together to enjoy Druidic pursuits, you have a Proto-Grove. Some are very simple, others are complicated matters.

One of the first hurdles in establishing a Proto-Grove is that there are not many clear rules or procedures. There are a lot of alternate ways that Druids align themselves and interact with few explanations anywhere. Therefore, let me give you my recommendations.

How is Reformed Druidism organized?

That is a more complex question. The simple answer is "not very well". The more I study the ways Reformed Druids have interacted, there seems to be a method to their madness. It is not an easy thing to build or explain a structure that was designed to be the antithesis of liturgy.

How can I start a Proto-Grove or get Ordained?

There are many opinions on these topics too, and I'll give you some of my insights into the diversity of ways these two goals can be approached and some advice on why you might not want to do them also.

As always, the advice is just my recommendations, and it is up to you whether you want to use it or not or interpret things differently, based on your observations and research.



Structure and the Lack of It in Reformed Druidism

Historical Types of Reformed Druidic Organization Styles

Rough Draft 3/20/2010

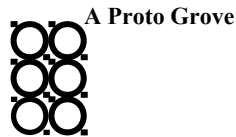
If you really want to know, Reformed Druidism has a strong history, and decisions about the structure evolved over many years. Thus a little lesson in different historical types of organization in The Reform (a new term I coined to include all the branches of Reformed Druidism, present, past & future). While some may disagree on the details, this should provide a starting point for future debates and people learning about The Reform for the first time. These are, of course, my own thoughts and may be too much info at the beginning.



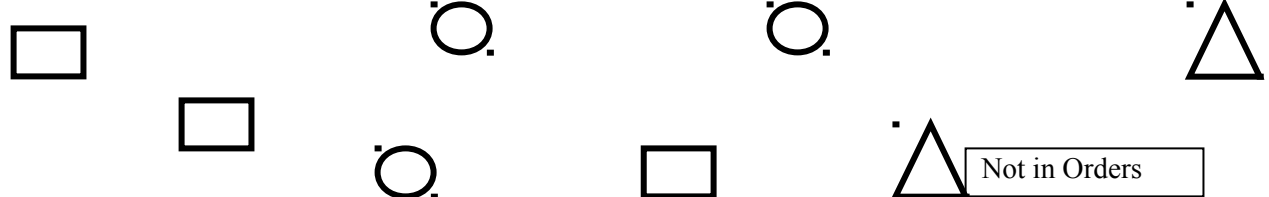
KEY TO CHARTS

STAR=Arch Druid (3rd Order), SQUARE=Another 3rd Order Druid (optional),
CIRCLE=1st or 2nd Order Druids or Druids of no Orders. TRIANGLE=Druid with no
order and wandering about. The number of objects in diagrams is not relevant.

Although there are some Groves which have eschewed the use of Orders, a Grove generally has at least three members, usually five or six or more. At least one member (often two or three) are members of the Third Order, who generally lead services and do Ordinations for members entering 1st, 2nd & 3rd Orders. A Grove usually holds an election once a year to elect the Arch-Druid (from the pool of Third Order Druids), a Preceptor (from the pool of people of 2nd or 3rd Order) and a Server (from the pool of people 1st Order and up). In most Branches of "The Reform", you can belong to any religion, philosophy or creed and also be a member of their Grove at the same time; although some other religions will not reciprocate this permissiveness. Usually, the Arch-Druid is the figure head of the group, and the one most busy with leading services and ordinations and holding meetings. The Preceptor usually assists in services and keeps track of records. The Server also assists in services and helps out where possible. A Grove usually has a constitution, which is submitted to the Carleton Arch Druid (AD) for record keeping. Most Groves have quite a bit of autonomy and vary greatly from other Groves.

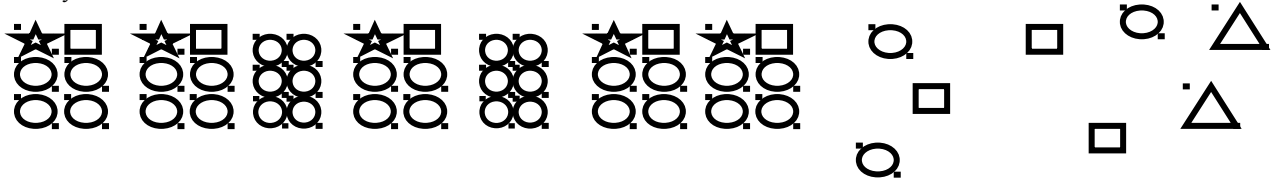


Originally, new Groves were formed by a Third Order Druid on vacation or moving to a new location and establishing a new group. Nowadays, people hear about the RDNA long before a Reformed Druid arrives in a region. A few of those people there band together to form a group, and usually eventually one of their members seeks the ordination to the Third Order, by either traveling far, or inviting a Third Order priest to visit them. During this period of waiting, they are known as a "Proto-Grove", which can last for several years, theoretically, with an odd mixture of 0th, 1st and 2nd Order Druids. In general, they use a modified version of the liturgy so as to not need a Third Order Druid, and may experiment widely in this phase, including devising an alternative service to meet their needs. Other Proto-Groves may instead choose to establish a new Druidic organization on their own.



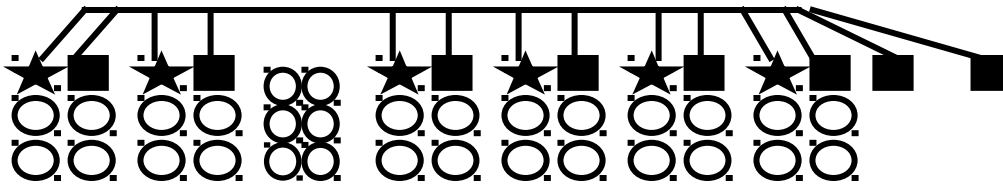
Independent Druids (see above graphic)

Groves break up often, and people leave Groves for various reasons, so floating around within Reformed Druidism are various Druids who are not members of a Grove or Proto-Grove. Some prefer to stay this way, and they are still respected members of the overall Reform. In fact, 7 out of 8 Reformed Druids are probably independent now, although in varying degrees of interaction. Generally, we believe that a Druid is a Druid, and they can join other groups and religions, and still remain a Druid to the day they die (and perhaps beyond that). Many independents are "semi-retired", but occasionally provide mentorship or advice to Groves, newsletters and visit fledgling Proto-Groves to help out. If a Grove fires you from office or expels you from its membership, you retain your Ordinations, but lose your elected titles.



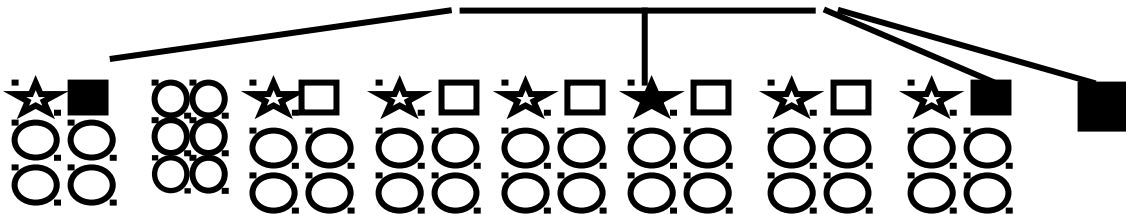
Druidism Today in 2005 (see above graphic)

Reformed Druidism is a mixture of Groves, Proto-Groves and an odd assortment of independent Druids. There are also numerous past and present branches, councils and types of Orders to connect Druids on an inter-Grove and inter-individual basis. This might make it seem complicated, because it is very confusing! I'll try to explain these inter-Grove organizations below.



Council of Dalon Ap Landu (Council of the Third Order) a.k.a. CODAL (See above graphic)

So far, there are no councils for members in the First and Second Orders. There is a Council of Dalon Ap Landu (an obscure Welsh patron deity found only in The Reform, and perhaps invented by us) for the Third Order members of all Groves, and those who are not in Groves. It has operated much like a legislature, and is chaired by the current Arch Druid from Carleton Grove (who amusingly tends to be the youngest member of the Council). From 1964 to about 1977, there were several items voted on by the Council, which by tradition has settled things by unanimous votes. The last vote to pass in such a way was 1971, to unequivocally give equal status to female and male Druids in the Third Order and Higher Orders. A contentious split vote during the Isaac Affair of 1974-1977, led to several schisms, new Councils, and the end of the practical use of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu, due to the rising number of priests (50+ at that time, twice as many since 1970), the difficult logistics of voting, lack of easy voting topics, and the stringent tradition of unanimity. The Council of DAL remains in existence, but seems to be in permanent abeyance, acting both as a rhetorical muse to address in letters, and acting as a strong break on the priests to organize the Reform any further than it is already on a national (or international) level.



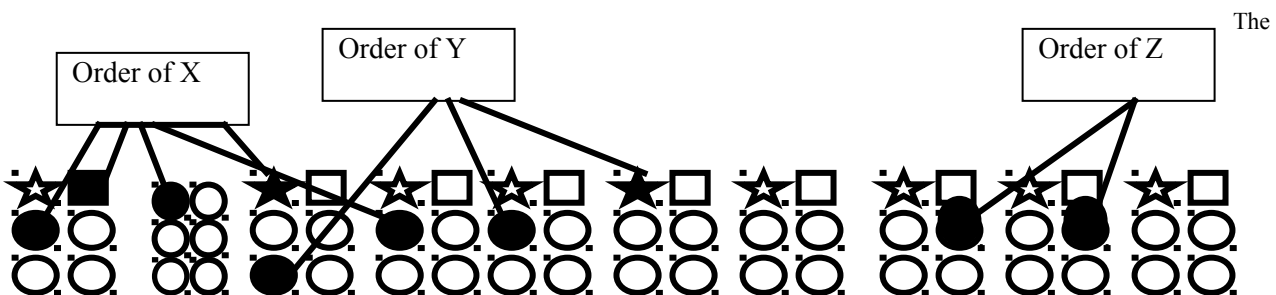
Higher Orders (4th - 10th) (See above graphic)

This is an often misunderstood organizational concept. Occasionally, a Third Order member will be called to join a Higher Order, which operates much like honor societies for certain fields of inquiry. 4th (Grannos) is for the Healing Springs, 5th (Braciaca) is for Malted Beverages, 6th (Belenos) is for the Sun, 7th (Sirona) is for Rivers, 8th (Taranis) is for Weather, 9th (Llyr) is for the Ocean, and the 10th (Danu) the Earth Mother.

Each Higher Order has a Council, and the first member to enter the Higher Order is the chair and is called either a Patriarch or a Matriarch. Originally, the Council of the 3rd Order elected the Patriarch of the 4th Order, who invited a few to join. The 4th Order elected the Patriarch of the 5th Order. The Patriarch of the 5th Order invited several people, and the Council of the 5th Order elected the Patriarch of the 6th Order and so on. Recently a Patriarch was elected to the 9th Order by the Council of the 8th Order. The New Patriarch hasn't done anything regarding a 10th Order, so at the present, there is no 10th Order, officially, but it is starting to fill up already as a place for departed Druids to be posthumously nominated.

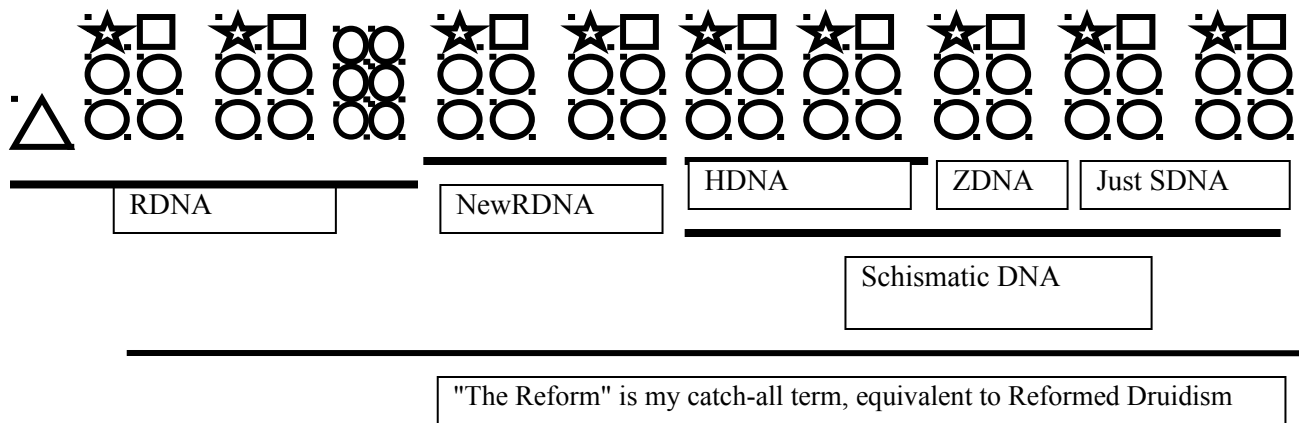
Of the 130+ current members of the Third Order, only about 15-20 have been invited to a Higher Order. The Patriarch/Matriarch of each Higher Order decides who can be invited, devises an initiation liturgy and can set other rules (sometimes allowing their associated Council to help in deciding these matters). Except for numbering and choosing Patriarchs/Matriarchs, no Higher Order is "above" each other; nor is membership in one Higher Order necessary before entering the next Order. In other words, you need not be a member of the 4th Order to enter the 5th Order, or in 5th Order to enter 6th Order, etc.

Councils of the Higher Orders cannot "over rule" the Council of Dalon Ap Landu (3rd Order), and in practice, very rarely hold meetings; leaving new members to pursue research and correspond individually amongst themselves out of sight.



Side Orders, Back Orders and Short Orders (See above graphic)

Due to the rarity of entering a Higher Order, and the fun of working on similar special interests by members of different Groves, a proliferation of "Side Orders", "Back Orders" and "Short Orders" have popped up. Most are open to members of all Orders (i.e. 1st to 3rd), although they may not be well advertised and are usually haphazardly run. In practice, anyone can start such lesser Orders, they can decide what rules, hobbies, or services they will do, and can even make a council, if they like, but their decisions only affect themselves, of course. Most are very simple and usually occupy less of their member's time than their regular Grove activities, unless you happen to be the Order's activity organizer! Some have their own councils, newsletters, reunions and projects.

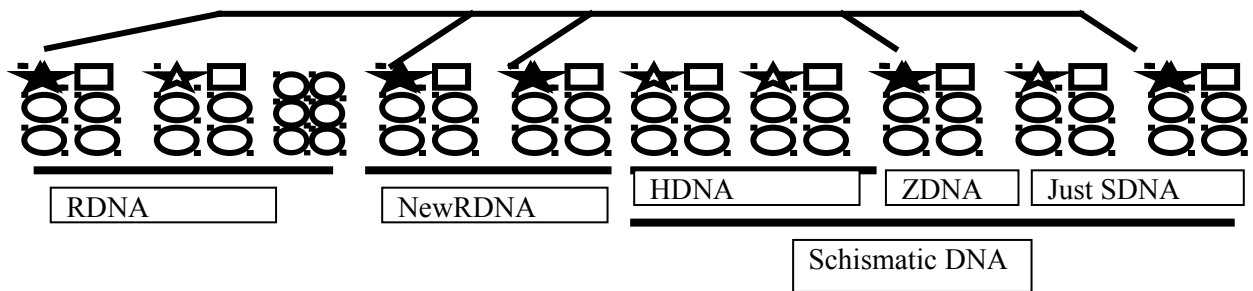


Branches of the Reform in the 1970s & 1980s (See above graphic)

This era is quite confusing, so feel free to skip it. In the mid-70s, due to dissatisfaction with the difficulty of making rules by the Council of Dalon Ap Landu (3rd Order), several Groves schismed off to form “Branches” on the “tree” of Reformed Druidism. First there was only the RDNA (and everyone was in it and the term was synonymous with Reformed Druidism), then in 1976, we had the emergence of NewRDNA (NRDNA), which would had several Groves planning to undertake new directions. Some NRDNA Groves wanted to make adaptations, restrict membership only to Neo-Pagans, and do intensive ritual experimentation and changes in the structure of their Groves; and they became the Schismatic Druids of North America (later branching into Hassidic DNA, Zen DNA and SDNA). Some Groves in the NRDNA didn’t want to make those many changes and stayed just NRDNA. Most of these members traced their descent from Bob Larson, rather than Isaac Bonewits. Those who didn’t make any proposed changes or schisms were, by default, considered in the RDNA. The definition of "Reformed Druidism" stretched to include these variants, and was no longer meaning just the RDNA, but also to include the NRDNA, SDNA, etcDNA and independent folks who just believed in the Basic Tenets.

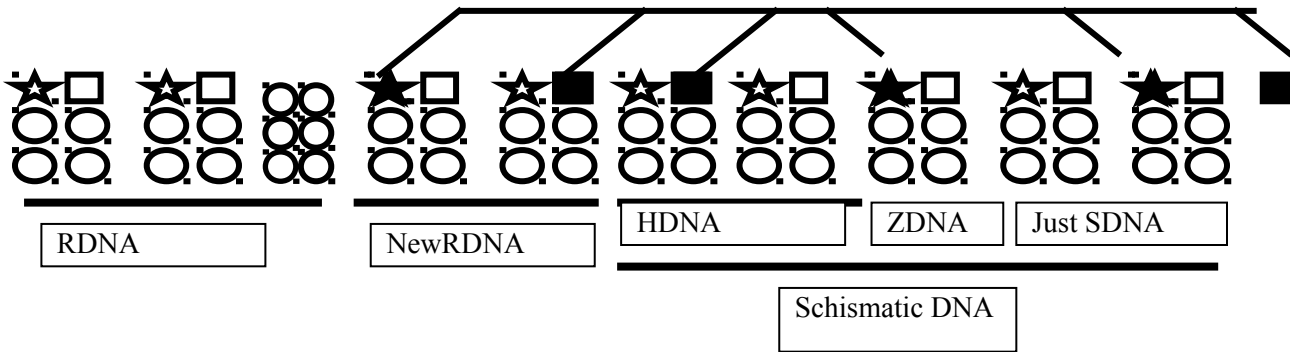
Each of these branches generally followed the same ordination formula for 1st through 3rd Orders; members of each branch would enter Higher Orders too. And a Third Order member of each Branch was still a member of the original Council of Dalon Ap Landu; but this Council of DAL had already stopped functioning at a practical level. Other means of interaction were quickly devised, but they also faded away (see below).

Many members of the SDNA Groves left in the 1980s to form a brand new fully Neo-Pagan religion, known as Ar nDraiocht Fein (A Druid Fellowship) in 1983, taking a few lessons from Reformed Druidism with them. Currently, in most RDNA & NRDNA Groves, members can belong to any or no religion; and do to the emphasis on Grove autonomy, and resulting Grove diversity, it is hard to describe a difference between RDNA & NRDNA Groves; except that NRDNA Groves TEND to be more older, have more Neo-Pagan members, are descended from the Berkeley Grove, they are more traditional, and are often located in California.



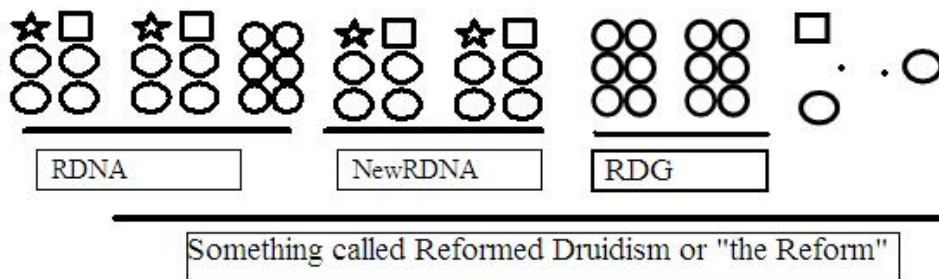
Provisional Council of Arch Druids (PCAD) (See above graphic)

In the Mid-70s for a few years, there was an attempt to provide better communication between Groves, due to the inability of routing all the correspondence through the Carleton Arch Druids (Chair of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu), due to their busy College student schedules. Arch Druids of various Groves could voluntarily join the Provisional Council (PCAD), and every year a different Grove would be charged with handling the central records of PCAD. They would vote on issues, and members of PCAD would follow those decisions in their Groves. After a few years, this fell apart due to lack of interest, agreement, and the rise of NRDNA newsletter publications that did their job of distributing news and information on voting. No decisions were apparently reached and it faded away, never to be seen.



Coalition Council of Dalon Ap Landu (CoCODAL) (See above graphic)

Another attempt at organization beyond the Grove level, was the CoCODAL. It was open to all members of the 3rd Order, not just Arch-Druids, and its decisions only affected those members [It's unclear how it would affect 1st and 2nd Order Druids of their Groves]. Between 1978-1982, it passed several rules by majority vote, before everything kind of fizzled out due to lack of direction and leadership. It is not certain, if members are still bound by their voting or not, and the CoCODAL seems more moribund than the CODAL, in theory.



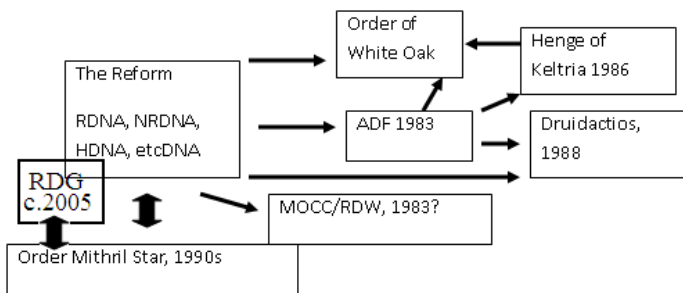
Order of Mithril Star (OMS) and Reformed Druids of Gaia (RDG) (See above graphic)

The Order of the Mithril Star is currently in an ambiguous position, they came to the RDNA after a long stay with the Church of All Worlds, and are a blend of CAW, RDNA and their own invention. It is rather uncertain whether they are in the widest boundaries of "The Reform" as a separate Branch or just a fancy side Order; or if they are a separate entity or a new type of relationship. Around 2005, the Reformed Druids of Gaia (RDG) established itself, mostly of members from OMS, who wanted a more adaptive version of Reformed Druidism, one that was international in scope. One of the reasons for this schism was distrust by several incidents and personal animosity between some members of the NRDNA and the OMS, such that OMS did not feel welcome on the RDNAtalk conference or Druid Inquirer website. By 2010, the split seems more and more settled, and the RDG has its own website, The Druid's Egg and a parallel system of initiation. They consider all Reformed Druids to be of RDG, but not all RDNA & NRDNA members reciprocate this feeling. We'll see how this develops. OMS, itself, has shrunk in size and activity as RDG has grown.

Diversity of Druidisms (See graphic below)

Now until 1983, except for a few fraternal Druid organizations with branches in the USA, Reformed Druidism was really the only publicly known type of Druidism. ADF provided a training program for Neo-Pagan Druids interested in Proto-Indo-European religious concepts, a legally recognized strong central church structure, a powerful liturgical formula, and a great number of council and rules. Over the years, many aspiring Druids joined ADF, borrowed some ideas and produced dozens of new groups of their own, often with an ethnic bias (Celtic, Nordic, Greek, Slavic, etc.) Henge of Keltria was the largest off-shoot, when this group split off for reasons of protest over training programs, charges of ineptitude, and a preference for only Celtic sources of inspiration.

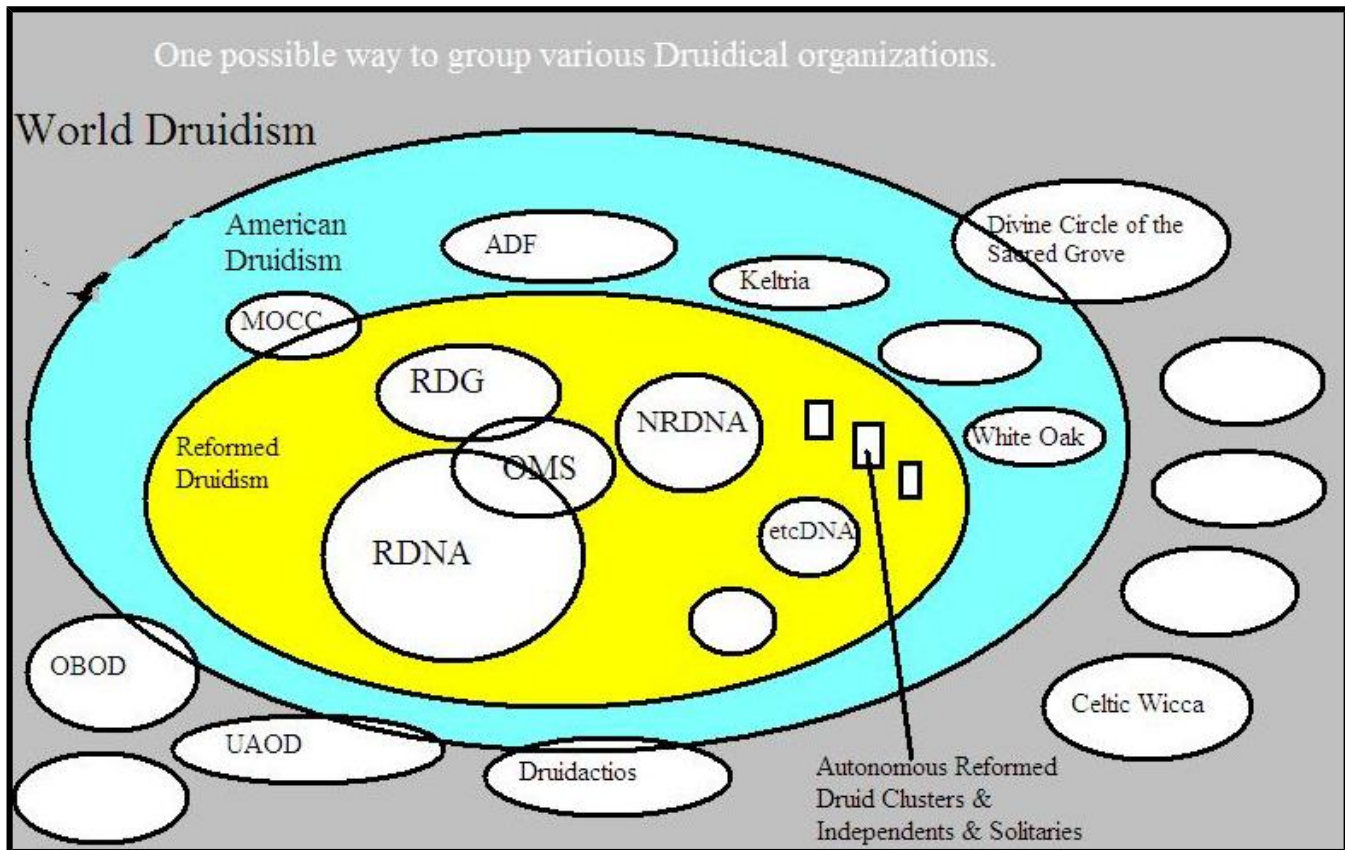
Druidactios' founder borrowed material from ADF, RDNA, fraternal groups in France and ideas of his own devising. Similarly, the Order of White Oak borrowed material from ADF, RDNA & Keltria, but produced primarily a core of material based on their own research.



Conclusion:
So, if you put together all these Groves, councils (extant & extinct), orders, various sub-organizations, schisms, wandering independents, and loosely affiliated religions, then you have a better idea of the baffling complexity and possibilities of Reformed Druidism.

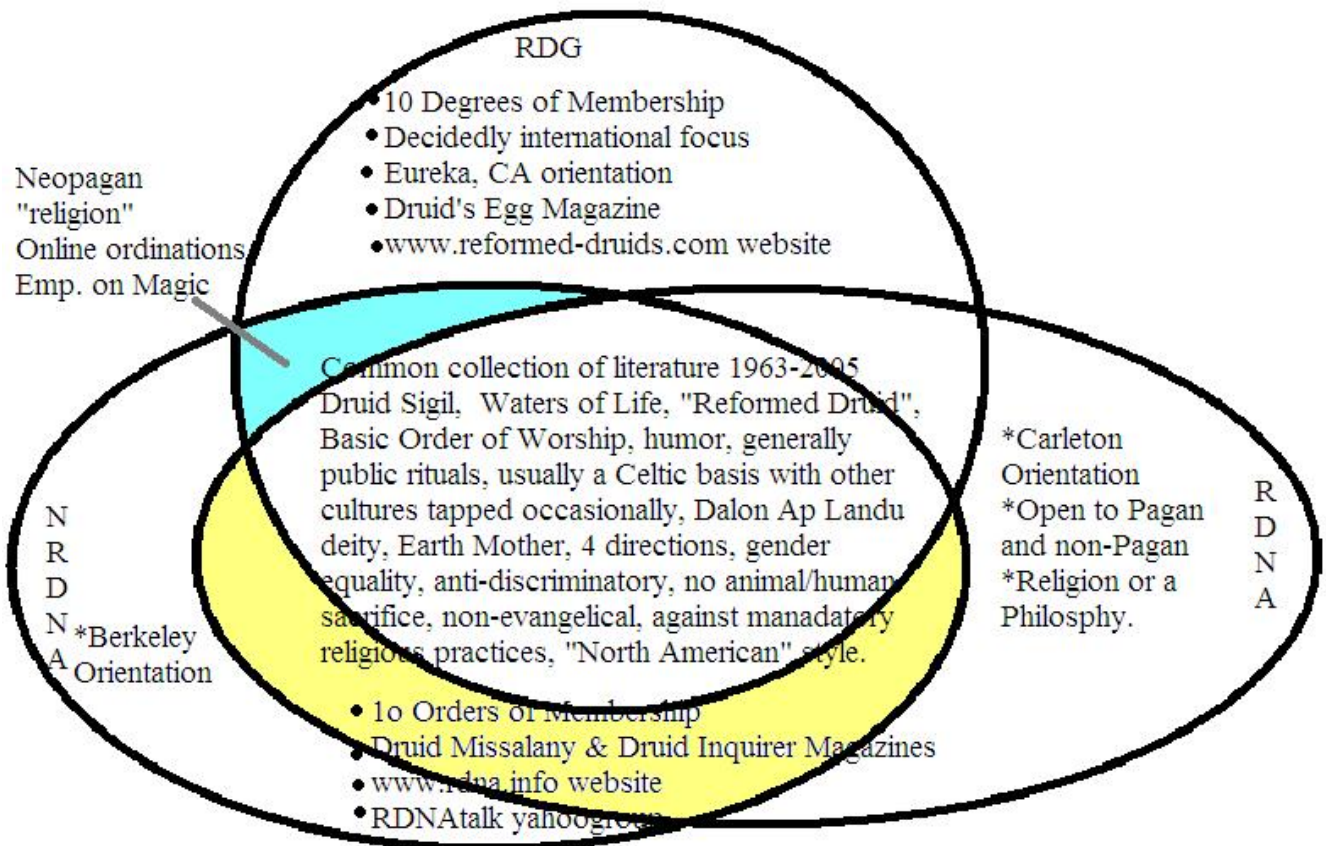


Another way to view Reformed Druidism and Its Relation to the American family of Druidical organizations.



Note: Some individuals consider OMS as not only for Reformed Druids. Each of these white circles may contain several Groves, Proto-Groves and/or individuals. Druidactios and DCSG are not historically well-liked by the other members of the American Druidic group. OBOD & UAOD are showing more activity in the North American area and cross-hybridization. Several "American" groups now have groves outside of North America also.





A chart showing general similarities and differences between the three largest existing branches of Reformed Druidism in 2010.

As you can tell, most of the branches of Reformed Druidism have a large overlap. When people ask how Reformed Druidism differs from ADF and Keltria, it usually boils down to a degree of organization. ADF is well-known as having the most established and elaborate corporate structure, seminary program, member-training program, liturgical complexity and organizational durability; and they still manage to have a lot of fun in the process. Even ADF, however, still has a lot of flexibility as compared to mainstream religions in the U.S. However practical that is, some Druids just don't want, need or care about that enough to go to that extreme. In this sense, Reformed Druidism more closely resembles OBOD in attitude, although organizationally and ritually it more closely resembles ADF and Keltria, due to historical reasons and interaction, but on a much simpler level. While the national structures of RDNA, ADF, Keltria, OBOD and MOCC are quite different, sometimes individual grove variations may be less so. For example, a very Celtic Neo-Pagan oriented NRDNA grove with a lot of grove bylaws may in fact very closely resemble a very loosely developed ADF grove. For those Reformed Druids sincerely interested in a fully developed Neo-Pagan religion with all the trimmings and stricter National organization, ADF or Keltria are the natural places to get transit to. However, much can be learned from cross membership with each group, as each is small, and active in different ways and fields. Many Druids move about their focus between Druid groups, with periods of solitariness or sabbatical, during a lifetime.

If you are curious about the difference between Neo-Pagan forms of Druidism and Wicca, read <http://www.adf.org/about/basics/druidism-wicca.html>

For the differences between Paleo-Pagans, Meso-Pagans and Neo-Pagans, read <http://www.neopagan.net/PaganDefs.html>

For a broad overview of the Neo-Pagan movement see the reading list in the UWP.

Different Types of Druidic Organizations (a very rough draft)

Here are 4 of the larger groups in U.S. Others might be added for comparison in later editions (e.g. RDG, MOCC, Whiteoak, UAOD)

Category	RDNA	ADF	Keltria	OBOD
Founded	1963	1983 off-shoot of RDNA	1986 off-shoot of ADF	1962 off-shoot of A.D.O.
Current Size	450 in Groves, 4000 overall 25-40 Groves & Proto-Groves	600+ 60+ Groves & Proto-Groves	300+ 5 Groves & study groups	2500+ 60-85 Groves & seed groups
Geographic Distribution	Midwest, North East, Far West, Japan, Canada, France	Evenly distributed across U.S., with UK & Canada	Midwest, Northeast & CA	British Isles, Canada, US, Australia and Europe
Largest Website	www.rdna.info	www.adf.org	www.keltria.org	www.druidry.org
On-line Conferences	RDNA talk on www.yahogroups.com		Keltria-L on www.yahogroups.com	Message board on www.druidry.org
Orientation	Eclectic overall Some Groves have a more limited mixture of inspirational sources.	Indo-European overall Groves tend to pick one or two sub-ethnic groups	Celtic overall Groves tend to pick one sub-ethnic (Irish or Welsh)	Eclectic overall Groves tend to have a few ethnic orientations or more "New Agey"
Overall Organization	Defunct national legislature, with largely-autonomous Groves and numerous feisty independents. Like the U.S. Articles of Confederation in mid 18th century. Clubby with tendencies to a church.	Similar to Federal system of balance between National centralized power and local Groves, as in the U.S. Constitution since the 18th century. A church.	Similar to Federal system of balance between National centralized power and local Groves, as in the U.S. Constitution since the 18th century. A tribe.	Semi-functional core body with semi-autonomous Groves scattered about. More of an initiatory fraternity than a church.
Judiciary Mechanism	No formal method of expulsion nationally. Groves may do so.	Formal expulsion and defrocking is possible.	Formal expulsion and defrocking is possible.	Uncertain
Official Statements	Very rare. None recently	Frequent	Infrequently	Infrequently
Detailed By-Laws	None	Yes	Yes	Uncertain
Elections	National has a council of 3rd Orders, who are appointed, but it is mostly inactive. Grove offices usually by elections	National and Grove offices by election	National and Grove offices by election	National offices appointed Grove offices by election
Leadership	Not prominent, less than esteemed in many cases Council of 3rd Order priests is mostly ceremonial. Central office is inactive Groves have Arch Druids 3rd Order Priests select folk to become priests.	Prominent & esteemed Central office. Arch Druid of entire ADF Groves have Senior Druids Seminarian graduates may be given 3rd circle priesthood	Esteemed Central office Groves have Senior Druids Seminarians graduates raised to 3rd Circle priesthood.	Prominent & Esteemed Central office Groves have Senior Druids
Fees	None overall. Groves might.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Membership Rules	Just the 2 Basic Tenets. Groves have local rules.	Yes.	Yes.	A few perhaps
Written Records	Extensive collected archives and compendiums produced.	Numerous liturgies and some essays collected and a few small manuals	A few small manuals, more oral based.	A few small manuals Several books by prominent members.
Digitized Records	Mostly digitized	Partially	Partially	A small amount
Magazine	Druid Chronicler 1977-82 Druid Missal-Any 8/year 1983-1991, 2000-now	Druid's Progress 1984-1995 Oaken Leaves 4/year 1997-now	Keltria 1989-1999 Henge Happenings 4/year 1999-now	None
Seminary Program	Nothing formal.	Formal program	Formal Program.	Nothing formal
Study Program	Nothing formal	Formal Program	Formal Program	Formal Program
Tax-Exempt Status	No Groves currently have this status.	Most Groves	Most Groves	Some Groves
Grove Set-Up	Simple	Complicated	Moderate	Moderate
Humor	Prominent	Moderate	Moderate	Less Prominent

Record of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu

[While the words and instructions of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu (which is the collective body of the Third Order Druids), are not graven in stone, they are generally accepted statements about how the Reform, as a whole, is organized. An astute reader can find all kinds of loopholes, and that is okay, since many of the passages were made with the intention of allowing a liberal interpretation. Most of the decisions don't directly affect the average layperson, but rather mostly shape the duties and privileges of the Third Order. Bracketed words for gender inclusivity have been added by myself in 1994 and are warranted by the intentions of later legislation. -Scharding]

7 May 1964. Voted:

Patriarch

To elevate David H. Fisher to the office and order of the Patriarch of the Order of Grannos (the 4th healing springs).

Liturgy

To adopt the Order of Worship of the Carleton Grove (as formulated by David H. Fisher) as the basic order of worship of the Reformed Druids of North America.

26 May, 1964. Interpreted:

Higher Orders

(a) that the purpose of the higher orders is to stimulate priests of the 3rd Order to continued spiritual inquiry, and are intended to honor achievement rather than tenure.

(b) That the higher orders are equal in the sense that no shall be considered a prerequisite for any other (except with regard to the formula for the election of Patriarchs *[or Matriarchs]*).

(c) That direct confirmation of the selection of each priest for a higher order must be made by the Patriarch *[or Matriarch]* concerned.

(d) That the ceremony of induction may be performed by any member of the order.

27 January, 1965. Voted:

Council

(a) To declare in perpetuity that the Arch Druid of Carleton shall be the Chairman Ex-officio of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu.

(b) To reserve to all the priests, collectively in the Council of Dalon Ap Landu, the highest authority of the Reformed Druids of North America.

Priestesses

(a) To delegate to the priest the right to individually consecrate priestesses to any order which they (the priests) may hold.

(b) To allow priestesses to hold the office of Arch Druid, provided that they have first vigiled and been granted the right to perform the ceremony by the Council of Dalon Ap Landu.

Interpreted:

Missions

(a) That any priest has the right to conduct worship and receive members into the First and Second Orders.

(b) That no one has the right to consecrate priests of the Third Order except the duly elected Arch Druid of a legally constituted Grove, i.e., a Grove which has adopted a constitution and filled by

election the offices of Arch Druid, Preceptor, and Server.

(c) That the ceremony for the consecration of a Third Order priest as adopted at Carleton may not be altered without the permission of the Council.

(d) That the local Groves retain the right to organize themselves in any way which will best serve their needs.

Liturgy

(a) That the waters-of-sleep shall be used during the winter half (Geimredh & Earrach) and the waters-of-life shall be reserved for the summer half (Samradh and Foghamhar), except when they are needed for healing or for the consecration of a priest. The priest shall wear the red ribbon when consecrating the waters-of-life, and he *[or she]* shall wear the white ribbon when consecrating the waters-of-sleep, both as the mark of the 3rd Order.

(b) That the white robe is the mark of the Druid, and it may be worn by any member; except that a Patriarch *[or Matriarch]* may wear a black robe (in honor of the first Patriarch), but may not at the same time wear the mark of any high order of which he *[or she]* is not Patriarch *[or Matriarch]*.

(c) That the first Patriarch *[or Matriarch]* of each higher order shall establish the ceremony and identifying mark of his *[or her]* order.

(d) That the individual Groves retain the right to establish any such identifying marks for its officers as it sees fit, provided that they do not conflict with any other marks already adopted.

29 March, 1966. Voted: (by mail)

Priestesses

(a) To grant automatically to all priestesses who have conducted a vigil the right to perform the ceremonies of Reformed Druidism.

(b) To allow a priestess, while holding the office of Arch Druid, to consecrate priests of the Third Order and priestesses unto the Order which she herself holds.

20 April, 1966. Voted: (by mail)

Council

(a) To require the Arch Druid of Carleton, upon their retirement from office, to prepare a report on the state of Reformed Druidism at Carleton, including such information on Reformed Druid activities elsewhere as they may have received, and including a list of Council members and Council resolutions; this report to be submitted to all members of the Council, the expense of the printing and distribution of said report to be fixed by him and charged to those who receive it.

(b) To require each Arch Druid to promptly forward to the Arch Druid of Carleton notice of the formation of any Grove and the name and address of any priest consecrated to the Third Order in that Grove.

1 May, 1971 Voted: (by mail)

Priestesses

(a) To subordinate all previous resolutions of the Council concerning priestesses to this one.

(b) To allow a priestess who has conducted a vigil and who has been consecrated to the Third Order all prerogatives of the order, consecrate priests and priestesses to the Third Order. In token of this she is known as a priestess of the Third Order.

(c) To allow a priestess of the Third Order who has been consecrated to a high order and whose consecration has been confirmed by the Patriarch of the given order all prerogatives of that order. Again, she is known as a priestess of the given order.

(d) To abolish all restrictions other than those applying equally to priests on the number of high orders to which a priestess of the Third Order may be consecrated.

A Summary of How the Council of Dalon Ap Landu Kind of Worked

1996

1. All Third-Orders maintained a current address with the Carleton Arch Druid, who tried not to lose the mailing list.
2. All new Groves were announced to the Carleton Arch Druid.
3. The Carleton Arch Druid prepared a report when they retire.
4. Vote proposals are forwarded to the Carleton Arch Druid.
5. The Carleton Arch Druid then writes to all the Third-Orders and started a debate.
6. If a quorum of the Third Orders vote (say at least 1/8 or 1/3 or 1/2, this is uncertain), and all participants agree, it passed.

It is unlikely that the Council will ever return, because the principle of Grove independence is too strongly established and at least half of the Third Orders are without current addresses on record. It also seems that it is unlikely that any vote could gain unanimity of responses. But existing, without functioning, is a purpose in itself, in an odd fashion.

Solitary Druidism

by Mike the Fool, Habitat Grove 2010

I would like to reiterate that it is not necessary to found a Proto-Grove, participate in a conference, or join an existing Grove to be a Reformed Druid. You can go the solitary route.

The reason that I discuss Groves so much, is that they are more complicated things for new-comers to organize satisfactorily for themselves. Most folk have had little experience running a religious group. There are also many benefits to being solitary. In fact, even if you are in a Grove, you probably spend more than 95% of your time away from other Druids anyway. Many Druids devise their own solitary rites or customs to fit their extra needs.

More than 90% of current Reformed Druids are not in a Grove of any type. Some call them hermits, independents, inactive or retired, but they are still Reformed Druids; many with rich personal spiritual lives full of discovery and deepening awareness.

Most people choose a varying degree of "Groveness" and solitary activity. Some like to attend regular services, others only big festivals, some just like to contribute to conferences, and some like to teach certain skills to members. Others just want to have the nominal affiliation with Reformed Druids, but desire little to do with other Reformed Druids on any regular basis.

Sometimes Reformed Druids, like cicadas or mushrooms, go through periods of frantic Grove participation and then withdraw into their private sphere for a long stretch of time before emerging again when conditions line up.

I have felt that while others may assist or speed up certain discoveries by interaction; they are not necessary for me. Like the traveler who keeps walking, even the furthest journey will be completed on one's own with enough time, patience and diligence.

Druids don't tend to have a firm final destination, but have a good idea which direction they need to go and this may eventually be at odds with the interests of the nearby Groves. Some stages must be done on one's own.

Sometimes a group's interaction will unearth buried ideas, but other times their voices may drown out quieter sources of creativity that need to be tapped and explored carefully. Some divine relationships are just too personal to be adequately shared. Most mainstream religions recognize the need of sabbaticals and retreats even for its clergy members to recuperate.

Think of the reclusive artist, sometimes they go to a class to pick up skills, other times they withdraw to perfect their talents and build up a repertoire on their own. Occasionally they later share the fruits of their study or teach their skills.

Most Groves do not yet have detailed personal journey-type initiation traditions to lead you on all parts of your journey, distinct from an ordination. When you can't get that from others, you must look to yourself and hope that other sources will avail themselves to guide you then.

Sometimes, the denied object is more tempting to the seeker than the freely given object of greater worth. If you don't have time to teach many people, making yourself difficult to find is one method of selecting new students, by winnowing out the less determined folk. Is it a coincidence that the object of a quest is often found in a distant swampy castle or on a mountain?

Of course, some Druids are solitary because they just aren't people-friendly. They prefer the company of animals, plants, books or their own thoughts. It's a good deal for all, being solitary makes them happier, and the rest of us don't have irritating crotchety codgers to deal with (just kidding).

So consider the option of being a solitary Druid during some periods of your Druidical journey. Breaks are good.

Finally, one is never really alone in Nature.

9 Simple Steps for Founding an RDNA Grove or Proto-Grove

By Mike the Fool, 2010

First the need for a grove must exist.

1. Someone must collect 3 or more members and declare a Proto-Grove.
2. Pick a name, look at a sample constitution (Part 4 of ARDA 2), choose roles, get a mailbox or group-email contact, determine the length of office, require & list the two basic tenets and whatever else is also important, delegate responsibilities (if any).
3. Hold elections for your Proto-Grove.
4. Send your Constitutions to Carleton Arch Druid, Carleton College, Northfield, MN 55057. I'd like a copy too.
5. Contact other Groves and share the good news. It could be the start of a beautiful friendship. Occasionally tune in to the news, dull as it is, at The Druid Inquirer news desk and just tell us how you're doing.
6. If you want to be listed on my site or initiated, contact mikerdna@hotmail.com and I'll tell you if someone is in the area to help out. Tell me your Grove's name, general location (city), rough membership estimate, contact address (internet is best), any homepages you've built; and a few paragraphs to describe your Grove. Send a short blurb every few months to mikerdna@hotmail.com to the Druid Inquirer magazine.
7. Go and do your thing. Use the Proto-Grove ritual format until you have a Third Order Druid and elect them as an Arch-druid, making your group a full Grove.
8. Eventually, find someone to go through the proper Third Order vigil process. Perhaps one of your members would like to do the vigil for the Third Order (or again, perhaps no one wants to yet, but you can still be a Proto-Grove.) Contact the closest Third Order Druid to personally assist you or talk to Mike about initiation problems. Afterward, tell Mike, and he'll record it his unofficial copy of the Record of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu.
9. When the group is not needed, break up and tell the rest of us.

Grove Voting

Groves can decide their own rules for in-Grove legislation. Most are democratic. Some Groves have different rules on determining active membership based on attendance, payment of nominal membership fees, or other means. You can have votes open or secret or mail by pre-arrangement. You can hold annual elections or have seasonal or life-time appointments. You can restrict candidates to those of certain Orders or be open to all and ordain those elected as needed. You can create new offices. You can restrict one office to a person, or allow multiple offices. You may require a quorum of membership at one or multiple election meetings to pass. Some categories of referendums may require 51%, 2/3, or unanimity among voters. You can have speeches, debates, correspondence of other types of discussion.

It's all really up to your Grove what is the most practical and fair system. Choose wisely

Choosing a Grove Name

By Mike the Fool, 2010

Names give a sense of identity, dignity and **existence** to what was previously a collection of people in a place. When you choose a grove name you need to consider its internal significance to your grove, how it will be viewed by outsiders and potential new members, and whether someone else is already using it.

Unless you are the sole-founder and member, you're probably going to consult with the other members about the name and put it up for a vote. There are a few conventions for selecting a name. Some choose a location that's easy to pinpoint on a map, like St. Louis Grove, East Bay Grove, Alberta Grove, etc. But you could also choose a name like "Red Rose Grove of Detroit".

Other groves prefer to choose mythological names of deities especially revered in your grove. However, if you pick a common or popular one (Bridget, Dagda, Morrigan) then you might want to add something to distinguish yourself from all the other Bridget Groves in the world, like "Bridget's Anvil Grove".

Most Reformed Druid internal newsletters list grove updates like this: "Habitat Grove: News of Quebec". But, if you were advertising your grove or Proto-Grove in an outside public venue, a list of various new age groups or one a Druid links webpage, it's probably good to list them like; "Angus Og Proto-Grove, RDNA" or "Dagda's Club Grove, NRDNA" so that people don't confuse you with groves from ADF, Keltria, MOCC, OBOD, AOD, etc.

It's probably a good idea for your grove members to set up a Facebook account to keep in touch with each other in your grove's name, and possibly set up a web-page in your name also. You might even want to copyright or trademark the name, if you are particularly possessive about it.

Musings On Grove Formation

By Mike the Fool, DC Grove, 2004 (2010)

I apologize in advance for my long winded observations, I hope they will clarify some general traditions about Grove formation, by dealing with it as a single subject.

There comes a time in many a Druid's lives when they wish to begin holding services or hold meetings in a semi-organized framework, and the idea of Grove formation arises. The first problem that arises is that no one knows how to found a Grove, and second, there are often no Third Order Druids present in the group to run the traditional services and do the usual ordinations, and/or initiations. What's an enthusiastic go-getter Druid to do?

Well, first off, I have to cautiously say that I'm not the final *de-jure* authority on the issue, merely one well-informed voice among many. That being said, I have unofficially ended up as the *de-facto* networker, facilitator and advisor of Groves at my website (www.rdna.info) where I give some simple guidelines and list the various Groves and contact information for people who want to reach a pre-existing Grove. So I thought it would be appropriate to share a summary of the thoughts on the various pros and cons of Groves.

Benefits of Grove Formation

The major benefit of Grove formation is probably a stronger sense of identity that often comes by slapping a label onto something. You are longer "Joe's friends who meet in Joe's backyard" but you are suddenly "The apple Grove that meets in Joe's backyard." Names have a power in themselves to some. As always, a title is an abstract concept, but titles are important to us, providing legitimacy and *gravitas* to a venture or person; a shorthand indicating certain powers or authority are inherent in them. Perhaps it's only the "magic feather" effect of Dumbo?

Like a corporation, a Grove is an entity that includes the members, but it also exists in a sense as a separate entity in both legal and metaphysical terms. In a Grove, there are elections for Arch Druid, Preceptor and Server; (or President, Secretary, Treasurer if you want secularly titled folks for dealing separately with financial/secular Grove business) and matters can be voted upon, you advertise for recruiting, design logos and stationary, send representatives to inter-faith council, have members admitted in various formal ways, apply for charity status, print letterhead stationary, buy group land in a forest, produce team T-shirts, and a dozen other nifty non-liturgical ways to build brand-loyalty. Mascots, secret hand-shakes and matching belt-buckles are, of course, all optional.

Traditionally (I'll use that word a lot in this essay), only the Arch Druid (being a Third Order Druid) of an active Grove would perform ordinations of 1st, 2nd or 3rd Order, so the founding a Grove was seen as a necessary pre-step for missionary expansion & liturgical activities in a region. Some Groves were even ephemerally founded simply for ordaining one or two folks in question, and then promptly disbanded after their purpose was finished. Most Groves in practice act rather independently, with nearly complete sovereignty, rarely interacting with their neighbors, following the RDNA traditions, customs and services as their Grove members interpret and elaborate upon them. Some Groves work closely together, holding occasional joint services, with large cross-over memberships, or on certain projects.

Other Groves may disapprove if a particular Grove goes

boisterously off-course from the standard patterns (such as restricting membership to those of certain faiths, sacrificing mushrooms or Twinkies, becoming too serious, requiring ridiculous fees, or censoring the modes of expression) but there is little they can do except criticize or distance themselves from that offensive Grove; which they might actually do. Running a Grove can be a fun and exhilarating project, full of memorable events, conversations and interactions, but that is not always the case.

Costs of Grove Formation

On the flip side of the equation, as with any contentious group of anarchistic leaning spiritual wanderers, you also introduce the specter of small-group politics, group-think, power plays, and the misappropriation of funds. Many Groves don't outlive the departure of their founding Arch Druid, the owner of the meeting property, or another mainstay of the group, leading to what I call "Grove collapse." Many leaders or supporters may be in danger of eventually suffering from "Grove burn-out" due to the inherent tendency of one or two heroic people doing all the logistic, financing or other grunt work; without adequate compensation or praise from some less motivated members. It happens over and over again, and seems to be a fact of Druidism, Wicca and Neo-Paganism; although a few Groves manage the transition and will last long longer than a decade.

When a Grove collapses, like other works of love and devotion, it can be a depressing series of wrenching events that can depress involved members for years to come. As with marriage, reproduction or other long-term commitments, you should also maturely consider the pros and cons of investing a lot of time and effort into producing a new religious group entity.

The very action of defining a group carries implied inclusive and exclusive components. By defining who is in your group, you are often in a subtle way also defining who is not in your group; which bothers some members who feel that some things are better left unclarified or defined (what I call strategic ambiguity) and part of "keeping it simple, stupid."(KISS)

Three Alternative Paths

The way I personally see it, there have been three standard ways to form a Grove, of which each aspiring wannabee Arch Druid should be aware. You might come up with some new models, but these are the ones that I've seen most frequently among the 85 past entities so far in the Reform. First there is a missionary Grove. Second there is a Proto-Grove start. And third, there is a hiving Grove. Let's look at them in some depth.

Missionary Groves were the first model during the early 1960s when various Third Order Druids from the Carleton Grove left after four years and went to graduate school or to start a job in another part of the country. (Obviously, the majority of Druids after graduation pursued non-Grove activities or solitary paths.) Back then, the missionary Third Order would arrive in a new area, which would naturally have no pre-existing Druid groups, and decide that they would like to have services and pursue Druidical pursuits with new friends. They'd gather three or more people together and vote on a local constitution, often similar to the Carleton Constitution. Then the Third Order would ordain a First and Second Order Druid at the first service to take the usual elected constitutional and/or liturgical offices. Then a copy of the constitution was sent to the most current Carleton Arch Druid (as the Chairman of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu; the overseeing body of Third Order activities), who has apparently always approved it, although the busy student didn't always remember to write back. A permanent fixed site and altar might be consecrated, or the Grove may select the most convenient site for each season. Annual elections would naturally follow and updates were sent to Carleton, where they are promptly misplaced or put in the

Archives. That's actually a very simple system, although there were some procedural debates of the chicken/egg sort of whether a Third Order Druid can consecrate Waters for ordination of 1st & 2nd Order Druids without already having a pre-existing Server (of 1st Order) and Preceptor (of 2nd Order) at the service. The general consensus is that the Third Order can do so, when necessary, in such initial situations as Grove formation and emergencies. (See early apocrypha for the debate.) We have existing approved guidelines for this model, but rarely are we such sticklers, and many a naughty unregistered Grove has happily poked around for decades in communion with other Groves. (Please note a stern wagging finger is implied here.)

So how about the Proto-Groves? Well, the missionary model worked fine for 10 years, then in the 1970s with the rise of Neo-Pagan and Celtic Reconstructionists, the RDNA faced the novel problem of many people popping out of the woodwork in distant locations wanting to start RDNA-style Groves with no Third Order Druid present. It was a perplexing dilemma to many Third Orders, since how can we tell them they can't be Druids, when we started our own tradition from scratch without any acknowledged lineage? Possibly this was because we were the only accessible model at that time (especially with Isaac's fame) in an age before the wonders of the Internet. Can a maestro, in love with the music, object to another maestro performing and the same concerto, even one she wrote herself? Imitation has been called the most sincere form of flattery. They naturally encouraged the budding groups to start new strains of Druidism, but they were persistent about joining us, so Brother Isaac Bonewits devised and promoted the Proto-Grove model.

Now, in the Proto-Grove system, you'd make a temporary constitution (perhaps the model of the President, Secretary, Treasurer) and would hold diminutive versions of the Order of Worship services that Isaac wrote, omitting or reworking the wording of the sacrifice and consecration of Waters of Life, until the pseudo-messianic arrival of an itinerant Third Order. This Proto-Grove model allowed them a pseudo-Grove status to advertise more members, feel a sense of belonging, and they could devise their own side-services to meet their needs until one could be trained to the Third Order during visits to the nearest full Grove, or if a wandering Third Order passed through their area. Technically, since only an active Arch Druid can ordain, the visiting Third Order would have to be temporarily elected as an Arch Druid before ordaining the local members. Once a new local Third Order existed in the Grove, and after a Server and Preceptor were ordained, a full Constitution was enacted and a copy sent to the record keeper of the Carleton Arch Druid. Then they became a full Grove in the fullest good standing with tradition. This convoluted process may seem a little confusing the first time you read through it, but it tends to work out well within a year with a little effort.

Thirdly, Grove hiving is when an existing Grove splits its membership apart into two or three pieces for reasons of either enormous size of membership or internal faction fighting. This notably happened in the Berkeley Grove in the late 1970s. Berkeley was an old Grove, with long-term, consistent membership and a slow build-up of several Third Order Druids, each with their own visions and developing agendas. Eventually a mixture of strong personalities, keen organizational preferences and avid revisionism rent the group asunder into the Berkeley Grove of the Bay Area, the Clann na Bracheta Grove, the Hazlenut Grove of San Jose and the Live Oak Grove of Orinda; all within a few miles of each other.

In a hiving model, one Grove usually keeps the originally title and the other Groves go off and establish new constitutions and elect new officers, although they may actually use the same ritual/meeting site, using it in turns like a timeshare arrangement. This is similar to a separation agreement in a marriage, hopefully

on friendly terms, but often not so. Although Wicca & magic-intensive groups may have a practical limit to the number of attendees, Druidism is more amenable oriented to mass-gatherings. It is still conceivable that a really charismatic Grove may outgrow the facilities or other factors and necessitate a spin-off Grove. However, I haven't seen this yet, since we could hold services in an open-air football stadium, if necessary.

The Third Order Factor

As you can see, the key factor to traditional Grove formation is a present Third Order. Like the Catholic and Anglican models, the RDNA Orders were laid out in a sort of "top-down" hierarchy depending on "apostolic succession". All 1st, 2nd and 3rd Order Druids are ordained by an Arch Druid who was ordained herself into the Third Order by a previous Arch Druid of another Grove; and so on back to David Fisher in 1963 whose ordination is a mystery. However, there is also a "bottom-up" democratic element, in that the congregation must elect a Third Order Druid into the position of the Arch Druid. If they are unsatisfied, they can vote for another viable candidate next year (or earlier) into the position or they can abandon the Grove. So, in a sense, part of a Third Order Druid's ability to consecrate ordinations or hold services comes from his or her elected position in the Grove, in addition to their innate possession of the Order's title and experience, and the blessing of the higher powers. In this way, the leadership and the Grove are symbiotically dependent upon each other for purpose and existence. No Grove, no Arch Druid. No Arch Druid, no Grove. But remember, you can still be a Druid without being active in a Grove.

All Third Order Druids are automatically members of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu (headed by the often busy Carleton AD) and must follow their simple rules for ordination and Grove formation, but each Third Order Druid (who becomes an Arch Druid) may ordain any viable candidate they wish without seeking permission from the Council (or they may also decline on their own criteria, although this is rare). There is no known council for 1st or 2nd Druids as yet (those folk usually being more concerned with in-Grove matters), although the Higher Orders (4-10) and side-orders have councils with their own rules. The Higher Orders are to encourage further efforts by Third Orders and many side-orders have been opened up as Special Interest Groups for usually all Druids to pursue interests in a less hierarchical manner.

If you can't convince a Third Order to visit your Proto-Grove in a reasonable period, then you must select a member to visit a nearby existing Grove to become ordained; or roust up an old "retired" Third Order Druid to do the work. You've heard the saying, "If Mohammad won't go to the mountain, then the mountain must come to Mohammad." There is a bit of an element of a quest involved here, especially when entry to a Higher Order is involved.

Now each Third Order Druid has a free hand in how they choose people to be ordained. Some Arch Druids, like myself, will ordain quite quickly, on the spot even, if the ordainer finds the ordainee to be sincere, honorable, reasonably sane, of good humor, witty, benevolent in manner, reverently irreverent, possessing that deep vocational love for the Earth and bearing some quality whiskey. Other Arch Druids are slower to warm to a stranger or short-term guest and may require attendance at several services, spend a while in residence, or require lengthy correspondence before a grudgingly granted mutually-agreed meeting. Indeed, in retrospect, some people even like to work hard like this for their ordinations, "earning them" through sweat equity in RDNA activities, although I also tend to take into account their previous experience before joining the RDNA.

Your best bet is to ask around to the different Groves or seek out retired ADs (I might suggest a few) of a compatible

nature. The Carleton Grove in MN and myself in DC are usually of the former method, which tends to be most conducive to ordainees residing in remote locations. Naturally, Carleton has heart-breakingly history-drenched beautiful scenery, lots of young perky members, and some great camping options. I would highly recommend that every Third Order Druid visit the campus at least once in their lifetimes. I call it the Mecca of the Middle-West.

Go-It-Alone Option

As we've explained, when access to a Third Order has proven impossible or resolutely impractical, the ordination system traditionally ground to a halt and Grove formation stopped at the Proto-Grove stage. And sometimes waiting for Fate to change our fortunes is good, too. Some Groves, like Carleton (1985-1993) did self-ordinations, and devised their own services "until such time as we are blessed by a wandering Third". Naturally, some of the self-made RDNA Proto-Groves eventually preferred their self-devised non-order-dependent services (originally temporary fill-ins) to the traditional ones, and often the Earth-mother seemed to respond equally favorably, so some would say Grove legitimacy is more about pleasing fellow mortals. A few went off to form their own religions, such as Reformed Druidic Wicca over in Oklahoma, without ever becoming a functional RDNA Grove, and they seem happy enough. So that's always a fourth course to consider, although you should not be surprised if some "Ordered" Arch Druids do get a bit huffy about these other self-initiated Arch Druids. Hierarchies invariably tend to be self-supportive that way and very particular about membership rules, so even the best of the RDNA might get some twinges of conscience in these matters. I think most in the RDNA still feel some sense of common purpose and belonging to this sprawling family of "American Druidism" that includes such spin-offs like RDW/MOCC, ADF and Keltria, among others.

Long-Distance Ordination

A fifth option is the technology's ability to supersede the tyranny of distance. Telephone ordination was first performed in the 1960s by David Frangquist to ordain a Carleton AD during the breakage of succession in the 1967-1968, when there were unannounced study-abroad shenanigans of the previous AD. I've done a handful of these myself, due to reasons of extreme distance, where the likelihood of meeting was scarce in the next few years (e.g. people at Thule AFB in Greenland on a 3 year tour of duty). In fact, I did one in August for Sister Colleen in Alaska. I see them as equally effective and minimally sufficient for the task, but aesthetically less than a third as enjoyable or memorable, as some traditions are best enjoyed in the subtle gestures, the shared sights & sounds, and physical mannerisms that occur during in-person ordinations. But whenever possible, I try to first arrange for a meeting with someone closer to them, and only perform them for overseas visits nowadays.

My own general strategy in those telephone cases was to have a long period of frequent written and telephonic conversation with the new person beforehand; to better understand their needs and style. After that, I had a service at my Grove, and retained some of the (hopefully) successfully consecrated Waters-of-Life and resealed them in a bottle. I then mailed the consecrated whiskey, a sealed copy of the services, reading material, ribbons and a Druid Sigil necklace to the ordaineewannabee. I discussed a few final matters with the ordaineewannabee at sunset (their time), ordained them to 1st and 2nd (with part of sent Waters), sent them off to start a fire and vigil away the evening. Myself, I bided my time in late-night walks in DC's nearby forests until I was contacted by them by cell-phone at sunrise (their time). I blessed the phone by the power of Taranis, establishing a contact with them through the planet and air itself (we're all just out of sight of each other, you

know) and performed the services and pack them off to get some sleep. I try to limit myself to 4 or 5 vigils in a year, for personal reasons or ordination purposes, due to the amount of effort, time and energy I have to invest.

My only concern is that the newly ordained folks will miss the aesthetic stimulation and gestures, pacing and mannerisms, unless they see a service in person, and the way I prepare sacrifices and set up the site. To alleviate that problem, I'm considering the idea of making a "training video tape" to accompany long distance ordination; but my other alternative for now, is to recommend that when circumstances later permit, the ordaineewannabee should visit CA, MN or DC and attend one or two traditional services to enhance their understanding of Druidism further. Certainly they might wish to continue correspondence with me, their mentor and other active Groves during the initial start-up period when those predictable mini-dilemmas will arise.

Final Notes on Groving

Ordinations traditionally only occur during the Season of Life [i.e. between Beltane (May 1st) and Samhain (Nov 1st)], except in periods of disaster or pressing emergency. This is because, it is only during that time that the Waters of Life, crucial to ordinations, can be traditionally consecrated; and even then it's up to the Earth-Mother. During the Season of Sleep (i.e. Samhain to Beltane) only the Waters of Sleep (plain water) are usually consecrated in our tradition. Therefore, there is only a six-month window for ordinations every year, and you must plan ahead accordingly. 1st and 2nd ordinations conceivably can be inserted into a standard Order of Worship service on the same day, although most Druids like to separate them by varying periods of time to have a period of growing.

Third Order ordinations take place only after a supervised (but solitary) vigil of at least seven hours duration (usually sunset to sunrise) by a fire (if possible) without sleep, with the ordination at dawn the next day by the Arch Druid, and attended by any other Third Order Druids in the area. I should note, that I highly encourage a 24 hour period of awakeness (sunrise, noon, sunset & night) when vigiling. Some Groves have further elaborated the various ordinations, so they might not even closely resemble the services in the ARDA liturgies on first glance. Some Groves send out emissaries to visit and discuss matters for a short while with the vigiler during the night, add extra quests, questions, and others play wry pranks on them. There is a lot of room for invention here, and a few traditionalists will object to adding, but they certainly hesitate if you remove material.

I could go on for hours longer on matters related to Groves, but I think I've laid out some recognizable rational frameworks for making a decision "to Grove or not to Grove" and my next article will address the important factors to contemplate before making the choice to enter Orders, or to vigil for the Third Order. Please refer to the following recommended resources if you want to found a Grove, or contact me at mikerdna@hotmail.com As always, Druidism can be as simple or complicated as you want it to be, but always leave the same option to your other members.

Further resources:

General History of Reformed Druidism in Part 8
The apocrypha of Part 2 describes a great deal about the purpose of ordination, Groves and liturgy.

Thoughts on Ordinations

By Mike of DC Grove, 2004 (2010)

A discussion of Grove formation would not be complete without a discussion on the process of seeking Ordinations, particularly the Third Order when setting up a Grove. How does being an ordained Druid really differ from being an associated Druid in the RDNA tradition? I can not speak definitively ex-cathedra on the matter of ordination, and these are only my observations based on my research, interviews and practice. However, my words might bring some aspects of the processes into clearer focus, and assist you in making your own decisions about ordination.

Some Lengthy Background Notes

You might wonder at why the various Orders even exist. The Orders in the RDNA were probably devised as a result of several factors common to the Founders at Carleton College four decades ago. One reason was that the college required elected officers for the club's constitution. Second, several members were from hierarchical religious backgrounds, like Episcopalianism, with a clear layered structure of laymen, deacons, priests, bishops & archbishops (although there were no Orders at the original services). Third, more than a few of the Founders had been members of fraternal organizations, or were clearly familiar with the general structure of Boy Scouts, Masonry or parliamentary procedures. Fourth, although Greek fraternities & sororities were banned at Carleton at the time, [I guess Celtic fraternities were okay?] first-year students were still hazed (ask your parents), rites of passage were more pronounced, and there were clear differentiated barriers between members of different class-years even in the 1960s. Fifth, ordination was a fun way to "pass the torch" off to carefully selected leaders who had "jumped through the right hoops" of the departing leadership (although I can point to few examples of refused members). Sixth, there were clear cultural/religious examples in society about knights vigiling before entering service or holy people praying off in the wilderness before entering a vocation.

Things have changed over the years since the Counter-Culture revolution, and I think Americans, in general, have become less enamored with hierarchical rankings in the five decades since the Druids were founded, especially after the decline of fraternities, fraternal organization, recent church scandals and conservative reactionary activities by church leadership, Watergate, the increasing casual style of treating colleagues as equals despite differences in age, wealth or experience. This has naturally influenced the RDNA structure in recent years, giving new options and possibilities of interaction, along with the plentiful examples available now from the proliferation of non-hierarchical liberal offshoots of monotheism. (On the other hand, other parts of our society, of course, are seemingly more willing than ever to hand over spiritual authority to charismatic or dogmatic church leaders.)

When I first started my own Druidic path and joined the existing Carleton Grove in 1990, it was isolated, but functioning, although a bit anarchic then due to the loss of Third Order continuity in 1983 and the graduation of the revivalist Druids from 1985-1989. Their departure left a new generation of Druids who did not share the experience of communal quarters on an adjacent farm to the campus. The group was searching for a new stable base, and would settle on different off-campus houses and dormitories every two years or so; while often dining or attending folk-dance, SCA or sci-fi club meetings together. The Carleton Grove was definitely leaning towards Wiccan and Native American themes, but still open to members of different traditions, with a fun eclectic range of activities. In the revival period, people

initiated each other at Carleton to the 1st and 2nd Orders, and simply vigiled on their own for a Third Order, which was recognized by others as a sort of an individual vision quest. I did so likewise, and found it very empowering and sufficient in many ways; but yet there was still a small doubt that I might be missing out on something else, although I couldn't put a finger on it.

Finally, in 1993, I found Richard Shelton (AD 1969-1971) who came to Carleton to re-establish the "apostolic Succession." After becoming interested in the older lost traditions of the RDNA, I thought about bringing back the Order of Worship and traditional ordination patterns. The Order of Worship was not well received, considered too staid and churchy, with people preferring more creative methods of worship, but the Ordinations proved popular and permanent. I thought this surprising as the Order evolved out of the liturgical positions of the Order of Worship service. The traditional ordinations seemed to provide a stronger sense of continuity for a constantly mutating college Grove. After my own vigil, being historically inclined by nature, I felt a great sense of comfort from belonging to a line of succession and the influence of a strengthened sense of common mission, not unlike joining a police or boy-scout squad; a sense of passage or a step forward on a journey. It motivates me to live up to my oaths when I'm down, and restrains me when I'm tempted to excess in my roles. I feel a sense of being watched and guided by Dalon (or Something) and felt the invisible influence of the other members of the Order, in a healthy supportive manner; like a school principal or the U.S. President feeling the weight of her predecessors. It might have been possible to have reached this state without ordination, but perhaps it came easier with a little structure and tradition? It certainly turned out to be a memorable rite of passage for me that I've enjoyed sharing with many people over the years. Since 1993, I have been present or officiated at about 25 vigils for Third Order (including 4 telephone ordinations), dozens of 1st & 2nd ordinations, and a handful of higher orders (which are a whole discussion in themselves). This has been both draining and empowering to be part of those moments. Self-initiations still sometimes occur at Carleton (and in a few other Groves), but regular ordination still seems the general rule, although Carleton often embellishes the traditional services to make it more amusing and moving for the ordainee. And each ordination has had a unique stamp of circumstances upon it. I've seen many different people enter 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Orders for many different reasons, although the Book of Customs in the Druid Chronicles gives good summaries that I like to follow. What follows may not make sense to some, but each person chooses/refuses Orders for unique reasons that have to be thoughtfully weighed.

Hesitation on Ordination

What's the big hurry? Ordination is not for everyone, and many RDNA Druids get along just fine without it, or choose only to do 1st Order at most, and enjoying long productive solitary ways. Awareness is not the sole possession of the Orders. Some folk don't have the time, motivation, or "pieces of the puzzle" ready for such a decision. I pushed Orders rather hard in my Grove at Carleton, St. Cloud & Akita, but few decided to enter them, possibly because of varying reasons of interest in organizational power, distaste of liturgical activity, "speed", "old ties", "grovity" and plain disinterest. As for the last, disinterest, mature Groves with 16 people and 8 years of stability will certainly have different dynamics motivating ordinations than a missionary start-up Grove as described in the earlier essay.

Regarding power, many Druids want to jump to Third Order quickly. This is quite understandable, as the Third Order has many well-known attributed rights (or should I say "roles"?), and far less-well-known responsibilities. However, I believe a 1st Order Druid is equally as "good" a Druid as a 3rd Order Druid, but I feel

a Third has undertaken greater responsibilities and dedication to the “organization” and members of the RDNA, little as there is in this group. I personally think the Earth-Mother will hear a devout heart regardless of their Order at a service, but tradition exists in most Groves for Third Order Druids to preside at a service. I have to acknowledge that each Order (1st-10th) has their own traditional organizational/liturgical/spiritual roles which, if followed in succession with proper performance, will deepen the spiritual experience of those Druids and sense of attachment to a band of siblings. As an ordainer of a simple, flexible tradition, I try to balance and adjust the ordination to meet the needs of the ordainee as much as possible, without losing all traces of tradition and continuity. I then always instruct the ordainee to give their next ordainees options of strict ordination and the possibility of some flexibility, according to a mutual decision of what’s most proper. I believe in options.

Although some people see the Orders as spiritual rites of passage, the Orders predominantly exist to fill liturgical roles. A Server in the Order of Worship must be of the 1st Order, a Preceptor of the 2nd Order and an Arch Druid at a service of the Third Order. In practice, 1st Order sometimes doubled as Preceptor in a bind; and sometimes a 3rd or even a 2nd Order has led a service, or a make-shift meditation, when the Arch Druid didn’t show up. There are always exceptions, but the traditional pattern is the most often the preferred pattern in many Groves, so far. As you can tell from perusing the apocrypha and interviews with “retired” Druids, RDNA Druids have always had issues on whether liturgy is more conducive or distracting to the core goals of Druidical activity; which are the observation and contemplation of Nature’s aspects and learning from the wisest in the world. Indeed, in what ways are you less of a Druid if you never partake of rituals? Is not life itself a long series of religious moments, that Zen-like, are of greater importance than our attempts to verbalize or sacralize them through short periods of liturgy? For those who eschew liturgy and tend towards contemplation and sacred living, ordination may not seem an important goal.

There are different “speeds” in the ordination process for varying reasons. Some people are glacially ponderous in making the decision to enter an Order, taking many years in one case (like Sister Stacey), weighing each aspect of the responsibility and feeling out whether they have the “gravitas” or *Je-ne-sais-quoi* involved, and who already made the choice and are just trying to find an ordainer (it took 2 years for me). In some Groves, people take at least a year between Orders (slow-and-steady model), other Groves do them in rapid fire succession as needed to fill out the liturgical roles or when suddenly presented with a mature candidate. Some egalitarian Groves (e.g. Amon Sul Grove and Swamp Grove) don’t participate in Orders in the traditional sense (as did Carleton from 1985-1993), and those who could lead there, did and do so, and without titles, quite contentedly it seems.

“Old Ties” hesitations refers to discontentful links to previous religions among members. Reformed Druidism doesn’t require abandonment of previous beliefs; it merely encourages an honest re-evaluation and thoughtful contemplation of them. Certainly, some other beliefs systems do not accept any association with Reformed Druidism, and some members decline to enter Orders for fear of being shunned by the jealousy of the old system. This concern kept me back for a year as I worked out my personal relationship with Catholicism in 1991-2. Taking Orders in the Reform, as in Christianity, is a major step for some people who take oaths and ministry very seriously, because it involves a change of identity at some level inside; one that is hard to reverse or decline without losing a bit of honor. I have noticed that the step into the 1st Order was much more momentous for some than the achievement of entering the 3rd Order. Originally, a Grove usually only had a single Third Order member (often the Arch Druid), and only ordained more when someone was

leaving/graduating to go form a new Grove or succeed a retiring Arch Druid. This impending “grovity” led to vigiling activity, for aforesaid practical missionary activity reasons. In some Groves, however, you may have many core members in the Third Order due to varied reasons of protecting continuity in a rapid turn-over environment (like Carleton), or for the fact that a Grove has been around for a dozen years (like the Berkeley Groves) and many long-term members have eventually seen a need to vigil themselves over the years.

The Calling

Not every religion has priests. Some faiths have ministers, rabbis, mullahs, magi, shamans, etc. Each operates in a different manner. What these clergy have in common is a desire to assist others, usually groups, in their spiritual journey, using whatever skills or areas of expertise they have. There are often many more dedicated “laity pillars” than “priests”, that is, folks who don’t undertake the public title and role of clergy, but do much of the same work. Sometimes laity made the shift-over to priests because of a “calling” or decisive moment. Perhaps they had a dramatic dream, or a waking vision that precipitated the decision. It might have come together from a suggestion by a friend that they should seek ministry as an outlet. Or maybe, it just felt like the right thing to do, and the feeling just grew more comfortable with time. Perhaps for a few, like an arranged marriage, taking on the priesthood is a purely practical need to fill the liturgical role for a new grove, hoping and praying that one will just grow inspired while holding the position. Regardless, there is often a sensing of driving urgency, an impulse that can’t be ignored, like a flower wishing to unfurl its budded petals to the sun; and most grow quite a bit more through on-the-job experience and training of hard-knocks.

“Perks” of the Third Order

Although the 1st and 2nd Orders have prescribed liturgical roles, they appear to have no defined particular defined “powers,” except possibly determining if the sacrifice was accepted, by some interpretations of the liturgy. A Grove or individual appear to be welcome to encourage, assign or assume powers to them; such as to devise separate liturgy formats for just 2nd Order, weather working, blessings, do Bardic performance at service, do divination, gather sacrifice or purify a site or props. The more comfortable you are with your Order, the more creative you can become, and reduce the gulf in popularity, that encourages the rush to the Third Order. I theorize the power comes from the Earth, the Grove members, and their own experience. Recently I’ve been awarding clear-tape ribbons to 2nd Order Druids, to remind them of the need to think clearly, be pure and adapt to the coloration of society. I might also permit services to be done, while under supervision of an attending Third Order. Similar to Sister Stacey’s Grove, I also require them to read the early Druid Chronicles, find a cup (either Gregorian style or their own choice), write a little comparing Druidism and a religion of their choice and to find their own ribbons. I’ll keep you updated on how it works.

A nice aspect of ordination is the mentorship relationship usually involved both before and after the ordination. Depending on the people and personalities involved, it may vary from a short period with a few wise suggestions and simple factual answers, to a deeper life-long bond that might broach advice on other aspects of life like choosing a job, finding a companion or other life issues. The Third Order also has a number of privileges, in addition to the invoking of Dalon’s “seven-fold powers and three ways of day and one of night,” that they have granted unto themselves; the most widely known are namely:

1. Right to vote in the Council of Dalon Ap Landu, which is more-

or-less defunct now in a legislative sense due to numbers and unanimity traditions, but still possesses a sense of camaraderie.

2. Right to be elected as an Arch-Druid and start a Grove.
3. As an elected Arch Druid, you may ordain people to 1st, 2nd, 3rd Order, or to the Arch Druidcy, although in practice some Thirds choose to ordain regardless of being an Arch Druid, which they see as a ten minute formality (to construct a temporary Grove).
4. May enter the higher Orders, if invited.
5. May conduct almost any rite or service of the Reform (excepting ordaining people to higher orders to which you don't belong); including the right to write rites.
6. Consecrate the Waters of Life and Waters of Sleep.
7. Wear a red ribbon for summer services and a white ribbon for winter services.
8. Employ really bad puns, sarcasm, irony and witty comments to the amazement of one's friend & foes.
9. Use of fancy titles, like:
Priest/ess of the Third Order
Priest/ess of the Reform
Priest/ess of the Order of Dalon Ap Landu
A Reformed Druid Priest/ess
Sign the letters O.D.A.L. or write a sigil after your name.
Call yourself "Reverend", or whatever is appropriate, which might be sufficient in some states & commonwealths to perform marriages & funerals.

The Responsibilities of the Third Order

As with any public role, of course, there are even heavier responsibilities upon the Second Order, and especially the Third Order, although they are less clearly laid out, rather than implied and unmistakably felt, and each person tends to enunciate them in a different manner. I have devised my own nine rules that have mostly governed my actions, since I was a 1st Order Druid, with a few tweaks. You are welcome to borrow some elements or come up with your own set.

1. Study widely, keep skills honed, and contemplate deeply.
2. Live a wholesome and respectable life according to a stable code of ethics.
3. Follow the general customs & practices of the Druids.
4. Encourage the best performances from others.
5. Assist and guide those who come in search of Druidism onto their correct paths.
6. Be available for consultation, assist & visit with vigilers in your area.
7. Revere Nature and protect it (and religious minorities) from unbridled predation.
8. Avoid inevitable creeping growth, the fossilizing touch of dogma, mandatory traditions, and unnecessary organization.
9. Keep a strong sense of humor and find aspects to enjoy.

Conclusion

Again, these are my own thoughts on the matter, but you can see that there are a number of issues with pros and cons to consider when choosing an ordination or considering an alternative course of leadership or spiritual initiation. Take the time to complete an honest self-evaluation of whether and how you would like to undergo an ordination. If you are thinking of entering the 1st, 2nd or 3rd Order, feel free to confer with your nearest Arch Druid, or give me an e-mail to me to discuss the matter at mikerdna@hotmail.com In any case, I hope that your path will be clearer and full of bright promise and rewarding challenges.

Standard Constitution Format

By David Frangquist, 1966

Unofficial, of course.

Other variants in Part 4 of ARDA 2.

REFORMED DRUIDS OF NORTH AMERICA
_____ GROVE

(Day, Month, Year)

Constitution of the Reformed Druids of North America at _____

Article I The name of this organization shall be the Reformed Druids of North America at _____.

Article II Any (resident of/student at/etc.) _____ may become a member of this organization upon presenting a petition, which may be oral, stating that he believes in the Basic Tenets of Reformed Druidism as set forth in this Constitution.

Article III The Basic Tenets of North American Reformed Druidism are these:

- 1) North American Reformed Druids believe that one of the many ways in which the object of man's search for religious truth can be found is through Nature, the Earth-Mother.
- 2) North American Reformed Druids believe that Nature, being one of the primary concerns in man's life and struggle, and being one of the Objects of Creation, is important to man's spiritual quests.

Article IV There shall be (#) officers of the Reformed Druids of North America:

- 1) The Arch Druid must be at least a third-order North American Reformed priest. He shall preside over all meetings.
- 2) The Preceptor must be at least a second-order North American Reformed Druid, shall assist in services, and shall be the principal officer in the secular arm of this organization.
- 3) The Server must be at least a first-order North American Reformed Druid, and shall assist in services.
- 4) (Provision may here be made for such other officers as may be needed.)

Article V Elections of officers shall be held annually, in (month). (Here may be specified the method, i.e. voice vote, ballot, etc.) Only those qualified to hold the posts may be nominated for them.

Article VI This Constitution may be attended by a majority vote in two consecutive meetings of this organization. A quorum, which shall be (fraction) of the members, must be present at each meeting.

I certify this to be a true and accurate copy of the Constitution of the Reformed Druids of North America at _____, read and approved at two consecutive meetings.

/Signature/
John Doe
Arch-Druid

(SAMPLE IN STANDARD FORMAT).

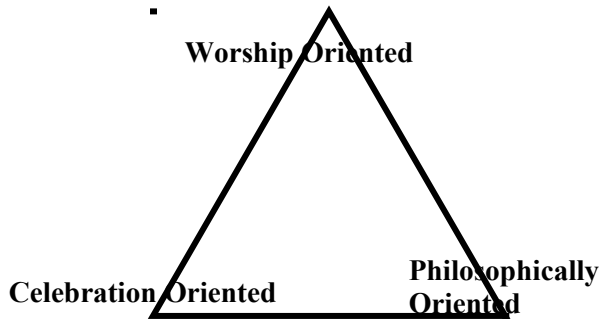
Feel free to modernize language and make it applicable to your situation, by simplification or adding important points.

Send a signed copy to: Carleton Arch Druid, Carleton College, Northfield, MN 55057

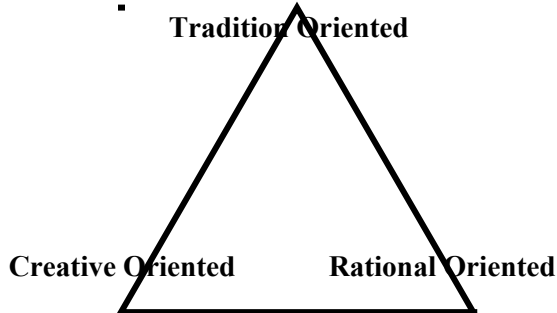
Oriented Differently

By Mike of D.C. Grove, 2005

You might notice after a few months that not all Groves or individuals have the same priorities, and are rather different. Sometimes the leaders and congregation have markedly different characteristics. This is the diversity of Reformed Druidism. The following diagrams might be useful for understanding individual or Grove orientations and you can consider how they fall within the three points of the triangle in my system. I don't like to use bipolar opposites all the time, so I chose the three-sided triangle instead.



One dynamic you will see is that some Druids like to invoke lots of Gods, talk to them on a personal level, and dedicate their actions to a higher being. Other folks just love a party and are intimate with the changing seasons on an earthly level. Then there are those folks who dissect and discuss topics, but have trouble with liturgy or having a good time. As you might suspect, most people fall somewhere in between these three points or move about inside.



In a similar manner, you might place Druids in three types based on how they approach "customs". Some folks won't do anything that isn't documented in a book or are hesitant if it hasn't been done for generations and endorsed by prominent folk. Other Druids love to brainstorm and research outside the box and experiment madly with things they've heard about. Finally, there are Druids who deduce the group's needs and analyze ideas solely by their positive or negative aspects, regardless of their beauty or long practice, and adopt and test them individually. Again, most Druids fall somewhere in the middle, or push towards a corner on certain issues.

By considering your Grove's dynamics and the orientations of your members, you are better able to anticipate which issues will bother certain folks and be embraced by others, and you can try to introduce a proper balance to meet your Grove's needs. It sometimes feel as you, as a leader, are an interpreter for people from different countries on different wavelengths.

The Missionary Im-Position

By Mike of D.C. Grove, 2003

Naturally, I speak here only for my own opinion. As you may have been following in the RDNAtalk conference, my thoughts have been turning to those young MIB who knock on my door to share the Good News with me. I'd like to share some thoughts based on my own limited experience in door-to-door sales of the mundane variety, although I have little academic marketing experience. However, perhaps some of the parallels may be interesting.

I should start off by admitting that I actually admire the dedication and sense of inquiry that most door-to-door missionaries possess. I am also a somewhat reluctant spiritual missionary myself, as is shown by the fact that most of you are reading this essay because of my outreach internet efforts, providing access to RDNA historical material. My strategy is however naturally passive. I make suggestions but do not insist on them to the exclusion of others. I am just there. People come, sometimes stay, and often leave soon. Like a tree, I passively watch their passage and shade them while they are near by. I occasionally invite a friend to attend. Many pass under my limbs without even knowing a Druid is present. This I feel is a rather common RDNA method of Grove dynamics, it may not be the most organizationally effective way, but it is the most satisfactory method I have found. It is one way, yea, one way among many.

Now, if I was a Treant, like in the Tolkien movie, I could pull out my roots and walk about lobbing boulders about and being a noisy nuisance. And in certain circumstances, I might contemplate such action. Others make this a matter of course, and we see them at our doors every month or two, because we have a large Mormon barn in our neighborhood, so we tend to get the lazy ones who are not willing to travel far. It pains my cynical post-modernist heart to credit them, but most of those to whom I talk to are actually rather nice, wholesome people with more community spirit that my hermetic nature can muster up. But there is something rather unsettling about the whole door-to-door thing, and I'm not sure that they are aware of it. Occasionally, you'll get the hard sell from some door-to-door friends, that reminds me of a past part-time job that I once had, I think you'll see the parallels and be forewarned.

Nature Abhors a Vacuum Salesperson

In 1995, I answered one of those "Big money for part-time fun work" posters, and got sucked up into a scam-filled operation selling well-known expensive vacuum cleaners in Minnesota. I learned a lot about the way you set up a campaign with many applications to missionary activities. First you divide up a town among the employees, distribute invitations for a free "no-obligation" comparison test via newspapers or coupons, with free complimentary present and literature. When someone bites at the bait, you send out the young commission-paid worker to the address at the appointed time, with promises of how well they will be awarded on the often slim chance of a successful sales (10% conversion rate is considered high, with a 10% cut of the overpriced good). Other times you just knock on doors up and down the neighborhood taking advantage of your sad tired visage to entice compassionate people to invite you in.

What happens next is you give your spiel, and start doing good deeds (such as vacuuming like a madman around the house) and showing off the features of a professional cleaner. Now most people, (and few will admit it), don't mind a little grime in the corners, dust on the lampshade, or dirt under the sofa-cushions. People get by with a simple system of their own, but feel a bit

guilty about it, and this is your entry point. You, as a seller, by your zealous example associate your vacuum cleaner with a virtuous clean lifestyle. Mites and dust are a natural part of life, and for most of us they actually build-up our immunological defenses against real parasites; but if given a choice in life, people would like to live in aseptically clean environment, free of grossness. The odds are, even if they buy your brand of cleaner, that they wouldn't put that much more effort into cleaning, but they COULD if they wanted to.

This is called "overbuying" and the car and computer salesmen ply this trick just as often as door-to-door salesmen. The customer is also acquiring "membership" or association with great clean people, who like mountains, are more often admired from afar or bypassed, rather than climbed and imitated. Certainly, some will actually read your cleaning suggestions book and may actually follow the instruction manual you provide; but similar results could probably be had by diligently using any other cheaper vacuum cleaner.

Cleanliness is like unto Godliness

Mark Twain once said, "A cynic knows the price of everything but not its worth." Every salesman must truly believe in the product that they are selling. You must study the other brands of vacuum cleaners only so far as to know their weaknesses, to be able to denigrate them, and then select tests that you know are going to show those faults. Few people are prepared to defend their own cleaners to a well-prepared offense that they are not expecting. The salesman makes it a matter of faith that your own product's deficiencies are more than matched by its strengths; and the cleaner must naturally be taken as a whole item. I spent 30 minutes being instructed in the cleverness of its foaming carpet cleaner head. All types of methods of agitating the cleaning liquid were attempted before the inventor realized that a simple cheap cloth mesh over the end would foam-up the liquid. When explaining this to the people, they begin to associate a few clever features of the cleaner to the rest of the whole contraption, which may indeed be pretty standard fare.

Now the vacuum cleaner sales pitch would start by discussing how much it cost to attain this marvelous product, for which a newly invented need was now apparent. For those of you interested, this \$900 vacuum cleaner really only cost \$250 to produce, and were sold to the local head agent for \$300. The salesman would naturally calm down the customer and "call his boss" to cut a deal, say to \$750, which was still too much. Eventually you barter down to a reasonable \$500 in regular payments. They get a slightly sup-ed up cleaner, and probably put on a list of "easy marks" for other high-pressure sales agents. You and your boss split the profits. My idealism got the better of me, as did low sales performance, and I left soon afterward.

What to do with Door Knockers

I know that most missionaries perform their actions as a matter of testing the strength of their faith, a sign of compassion to the beknighted followers of the wrong faith, and to follow the instructions of their superiors, and these I tolerate and a few I admire. A few are witless and naïve people with but a few scraps of scripture to cover their nakedness, and I try not to scare them in their delicate condition. For some, their sense of self-worth is painfully dependent on getting others to follow their own pathway, and I feel sorry for these. Indeed I generally feel that those who come to my door may well indeed be the gods in disguise and I feel obligated to assist them in some fashion, even salesmen and missionaries. However, others are belligerently bigoted and seek to stamp out anything that disagrees with their vision, and these I abhor.

I suspect that many of these groups are outward oriented,

sometimes in a pyramid scheme, with all the spiritual profits rising organizationally to the founder. It is true that perhaps some form of spiritual community is better than none, but I like to think that the ones that I choose are better, than the ones that choose me; assuming there is free will, of course. Most people, I believe, tend to belong to a faith that operates nearby out of convenience more than avid support of their "small print" of social policies and theological beliefs outlined by their inner circle of organizers. I have always wondered why they don't apply this strong energy into improving the members that are already part of their community? Some groups even seem to exist only to recruit more members. The Mormons are so desperate for growth, as to actually convert the already deceased ancestors of current members, and as a result, they have one of the most massive genealogical collections in the world, as my parents found out in their own family research. Quite likely, several of your own ancestors have been converted in this manner already! Thus much good occasionally does appear to result indirectly from these activities.

There appears to be a few common responses in the Neo-Pagan and Druid community towards these wandering door knockers. Some choose the "duck and cover" maneuver and refuse to answer the door, which is avoiding the whole issue. There a few (like me) who politely listen and refuse to respond either way, giving neither support nor denial to their cause, basically taking up their time to save some other unknown resident the experience. The most popular and funny, but probably rarely performed, are the "shock and awe" responses of overwhelming these people from narrow backgrounds with lavish displays of "see how weird and unsettling my lifestyle is! oooga booga!"

However, if you think you can surprise them with your Druidness, your mirthful days may be numbered. I recently came across a book which I read a 92 page point-by-point book of a series by Zondervan Guides to Cults and Religious Movement that teach how to witness to Pagans. It is called Goddess Worship, Witchcraft and Neo-Paganism. (ISBN 0-310-48881-8 \$6.00) If you want to go head to head against the toughest bible-thumper, I recommend you read it to see what arguments are coming. It was an interesting applying logical debating methods to sell rather non-sensical fantastical spiritual myths. It is another of those circular argumentative systems that once you accept one point, you are locked into a series of semi-logical faith-based points of belief. Maddening as I found it, it provides intriguing insights into the whole process.

A nice counterpoint is to realize that world views are a dollar a dozen, and I'd recommend reviewing the following two books: The Truth About Neo-Paganism written by one-time RDNA member Anodea Judith (of Chakra fame). ISBN 1-56718-567-3 which is \$3 at 60 pages. Another book is Pagans and the Law: Understand Your Rights which is a good handbook to simple legal questions that many Pagans should know, if you get flak for your religious beliefs. I'll hopefully be reviewing this book in a future issue.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe that the best preparation for dealing with the missionary is to follow the Druidic path of asking yourself the hardest questions ahead of time, to know what you really believe; and find out what areas of your spiritual life can be met with community involvement, psychiatry, lifestyle modifications and simple greater awareness. After you've done that you should be able to explain the satisfactory nature of your beliefs and perhaps give them a little useful insight to take back with them.

Recruiting Advice

By Mike the Fool, 2005

Okay, you know you can be solitary, and know how to start a Proto-Grove. So, if you DO want to start a Proto-Grove, with all the inherent headaches and bother, then how do you find folks to join you, without (you know) scaring them? Most people are quite wary about joining small religious movements, after all.

Well the first question you should consider is "How many people would be about right?" Converting the world has never been a goal for us. I feel if I'm changed myself, then I've more than done my bit to improve the world. Maybe three, eight, thirteen, thirty, a hundred folk is comfortable for your resources? Pick something you can handle and then set a reasonable time-frame, and select a series of activities to find people. Also it is important to decide what methods you WILL NOT use, to avoid a slippery slope towards maximum acquisition at all costs.

Well, there is the classic way, of asking folks you already know who seem interested in Nature and willingness to explore religious concepts (difficult to do if you're still in the closet). If they aren't interested in Druidism, maybe they know somebody ELSE who would be a good fit. Networking.

You could advertise that you want to have more members. Newspapers, magazines, web-lists, bulletin boards in occult shops, new age stores are possibilities. Local Neo-Pagan, folk societies, sci-fi guys, colleges, or environmental groups might be good places to join anyway for skill-building; and you might meet some Druidically inclined folk there as an unexpected side-perk.

Yelling loudly on street corners, randomly calling people on phones, untargeted mailings and spam are not likely to be very useful and will likely just annoy people. Having a booth at a fair, related public event or convention might be a feasible route. You will also have a few less-than-supportive visitors in this manner. Don't be an apologist or play by their rules. Be honest, tactful and admit what you don't know yet. Likely questions you'll hear are "Is it a real religion?", "Do I need to stop being a Christian?", "Are bloody sacrifices necessary?", "I'm not Irish, is that OK?", "Do you have a heaven?" and "Can you do XYZ type of magic?" Sadly, it is quite rare for someone to ask, "Will it make me wiser?"

Although you may be discreet, more than likely, everyone else probably knows that you're "different" in some manner, and you might have nick names like "nature boy", "green thumb", "Mr. Weird" or "the artist". People of like-mind will eventually FIND YOU, even if you aren't actively looking for them. This is the passive method, it takes one to know one. Besides, what's the big hurry? A lot of Groves start very small, and stay that way, fluctuating a bit, but growing larger over a long period until they reach some type of practical plateau or split.

Don't try to just find people like you. It is nice to find people who complement you, even if they don't compliment you. A little diversity helps to shake things up and keep you out of a rut. My personal tradition is that anyone who finds me is possibly a divinely-sent guest who is worthy of respect. Other Groves are much more cautious and have a series of screening processes to separate crazy folks from the eccentric, and avoid certain types of people they are not comfortable with. This is indeed a gray area, where prejudices might sub-consciously operate, so review those procedures and their results occasionally.

But in summary, you need to know the needs of your group, what attracts people to Druidism, do a lot of trial and error, and properly utilize resources you did not even know you had.

Regalia to Liven up a Service

By Mike the Fool, 2010

You could hold a Druid ritual by walking out in the morning in your jammies after breakfast with just a glass of whiskey, and it might work for you. But where's the drama and majesty and "oomph" of being a Druid without a bit of bling and nifty doo-dads to manipulate at meetings and rituals and make it a memorable and compelling experience? However, unlike indoor pagan groups, if you start amassing too much paraphernalia, you'll have to haul it out to remote grove sites, and if someone forgets to bring it, then you might have withdrawal and disappointment issues. Careful what expectations you start. Most regalia can be collected from stuff around the house, made by hand, or found online with a bit of frugal shopping. Normally, the server would be in charge of hauling about this stuff.

Vestments. They are fun, and it's especially nice if there is some type of coordination amongst the members, either in color or style/cut. You could even hold an evening or two to make ritual garb, or even schedule a group appointment with a tailor. Traditionally, most mainstream religions tend to be rather conservative or archaic in their clothing for religious leaders and services. A prime example is the Catholic church's continuation of upper class Roman clothing of the 3rd century for its modern priests. While most of the RDNA's founders in 1963 wore slacks or calf length dresses, white shirts and black ties under Carleton College's dress codes, they did have a proclivity to drape 2 or 3 bed sheets in odd and varying methods over their semi-formal clothing, which I like. By the 1970s, with the advent of Renaissance Fairs and Neo-Pagan fashions; robes, cloaks, leather boots, hats with feathers, etc. became more accessible and de rigeur for those who could find, make or afford them. Others get their Scottish kilt thing going. However, one thing you do not want to do is look like a KKK clansman or some type of Hollywood B-movie Satanic stand-in. Elaborate headdresses, long trains, and such might interfere with your movements in a wooded environment. If you go for the traditional white color, you'll have to wash and bleach more frequently for all the grass stains, dirt, beer spills and coal smudges. Probably a good idea to always have a back-up suit. It might be nice to have 3 or 4 extra suits for newcomers, who might get a giggle about trying them on. Old bed sheets can probably be gotten at 2nd Hand shops, or the cheapest variant at a Walmart.

Ribbons. Depending on the Orders you belong to you might have various colored ribbons to wear (e.g. red or white ones for Thirds, depending on season), or perhaps sashes of office. It is generally a good idea to weight or pin them down if short and light weight when the winds respond vigorously to your prayers.

Bling. A druid sigil necklace is nice and www.amuletsbymerlin.com sells some, and I give specially commissioned designed ones out to new third order druids. Bangles, tiaras, whatever you think goes well, if you think you can carry it off.

Staff. Probably nice for processions, pushing logs in the fire, drawing the Druid Sigil for the ceremony, fighting off wolves, and for making large gestures. However, it can interfere with holding a script, pouring liquids and other ritual fine movements.

Backpack or all-terrain luggage carrier. To haul around firewood, regalia, water, texts, musical instruments, clothing, picnic food, etc. Perhaps a wheelbarrow or large wheeled cart?

Two screw top bottles. One for mineral or nice water (non fizzy) and the other for your Whiskey or other waters-of-life. Black & White was once traditional, but you might want to go for a higher-brow choice, whatever is available, and then a revert to a cheaper liquor for the picnic afterward.

Chalice. You need at least one large cup. Traditionally, we have used a Georgian glass cup that holds about 1.5 cups of volume. If you are doing a large crowd, you might need two cups, a bowl, etc. It is usually nice to have a non-alcoholic alternative. Since few people wish to share a common cup anymore, you might wish to distribute shot-glasses to each to pour into and drink from.

Lighters, saws, kindling, “fire juice”, incense, matches, candles or tiki torches. Fire is good, but some locations’ fire codes (and common sense) limit what you can do. Try not to damage the local area for fire materials, using deadwood only, and not more than you will need. Forage afar. It’s a good idea to stock-pile materials or order deliveries well in advance of an event so that they are assured of being dry, the right size and ready to use. You could also dash some fine flour or sugar or whiskey on the fire at dramatic points for “phoom!”, but just don’t singe your flowing cotton vestments. A BBQ or hibachi is not quite the same feeling.

Musical instruments. Some drums, rhythmic instruments, bells, and a tin whistle are more than enough to set the mood, along with some singing. A harp, pipe, fiddle, or guitar would be the next step up, but require money, practice and skill to use. Dance, praise pieces, processions, and background music for consecration (bells ringing?) are nice touches.

A liturgy book. Like the UWP, or the printed version of Part Three of ARDA 2. It is much more magnificent for the performer to have the service memorized, and perhaps some cue-cards for an inserted poem or such. If you have call-responses to the crowd, its best to practice before starting, or to distribute cue cards for that section.

Fliers. For possible curious visitors.

Written permission or permit for a site. If necessary. For law enforcement or rangers.

The sacrifice. Oh, yes, don’t forget that. Usually some flowers, a small branch or something vegetable and living. You might have a special sickle or knife for cutting the sacrifice. A nice touch is a special basket to carry it, in style, to the service, or just loop it into your belt.

Altar. If you are not just using the ground, or a nice stump or nearby rock, you may wish to drape a nice cloth over the backpack or the regalia box or a light-to-carry wire frame of some sort, and place the sacrifice and chalice there. If you have a nemeton/grove site, you’ll likely want to invest in a traditional altar.

Picnic Box. You’ll want a large amounts of spoons, forks, a few tarps, plastic plates, plastic cups, napkins, plastic bags, corkscrew, can-opener, bowls, string, etc. Again, see Walmart for bulk-party goods. If you spend a bit more, you can have cheap re-usable goods, but then someone has to wash those dishes.

Banner. If you’re trying to attract members or like to announce your presence to befuddled viewers, you could get a banner that you stretch between trees announcing your grove name. Or you could make some type of pole-stand. Banners are especially fun at festivals and for parades.

Miscellaneous. If you clean up, trim or adjust a site at each visit. You might need some gardening tools, bags, work gloves and mosquito spray. If you work at night services, you’ll want a small light for reading a script (yes, it should be memorized), perhaps a head mount hidden in a wreath of oak leaves?

Ye Olde Techie Basket. Put away all those phones, watches, pagers, video games and other things that go beep away about 100’ from the service, and a large pile of clothes to muffle the noise on those beeping things. If you are using your iPhone to provide the music for the service, that’s acceptable.

Carleton College for a long time had a portable sweat lodge **kit** with shovel, axe, saw, 10-20 soft-ball size volcanic rocks, flexi-poles, pitchfork, tarps, blankets, towels, sage-smudges, buckets, water jugs, all in a sturdy wooden box with large wheels.

Choosing a Grove-Site

By Mike the Fool, 2010

Druids meet outdoors whenever possible, sometimes even when it is unpleasant. The popular imagination limits Druids to meet either in stone circles or in wooded groves, however you should meet wherever you will; lakes, rivers, springs, mountains, cliffs, valleys, waterfalls, gorges, deep forest, etc. A great deal of the power of a ceremony is dependent on the scene of the service, not your excellent baritone voice and cultivated shaggy beard.

Urban Druids are harder put to come up with something more impressive than a city park or someone’s backyard or a rooftop garden. There should be a state park, national forest, arboretum, or some site of great natural beauty somewhere, but public lands might have restrictions on usage for religious ceremonies, if your service became known. Finding a benevolent landowner or farmer with an appropriate site is every Arch-druid’s dream, but your access will depend on your relationship. Few groves have the funds or wherewithal to purchase their own little piece of paradise and set up a full scale permanent nemeton.

In fact, a great grove site will choose you, rather than the other way around. Perhaps a few services in one spot will lock down a place that is reasonably convenient, accessible, beautiful, and receptive. If usage of the site must be discrete, you might wish to just place a few small rocks in a circle, have a discrete hole to bury offerings, clean up deadfall branches and take out all trash. The more leeway and permissions with a site, the greater the possibilities, dependent on labor, money, time and imagination of the group members.

You could build a low rectangular earthwork around the space as the ancient Celts did, with a small shed in a corner for storing materials or as a shrine. You could add stone circles or standing stones for services or memorials. Establish a picnic area, a fire pit for sit-arounds, plant selected trees in meaningful patterns, clean up underbrush and non-native species, hang mementos from trees, have a decorate processional pathway, have an away site for vigils, dig an offering shaft, set up bile-poles, build an altar, have log-benches, tiki torches, little mason jar lines to drop candles into, or whatever sparks your imagination.

Any long term site will need to be consecrated, tended and loved, such that you may wish to designate a team, or incorporate its upkeep into the schedule of every seasonal service.

Section Three:

Cautionary Advice (If Things Get Difficult or Complicated)

Introduction

After reading Section Two, you will realize that Druids have a love-hate relationship with organization and greatly prize freedom and independence. This also has potential drawbacks.

While Reformed Druidry is usually a pretty jovial simple matter, there are problems that may pop up over the coming years that you might want to consider and prepare for. We've never assembled a section like this before, but perhaps it's about time to address some issues "pro-actively". Some of my comments may seem like I'm dictating behavior or imposing rules, but I'm just giving you a barometer of what one Druid thinks is proper and reasonable. It's not a matter of being paranoid, but we are resigned to the eventual possibility of problems. More advice may build up later on, but this is the best I find for you at the present.

Quite a few Reformed Druids come from traditions that did not treat them well, and some times it is difficult to shake off those ingrained habits and assumptions about what spirituality has to look like, and those very things they wished to escape are brought with them to their groves. Hopefully, they'll be able to start anew and build a friendlier organization. If they fall back into those behaviors they sought to escape from, you will have to consider if and how you will respond.

If there is one thing that Reformed Druids have stressed since the beginning, it is that Druids must stand up for their rights and dignity against forces that would use religion as an excuse to control them. If you ever witness or hear something that is mean, unfair or rotten, you should talk about it with other grove members, or a trusted outside source.

Read the following essays and think about them.

And let's hope, it is never necessary to respond to the problems of this section in real life.



Celtic vs. Cultic, Things to watch for:

It has come to my attention that, as with almost any religion, charity, or philosophy, eventually you will get a few bad-eggs that are going to use a good thing as a front for some type of scam or hurtful purpose.

So I think the new-comer to Reformed Druidism should be aware of what are the usual clues for detecting, shall we say, unsavory practices in a group they decide to join. Please take care to note who is running things and **HOW** they operate.

Inherent Weaknesses in the Reform

Perhaps intentionally, the RDNA is an unusually disorganized group on the national level, with a very strong tradition of local autonomy for Groves and independent Druids. A regretful consequence of this freedom is that there seem to be few practical group-wide steps that Reformed Druids can invoke upon unsavory Groves to correct their actions. The most we can do is passing notices, sharing complaints, informing “ensnared” members of their rights, and avoiding those folk we dislike or distrust. Most other modern Druid groups, like [ADE](#), [Keltria](#) or [OBOD](#) were created with some type of conflict resolution mechanism on a centralized level.

Some Groves you’ll find are sloppy or poorly managed, but you may run across a Grove operating rather inappropriately, and we’d **really** like to know about it. However, there is no formal judicial means to address grievances on a national level, although you can find sympathetic ears and varying opinions from numerous established Groves on the **RDNA**talk conference on <http://groups.yahoo.com> that I mentioned in the Quick Resources.

Those customary RDNA-wide limits are **not** intended as condoning bad practices. Rather, it requires that individuals or Groves must be prepared to make their own policies and stand independently against what they believe is wrongful treatment. Although Groves differ widely, they are often simple set-ups with colorful local customs and often few set-rules as I mention in my slightly flippant article, [“less is more”](#) in this publication.

It takes only a few minutes to register into the RDNAtalk conference, anonymously if you’d like, and you’ll certainly get some advice there and the company will be comforting. (I’d recommend “daily digest” setting or “no e-mail” and check the posts online, as the convenience arises.)

Inherent Resistance in the Reform

As I’ve mentioned elsewhere, trying to build a “cult” within the RDNA is probably a very counter-productive choice to consciously make, despite its inviting disorganization.

Reformed Druids are perhaps some of the most contentious and rebellious Druids who have walked upon this Earth. Many have been treated badly once in previous religious groups, and are vociferous critics of those practices. They cherish their independence quite dearly. This is found repeatedly in their literature, conferences and discussions, and any decent research by a member would uncover this nowadays.

For example, if the late red-baiter Senator McCarthy was trying to build a coercive anti-communist organization in the 21st century, it would be a bit silly for him to call it the “Beatnik Brigade”, just because “Beatniks” sounds real “hip” and they are disorganized. Anyone joining the Beatnik Brigade would eventually look up the term on the internet, notice the freedom-loving, poetry-spewing rebellious origins of the word, and notice they are not harmonious with the group’s purposes and activities of anti-communist witch hunts.

Similarly, if I were interested in conning Christian folk into giving me money and following me blindly, I wouldn’t adopt the name “Roman Catholic Church”, which would raise flags of suspicion from those familiar with it. Instead I’d make up a new name, like “Reformed Christian Fellowship”, and then I’d be able to avoid disparaging comparisons with better behaving groups of the same name. Similarly, if someone wants a “cult”, better to found a new group, like “True United Renaissance Druids”, rather than using the term “Reformed Druid.”

So as long as Reformed Druids continue to insist on their independence of individualism and Grove autonomy, and simplicity of structure; their freedom-loving reputation in Druid circles and on the internet should dissuade most intentionally harmful cult founders from settling in our ranks for long.

However, that indicates to me the more likely scenario is that of an immature or shallow person, on a small scale in an obscure location, perhaps just taking advantage over a few members; perhaps without either he or they realizing it, by sliding by degrees over years towards authoritarianism, as more moderate voices leave, rather than make the effort to reform the group.

Individual Responsibility

Therefore, since every Druid is only responsible for their own actions, you should stop and take a few serious moments and think about your rights and the kind of requirements that you expect from a Grove that you may join, or the type of character you want in a mentor you choose to study from. Just because you join a group, doesn’t mean you give up your civic rights as a citizen. Of course, you can’t always get what you’d like, people will always disagree on style. But, I believe that a good Reformed Druidic Grove should have a spirit of **cooperation** and **compromise**, rather than **coercion** and **control**.

If you can’t find a Grove or mentor for you needs, then you should start your own group, or study on your own rather than settle for some unsatisfactory substitute. It is much better to leave than take abuse or tolerate harmful incompetence. As my old civics professor explained in junior high school, “Other people’s indisputable rights end when they meet yours. And when they meet, either compromise or agreement to disagree must be made.”

So without getting paranoid or jumpy, let’s rationally consider a few steps we can take as individuals or Groves to prepare ourselves for a possible problem in the future. Hopefully, this will never happen, but best to think about the possibilities. An ounce or two of prevention is worth a few pounds of cure in this matter.

9 Sensible Steps You Can Take

- Ask widely for good mentors, and evaluate them carefully, rather than taking the first one you can find.
- If you see something out of place, ask a few older Groves for a second or third opinion of the practice in question.
- Read widely in Reformed Druid essays about what other Groves have done and don’t do.
- Discuss what you think are sensible limits of power within your Grove and make an informal Bill of Rights.
- Stand up to bullies and offer your support to people who you think are taking advantage of new members.
- Report criminal acts to local police immediately.
- Proactively think of ways to subvert your own Grove, then fight attempts by others to employ such tactics, but sometimes the cure is worse than the disease.
- Be a shining example to encourage others.
- Don’t accept excuses that wouldn’t fly in a secular club (e.g. bowling league) “just because” it is a religious group.

Druid Etiquette 101

By Elm-ily Post (a.k.a. Mike), 2005

I've watched Druids communicate for a long time, and they have a bit of an unwritten code of behavior that they expect. Some have accused Druids of being snooty or snobbish. It is hazardous for me to attempt to codify them, but if you follow these general guidelines, you might avoid putting your foot in your mouth, and probably be respected for your manners.

Reformed Druids usually get irate when someone sets themselves up as the mouthpiece of the entire Reform. You don't want to get that flak from folks when you don't mean to offend.

This advice is mostly oriented for on-line conference usage, but might also work for in-person relations. I'm not moralizing here, this is just some personal advice, from me to you.

0. Do unto others as you'd have them do unto you.

1. Avoid words like all, everyone, no one, never, always, "every Druid", or "Druidism believes" and other general terms that imply that ALL Reformed Druids believe X or Y. Exceptions are frequent. Instead, you should prefer to use words like; many, most, some, a few, often, sometimes, it seems, it appears.

2. When you are talking about ancient Druidism, say so, when you are talking about modern Druidism, say so; and when you are talking about Reformed Druidism, say so.

3. When expressing a personal or Grove opinion, say so frequently; using words like I think, I believe, for me, in my opinion, personally, in my Grove, or I feel.

4. Use a consistent name in conferences, even if you primarily use an alias. Using multiple accounts or names is not only confusing to many, but may actually engender suspicion that you are trying to "agree with yourself" by using alternative identities. Put your name with a criticism and stand by your words as long as you think you are correct.

5. Be courteous and cordial with each other, even when they ain't.

6. Give each other the benefit of doubt in uncertain matters.

7. Use proper grammar and clear terms and emoticons.

8. Review all letters for a moment before sending, to check for improperly stated thoughts. Write slowly and thoughtfully.

9. Being funny is a fine thing, but apologize if you perhaps poke someone a bit too deeply.

10. Do not be afraid to state your personal beliefs, but try to do so in a tactful or diplomatic manner, when you think they might be controversial. There's a way to make a point without making an enemy.

11. Do not completely demonize or ridicule opponents. Try to give a more balanced and objective view of the situation, although you are welcome to state where your preferences lie.

12. Agreeing with people is nice, tell them so on those rare occasions. Put the extra effort to turn a bland "yeah, me too" agreement posting into a deeper more interesting response, giving illuminating examples from your life or some complementary thoughts.

13. Don't just "quote scripture" on people on an issue. Give clear rational arguments why you believe so, because not everyone agrees that your source material is without doubt.

14. Remember not everyone is as well versed as you. By giving a bit of a clear simple lead-in, you can draw in a bigger audience, than if you start off using technical words they don't know.

15. Try to cite your sources, if you are heavily relying on a few obscure authorities for your opinion.

16. Accept that people will not always agree with you.

17. Listen and try to understand someone you disagree with, then you constructively criticize, also offer a variety of viable alternatives and solutions.

18. Spend less time worrying about organizing, and more about experiencing things. You might change a Grove, but the Reform is very resistant to overall officially proclaimed change.

19. Separate facts from theories.

20. Share fun ideas that work locally, but don't be hurt if they aren't adopted elsewhere.

21. Don't expect even the greatest ideas to be accepted as official outside your Grove.

22. Attempts to make codes of morals are likely to irk people.

23. Don't try to "pull rank" on folks with less seniority or orders.

24. If you say everything you want to say, you'll probably hear something you don't want to hear.

25. Don't post people's private e-mails in a conference without permission or maliciously reveal things in confidence, just to hurt someone.

26. Write a thank you note when someone does something nice for you, or goes out of their way to advise you.

27. Volunteer to help someone who has too many duties.

28. Straight-out refuse (politely) anything you can't handle.

29. Delegate tasks around the Grove fairly, giving others a chance to learn the tasks too.

30. Be on time or reasonably early for activities. Tell people if you are coming or if you need to cancel.

31. Some Groves do not permit minors to be ordained or partake of the Waters of Life (or even attend services) without their parents' written permission for legal or ethical reasons.

32. Be honest, but tactful. Timing & phrasing is key.

33. Except on manners or age, it's rather hard to imagine any Groves treating members less well based on appearance, background, opinion, or orientation.

Basic Rights at Habitat Grove

As generally in practice in my own Groves since May 2004. Not all other Groves have made a list of rights, nor do some legitimately desire to go about the drudgery of enumerating them. This version is meant only as an example, not representative of the RDNA as a whole, although I think them common, some with more, some with less.

1. Right to be treated fairly and with respect.

2. Right to come and leave the Grove freely.

3. Right to believe or worship in your own way.

4. Right to ask and refuse advice or instruction.

5. Right to choose your leaders and vote in Grove decisions equally.

6. Right to disagree or refuse requests.

7. Right to have cross-memberships, join other groups and form your own splinter Groves if you leave.

8. Right not to have others speak on your behalf.

9. Right to critique others without harassment.

10. Right to call yourself a Reformed Druid if you believe in the two Basic Tenets.

11. Right to talk with whoever you want inside or outside the group.

12. Right to refuse to associate with someone you do not like.

13. Right to choose a neutral mediator to settle an issue.

You probably have many more rights.
Please respect other's rights likewise.

The Advanced Bonewits' Cult Danger Evaluation Frame (ABCDEF)

(Version 2.6)

The following lengthy article and checklist is by a long-time Reformed Druid, Isaac Bonewits. It has proven useful as a simple guide for self-rating a local group that you join, and provoke some reflection. The higher the score you chart for a group, compared to other religions in your region or familiarity, the more cause for concern; although a very high score in just one area might be a tip-off of a problem worth monitoring.

For example, in Item #1 below, the lack of institutionalized rights in the RDNA, allows for potential mini-dictators or hurtful practices to develop in a Grove. This has rarely happened, as the rather fierce anti-dogmatic and rebellious nature of most Reformed Druids and their writings tends to minimize tolerance this kind of abuse by leaders.

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Isaac Bonewits

Introduction

Events in the last several decades have clearly indicated just how dangerous some religious and secular groups (usually called “cults” by those opposed to them) can be to their own members as well as to anyone else whom they can influence. “Brainwashing,” beatings, child abuse, rapes, murders, mass suicides, military drilling and gunrunning, meddling in civil governments, international terrorism, and other crimes have been charged against leaders and members of many groups, and in far too many cases those accusations have been correct. None of this has been very surprising to historians of religion or to other scholars of what are usually labeled “new” religions (no matter how old they may be in their cultures of origin). Minority groups, especially religious ones, are often accused of crimes by members of the current majority. In many ways, for example, the “Mormons” were the “Moonies” of the 19th century — at least in terms of being an unusual minority belief system that many found “shocking” at the time — and the members of the Unification Church could be just as “respectable” a hundred years from now as the Latter Day Saints are today.

Nonetheless, despite all the historical and philosophical warnings that could be issued, ordinary people faced with friends or loved ones joining an “unusual” group, or perhaps contemplating joining one themselves, need a relatively simple way to evaluate just how dangerous or harmless a given group is liable to be, without either subjecting themselves to its power or judging it solely on theological or ideological grounds (the usual method used by anti-cult groups).

In 1979 I constructed an evaluation tool which I now call the “Advanced Bonewits’ Cult Danger Evaluation Frame” or the “ABCDEF” (because evaluating these groups should be elementary). A copy was included in that year’s revised edition of my book, *Real Magic*. I realize its shortcomings, but feel that it can be effectively used to separate harmless groups from the merely unusual-to-the-observer ones. Feedback from those attempting to use the system has always been appreciated. Indirect feedback, in terms of the number of places on and off the Net this ABCDEF has shown up, has been mostly favorable. For example, it was chosen by and is now displayed on the website of the

Institute for Social Inventions, who paraphrased it for their “[Best Ideas — A compendium of social innovations](#)” listing.

The purpose of this evaluation tool is to help both amateur and professional observers, including current or would-be members, of various organizations (including religious, occult, psychological or political groups) to determine just how dangerous a given group is liable to be, in comparison with other groups, to the physical and mental health of its members and of other people subject to its influence. It cannot speak to the “spiritual dangers,” if any, that might be involved, for the simple reason that one person’s path to enlightenment or “salvation” is often viewed by another as a path to ignorance or “damnation.”

As a general rule, the higher the numerical total scored by a given group (the further to the right of the scale), the more dangerous it is likely to be. Though it is obvious that many of the scales in the frame are subjective, it is still possible to make practical judgments using it, at least of the “is this group more dangerous than that one?” sort. This is if all numerical assignments are based on accurate and unbiased observation of actual behavior by the groups and their top levels of leadership (as distinct from official pronouncements). This means that you need to pay attention to what the secondary and tertiary leaders are saying and doing, as much (or more so) than the central leadership — after all, “plausible deniability” is not a recent historical invention.

This tool can be used by parents, reporters, law enforcement agents, social scientists and others interested in evaluating the actual dangers presented by a given group or movement. Obviously, different observers will achieve differing degrees of precision, depending upon the sophistication of their numerical assignments on each scale. However, if the same observers use the same methods of scoring and weighting each scale, their comparisons of relative danger or harmlessness between groups will be reasonably valid, at least for their own purposes. People who cannot, on the other hand, view competing belief systems as ever having possible spiritual value to anyone, will find the ABCDEF annoyingly useless for promoting their theological agendas. Worse, these members of the [Religious Reich](#) and their fellow theocrats will find that their own organizations (and quite a few large mainstream churches) are far more “cult-like” than many of the minority belief systems they so bitterly oppose.

It should be pointed out that the ABCDEF is founded upon both modern psychological theories about mental health and personal growth, and my many years of participant observation and historical research into minority belief systems. Those who believe that relativism and anarchy are as dangerous to mental health as absolutism and authoritarianism, could (I suppose) count groups with total scores nearing either extreme (high or low) as being equally hazardous. As far as dangers to physical well-being are concerned, however, both historical records and current events clearly indicate the direction in which the greatest threats lie. This is especially so since the low-scoring groups usually seem to have survival and growth rates so small that they seldom develop the abilities to commit large scale atrocities even had they the philosophical or political inclinations to do so.



Figure 1 Isaac Bonewits, c. 1976.

The Advanced Bonewits' Cult Danger Evaluation Frame
(version 2.6)

	Factors:		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Low High
1	Internal Control: Amount of internal political and social power exercised by leader(s) over members; lack of clearly defined organizational rights for members.	1	_____
2	External Control: Amount of external political and social influence desired or obtained; emphasis on directing members' external political and social behavior.	2	_____
3	Wisdom/Knowledge Claimed by leader(s); amount of infallibility declared or implied about decisions or doctrinal/scriptural interpretations; number and degree of unverified and/or unverifiable credentials claimed.	3	_____
4	Wisdom/Knowledge Credited to leader(s) by members; amount of trust in decisions or doctrinal/scriptural interpretations made by leader(s); amount of hostility by members towards internal or external critics and/or towards verification efforts.	4	_____
5	Dogma: Rigidity of reality concepts taught; amount of doctrinal inflexibility or "fundamentalism;" hostility towards relativism and situationalism.	5	_____
6	Recruiting: Emphasis put on attracting new members; amount of proselytizing; requirement for all members to bring in new ones.	6	_____
7	Front Groups: Number of subsidiary groups using different names from that of main group, especially when connections are hidden.	7	_____
8	Wealth: Amount of money and/or property desired or obtained by group; emphasis on members' donations; economic lifestyle of leader(s) compared to ordinary members.	8	_____
9	Sexual Manipulation of members by leader(s) of non-tantric groups; amount of control exercised over sexuality of members in terms of sexual orientation, behavior, and/or choice of partners.	9	_____
10	Sexual Favoritism: Advancement or preferential treatment dependent upon sexual activity with the leader(s) of non-tantric groups.	10	_____
11	Censorship: Amount of control over members' access to outside opinions on group, its doctrines or leader(s).	11	_____
12	Isolation: Amount of effort to keep members from communicating with non-members, including family, friends and lovers.	12	_____

	Factors:		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Low High

13	Dropout Control: Intensity of efforts directed at preventing or returning dropouts.	13	_____
14	Violence: Amount of approval when used by or for the group, its doctrines or leader(s).	14	_____
15	Paranoia: Amount of fear concerning real or imagined enemies; exaggeration of perceived power of opponents; prevalence of conspiracy theories.	15	_____
16	Grimness: Amount of disapproval concerning jokes about the group, its doctrines or its leader(s).	16	_____
17	Surrender of Will: Amount of emphasis on members not having to be responsible for personal decisions; degree of individual disempowerment created by the group, its doctrines or its leader(s).	17	_____
18	Hypocrisy: amount of approval for actions which the group officially considers immoral or unethical, when done by or for the group, its doctrines or leader(s); willingness to violate the group's declared principles for political, psychological, social, economic, military, or other gain.	18	_____
<p>A German translation of the 2.0 version of this is available at: Isaac Bonewits' Sektengefahr Checkliste.</p> <p>A French translation of the 2.6 version is available at: Grille avancée de Bonewits pour l'évaluation du danger potentiel d'une secte.</p> <p>An Italian translation of the 2.6 version is available at: Documento Avanzato di Isaac Bonewits per la Valutazione del Pericolo del Culto.</p> <p>A Polish translation of the 2.6 version is available at: Zaawansowany Kwestionariusz Bonewitsa Oceniający Niebezpieczeństwo Sekty.</p> <p>A Portuguese translation of the 2.6 version is available at: A Ferramenta Avançada de Bonewits para Avaliação de Seitas.</p> <p>Other translations will be posted as they are done.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Low High</p> <p>Copyright © 1979, 2001 c.e., Isaac Bonewits. This text file may be freely distributed on the Net, provided that no editing is done, the version number is retained, and everything in this notice box is included. If you would like to be on one or more of Isaac Bonewits' emailing lists, click here to get subscription information.</p> <p>Again, remember it's important to judge by reality rather than simply by documentation.</p>	

Note, the links don't work.

Other Resources for Information

<http://www.religioustolerance.org/cultmenu.htm> A rather neutral overview to begin study on the topic, and simple information on those groups most often targeted by anti-cultist prosecutors.

21 Likely Tactics Used by Corrupted or Inept Leaders

And ways that I would personally respond.

By Mike the Fook, 2008

When a *less-than-desirable* leader or group is questioned or challenged, they may pull several tactics rather than forthrightly address, clarify or fix a problem. Most of these methods are rather unethical to me, but also might be used mistakenly by an inexperienced leader, and might be correctable. They are not just applicable to groups within Reformed Druidism, but might also be revealing about various clubs or organizations you belong to.

Only you can be certain of local conditions, and you must use your own common sense, especially if you sense some danger involved. This is just my casual advice and personal feelings.

1. Ridicule and Harassment.

I understand that sometimes a teacher may have to cajole or good heartedly poke fun at a student to coax them into trying harder and getting past a perception barrier; but comments aimed at demeaning or breaking down their will are unacceptable to me. Pestering recalcitrant members, such as calling at work, incessant e-mail or telephoning, or following them is usually called harassment or stalking in most states and it is a criminal offense. It has been regretfully shown in both cults (and the equally disturbing methods of "deprogrammers") that the average person is only prepared to fend off three rebukes; so I'd expect a Reformed Druid should be prepared to steel themselves for far more than that.

2. Threats or bribes.

If you can't convince me of the soundness of your views and their applicability to me by reason, rational debate or clear evidence, then using violence or bribes merely shows that you are the one who is probably wrong. I'd report threats to the law enforcement authorities and would leave such a dangerous group, encouraging others to do likewise. Claims of "hellfire", "damnation", spiritual pollution, or barring from afterlife, could be construed as threats in certain situations.

3. "God told me so."

That's nice, I'll await his/her direct message to me, to confirm that matter. Reformed Druids may claim that they are inspired sometimes, but most seem very hesitant to insist that others believe another's personal revelations. Most folk seem to require more rational evidence or reasoning, rather than a blind reliance on an unverifiable source.

4. "It's in the scriptures."

Like point three, many Reformed Druids are reluctant to believe something just because it was written down and adopted by another group of people. It might be interesting, but we're interested in the writings of many faiths. There are no official or preferred scriptures. We have no official scriptures in the Reform, and don't intend on having any. We have writings, but most Reformed Druids are very careful to claim that they are espousing their personal view on matters they discuss. Each is weighed individually upon their merits by each reader.

5. "We decided that already."

You may have, but I disagree with this decision for reasons of x, y & z. Could we re-open that custom, tradition, rule or law for possible revision and a new referendum or vote at an upcoming meeting? I have suggestions of a, b & c as an alternative. If this is indeed the group preference, you should be confident that it will pass again.

6. "I'm the most qualified to lead."

You may have been so at the time of your election, but it may be time for rotation of leadership or the training or delegation of power to other members. Mr. A, B & C have shown interest in taking on great responsibility, and they would possibly like some mentoring, but also wish the opportunity to lead more activities. There is an unspoken assumption that the number of consecutive terms implies greater achievement by a leader, but giving the helm to someone else who has the group confidence is a great achievement too. Make more leaders rather than followers.

7. "I alone have secret knowledge."

I see. I understand that some personal communications with members might be qualified by clergy-confidentiality, and that some traditions have some initiation elements that are revealed in stages. However, I feel sorely left out and do not understand the references and in-jokes that are being made. What are the steps that I must take to also learn this knowledge that you keep? Must it truly be kept secret, or is that status merely a ploy to prop up a limited pool of people to fill leadership positions?

8. "This is how the ancient Druids did it."

But we are not ancient Druids, we are Reformed Druids. Just as Reformed Jews do not carry out every practice that Orthodox Jews practice, so we Reformed Druids have to interpret and choose which ones are appropriate and useful for the modern era. I will grant that if the Ancient Druids did do it, it will likely be one of the first traditions that we will consider for adopting. However, much of what the ancient Druids did has been lost or forgotten or misplaced; much of what we do know is scanty, piecemeal or a remnant collected in the middle ages long after important social changes in Celtic countries, and filtered by various monks and oral transmission. There are also traditions by many other peoples who have revered the earth that we should examine. Some things are no longer appropriate for our modern sensibilities.

9. "Everybody in Reformed Druidry does it this way."

I believe there is very little that is done the same way by all Reformed Druids. Each Grove and individual may have differing ways that meet their needs and desires. What's to say that we may not go down a new road or explore a new tradition or remove one that no longer assists us? Passing on lore is one thing, but one need not also follow everything one has learned, it may again be applicable at a future date, but it does not seem right at this moment.

10. "More people agree with me than with you."

I care not if the entire world disagrees with me, I have a right to my opinion. I feel a responsibility to voice my concerns and objections. If this Grove is a democracy, I will tend to follow the decisions of the group on stylistic issues so far as they do not unfairly impinge on my personal core rights. If the group decides on a policy or rule that I cannot abide by, then I may choose to leave and invite similar-thinking people to join with me.

11. "Without me you can't have a service."

Similar to #6 or #7. We no longer choose to have you as our leader, but respect your title and ask you to choose a successor from among us to lead future services. If you will not do so, we will seek elsewhere for the necessary ordinations. Perhaps in the meantime we will jury-rig a temporary service that does not need your skills or authority. No leader is indispensable, not matter how valued or venerable. When a great tree falls in the forest, new trees will get more sun, grow, and fill the canopy.

12. “You’re new here and just don’t understand.”

Then tell me what the issues are, how they were derived and the reasons for them. I should not be dismissed merely on seniority. I am rational and can be convinced if I'm wrong. Be more patient with me. If others don't know, then invite them also to attend and learn with me at a reasonably soon time, for this issue is very important for me. There are no stupid questions.

13. Keeping you too busy.

This has been done for ages. I feel that I have been assigned an unfair burden of the chores or given unnecessary work merely to keep me too busy to consider the ramifications of recent issues or organize opposition. Perhaps you do not realize the extent of the responsibilities in my personal life. Perhaps the size of the workload is purposely too great to discredit me when I inevitably fail to accomplish it. I wish to contribute to the Grove's activities, but I need more time to rest and recuperate and reflect. I must refuse to do x, y, and z. I may assist the Grove in less time/resource demanding ways by my advice and wisdom.

14. Mobilizing against a large enemy

Similar to #13. When a president has a troubled domestic situation, rather than sensibly deal with that as early as possible, it often seems more convenient to rally the group against an assigned enemy. People tend to stick together better when they feel besieged or threatened, but this is only a temporary fix. Constantly finding new threats, more entangling campaigns and new causes can eventually burn-out and demoralize a group, which may refocus on a domestic issue with greater severity afterward. Our usual goal is to know the world better, not necessarily to completely change it to our preferences.

15. Lying, confusing and distracting.

Although some truths are difficult to swallow, and some mysteries difficult to penetrate, I prefer to be spoken to honestly and straight-forwardly. If you don't know or can't explain something, then just say so, don't just make up an answer to satisfy me if it will lead me astray later on. I do not expect you to be an all knowing guru. Admitting that we are indeed wrong is also stating that we are wiser today than we were yesterday.

16. “You’ll lose your friends if you misbehave.”

This could be interpreted as a threat to quell reasonable dissent. If my manners have been inappropriate then I might need to amend them, but if my issue is valid then I demand a timely and appropriate hearing. If the group tires of my company and requests me to leave, I will go my own way rather than stultify under unethical dynamics. I can find enlightenment, good company and awareness in many formats besides this group. If they are truly my friends, they will understand this and not hold it against me.

17. Falsifying elections.

Each Grove has its own system of voting and the necessary quorums, % of voters, timing of elections, etc. If I doubt the accuracy of the count or the result, then I would like to have a method that respects the confidentiality, but is more verifiable. If the Grove will not abide by a fair voting system, then I may wish to leave and take so-minded folks with me. Perhaps a neutral third party to collect and announce the results?

18. Setting you up for a fall.

Like #13, some leaders, fearing a rising talented & good-natured rival may assign you an impossible task, produce false evidence against you or trump up a minor misdemeanor against you. I find this to be the hardest to deal with. If increased abilities of some members disturbs them, then that leader is power-hungry and too insecure to be a good leader.

19. Hold secret meetings to deal with you.

Similar to #18. If you have a valid complaint of a non-personal nature with me, tell me in front of the group so that I may directly address the charges and call witnesses and present evidence in my defense.

20. Blacklist you.

If a leader goes around to other groups and says false or wrong things about me, it is more shameful for them than it is for me. It might be difficult to fight this back-alley politicking. I have the self confidence in my worth and my position on the issues, and I will present my side of the story to other groups, and ask them to judge me on what they see and observe rather than what they have heard.

21. Being inaccessible.

Some cults have prominent leaders who are too rarified or special to be contacted by ordinary members. Separation implies that they are above mere politics and mundane motivations. All contact with them is mediated by select individuals. When this happens, even if the leader is a good person, the intermediaries may become a problem. In some cases, the leader may not even exist, as in the movie, The Wizard of Oz. While I can understand some folks being busy, having a shadowy leader is not acceptable to me.

Attributes of a Leader

Drawn from a list I made in 1992 as I contemplated Druidic priesthood, slightly updated. I wished to acquire or improve these traits, and I realize I still have a long way towards achieving them. I look for them in my friends I study with and in the priests I train. Why do you not see; "beautiful, powerful, rich, perfect, pure, or popular?" I came up with 80 traits to guide myself, recognizing that blind immoderation in any of them could lead to trouble. It is better to me to be honorable and respectable than honored and respected. I'm sure I missed some, but then, it's just my personal priorities, and you might add or change some. So, in no order:

Flexible	Integrated	Listening	Visionary
Moderate	Open-minded	Confident	Charismatic
Brave	Knowledgeable	Respectful	Caring
Curious	Prioritizing	Problem-Solver	Competent
Aware	Instructive	Humorous	Friendly
Green	Dedicated	Virtuous	Sensible
Loving	Grateful	Graceful	Reasonable
Active	Constructive	Thoughtful	Honest
Fair	Delegatious	Reflective	Meditative
Clever	Supportive	Industrious	Responsive
Tactful	Pro-active	Traditionish	Calm
Decisive	Creative	Nurturing	Sensitive
Trusting	Generous	Rewarding	Humble
Decent	Enlivening	Enlightening	Reliable
Kind	Efficient	Inclusive	Humane
Balanced	approachable	Practical	Unstressed
Peaceful	Polite	Organized	Inventive
Mystical	Mature	Studious	Unselfish
Inspiring	Enduring	Thrifty	Careful
Celebrating	Empathic	Patient	Intuitive

Vocation vs. Vacation

By Mike the Fool, 2005

After reading all that cautionary advice, I'm sure you're on alert for anyone pushing you around, but the most likely person to hurt you is, oddly enough, yourself. You are potentially your own greatest ally and enemy, if you abandon moderation and balance in your Druidry.

While I have listed many admirable traits and unofficial minimal manners for Druids, I want to encourage you to place some sensible maximum limits on your expectations and duties. You do not have to impress anyone or be Super-Druid, who is all things to all folks. Rome wasn't built in one day, and several smaller towns are quite nice to live in too.

Over the years, I have seen a number of Groves and Covens falter (which is sometimes a good thing) not due to persecution, nor from lazy or inept leaders, but due to "burn-out" among the leadership. Druids who plan Proto-Groves often go on to become Priests and Arch Druids. They are dedicated folk with a mission. Some of these Druids, and I've been one of them, want to try out every idea, hold frequent liturgies, provide oodles of assistance, to dozens of folks, have a dozen Druidry projects, all at the same time, and still expect to remain sane for years on end. Abiding by a stable manageable workload is actually a sign of competence.

A vocation is sometimes recognized by contentment with the drudgery of an often thankless job. My mentor, Richard Shelton, has said that the key to being a priest is about service, not slavery. The Arch Druid also has a right not to be over-utilized by the rest of the Grove. There's a saying at Carleton, that the one who runs away from responsibility the slowest becomes Arch Druid. I would add a corollary that sometimes the Arch Druid must run away a little faster for their own health.

As far as I know, there are no professional RDNA Priests who are financially supported by their Groves. We have jobs, we have classes, we have families, there are friendships, we have civic obligations, and we have a private personal life. Neglecting or ignoring these responsibilities to help your grove mates is neither admirable nor honorable in my book if it becomes habit. What kind of example is it to others to be obsessive rather than dedicated? Living a sensible life might be a great lesson to them.

Druids praise the cycles of Nature, but do not realize that they themselves wax and wane too. The sun and the moon do not always shine, the sea rises and falls, and leaves bud, grow and fall off. In the same way, a priest must know when to take a break, when to refuse the assumption of another duty, pull-back on what they do offer, and regenerate their energies. Even if you give your best, your "best" might get persistently worse without adequate rest. All work and no play makes Robin a dull Druid. Delegate!

What is worrisome is that when you are over-burdened and not in moderated balance, you are more likely to make mistakes, hasty decisions or snap at someone when a little thing goes wrong. If not for your own sake, then for the grovelings' sakes, allot your resources and responsibilities wisely. All too often, when a Super-Druid burns-out, after having done nearly ALL the work, there are rarely any competent back-up folk trained to step in and take up the slack.

How to Recognize Stress

Americans like to live on the edge with rather stuffed schedules. Even when we can't honestly admit that we are doing too much and pushing ourselves past our tolerance level, our body will give us clues. The following is a list of symptoms which have all been proven to be stress-related and can appear due to imbalance in jobs, relationships or even your religious activities. Many of these symptoms may be caused by organic illnesses, but they are also symptoms of excessive stress. In the absence of the confirmed diagnosis of an organic malady, consider the possibility

that excessive stress may be the cause of these symptoms and see your physician and reconsider your workload and priorities.

- Insomnia or nightmares
- Lack of spirituality, vitality or "connection"
- General irritability, hyperexcitation, or depression.
- Pounding of the heart (high blood pressure symptom).
- Dryness of the throat and mouth.
- Social withdrawal from friends and family.
- Impulsive behavior, emotional instability.
- The overpowering urge to cry, or run and hide.
- Inability to concentrate and general disorientation.
- Feelings of unreality, weakness, or dizziness.
- Predilection to become fatigued, and loss of the "joie de vivre".
- "Floating anxiety," a generalized apprehension without a focus.
- Emotional tension and alertness; a feeling of being "keyed up."
- Trembling, and nervous tics
- Tendency to become easily startled by inconsequential stimuli.
- High pitched, nervous laughter, or stuttering.
- Bruxism (grinding the teeth, especially at night).
- Hypermotility; excessive activity in the stomach and intestines.
- Excessive sweating without physical exertion.
- The frequent need to urinate.
- Diarrhea, indigestion, queasiness in the stomach, and vomiting.
- Migraine headaches, or pain in the neck or lower back
- Premenstrual tension or missed menstrual cycles.
- Loss of appetite or compulsive eating.
- Increased smoking, alcohol, or use of legally prescribed drugs, such as tranquilizers or stimulants.
- Accident proneness.

How to Handle Responsibilities

As I mentioned in UWP's article, "Solitary Druidism", there are times when you need to step down from office, take a sabbatical from duties, or delegate a season to another person to handle things. Very often, these breaks, like a tree falling in the forest, give others a chance to step forward and acquire leadership skills that they were either too lazy or too humble to undertake.

I would rather have potential co-equals and comrades than permanent underlings, disciples or scions. I love to share what I know and think with folks, but I want them to reciprocate that by helping others and learning from yet other people. Two horses can get the wagon out of the mud hole better than one. And I secretly delight when they construct an innovative personal thought-out opinion on an issue they would previously have simply sought an authority's opinion to defer to.

Consider having a Co-Arch-Druid and establishing a rotation of responsibility for services, incommunicado days, strict "business hours", vacations and sabbaticals. One option I have seen for very busy folk is to make every third or fifth service a big deal, and tone down the other of the "Big Eight" services. Eventually with two or three years, each is done in grand style.

Sometimes folks are more willing to volunteer to lead activities than liturgies, due to a perceived necessity of some type of "license" to hold services or purposely skip a seasonal festival so that people can spend more time with their families (Yule or Lughnasadh is a good one). Consider having an activity instead of a service to break up the pattern.

When your Grove is brainstorming about possible activities, ask folks occasionally, "That's a good idea and quite possible, who would like to be in charge of it?" As with kindling a fire, start with kindling and add larger and larger wood with each success. Hopefully, with diligence and some advice along the way, members will realize they are capable of bonfire-size duties and you'll avoid burning out.

Finding Excellent Mentorship(s)

By Mike the Fool, 2005

(This should go in Section Three, there wasn't sufficient room.)

As I mentioned in the Quick Resource List, there are several resources for Druids to access in the Reform. And, you know now a great deal about the dis-organization of the Reformed Druids; and indeed this unofficial guide should be enough to let you hit the ground with your wheels spinning. But, eventually, you might like to get some consistent advice from a few fellows who've been around the forest a few times. How do you find them? How do you evaluate them?

What you are probably seeking is a mentor or patron, a concept that has been around under different names for millennia. You've probably found a few while growing up.

History of the Concept (borrowed essay)

Mentoring is a powerful and popular way for people to learn a variety of personal and professional skills. In fact, mentoring is one of the oldest forms of influence. Popular mentoring literature attributes the origin of the term mentoring to Homer, one of the ancient Greek story tellers. In his classic tale Homer tells of the King of Ithaca, who asked his friend Mentor to look after his son Telemachus while he fought to win the Trojan War. However, scholars familiar with the original work believe that the model of mentoring portrayed by Homer would make most relationships fizzle rather than sizzle. In fact, the true origin of the modern use of the term mentoring more likely comes from the work of 18th century French writer Fenelon who was also an educator. African scholars have noted that mentors were commonplace in Africa, long before the ancient Greek civilization.

Regardless of the origins of the term and although not everyone takes the place of a king, most adults can identify a person who, at some time in their life, had a significant and positive impact on them. Mentors can be friends, relatives, co-workers, teachers, as well as historic or contemporary personalities. Most often, a mentor is a more experienced or older person who acts as a role model, compatriot, challenger, guide or cheerleader.

Mentoring has become an effective method for businesses to help employees with orientation, career advancement, problem solving, coaching, and support. In addition, mentors can assist people to deal with the challenges associated with successful, productive, meaningful work life.

Some General Examples of Mentoring

- Women executives assist other women to break the "glass ceiling"
- Senior citizens demonstrate hobbies to elementary students
- Business managers take new employees "under their wings"
- Volunteers partner with students at risk of dropping out of school
- People managing life challenges provide support and wisdom to others
- Older students help younger students cope with peer pressure
- University alumni provide guidance to students seeking business careers
- Experienced faculty members assist their newer colleagues
- Successful business people help new entrepreneurs starting out

Reasons for Mentoring in Reformed Druidry

There is no formal program of mentoring, but it happens here and there when two (or more) Druids realize that each has something to offer each other to improve their Druidry that is not necessarily a "Grove"-type relationship.

It is said that one can learn a great deal about a subject by trying to teach it. The process of formulating, clarifying it, or just examining it through new ideas can deepen one's understanding of an issue. Sometimes the teachers grow more than the students. Some find it amusing.

Other Druids feel that since they were bestowed with a chance to learn from another, they also feel obligated to pass on that sort of assistance to a few others (kind of like the movie, "Pay It Forward") to settle their Karmic debt.

Selfishly, mentoring also often gives the mentor an ally for future projects or campaigns, although there are more than a few cases in the business and political world where the dog has bitten the hand that feeds it, sometimes because the dog is more ethical than the master that trained it! Both sides should benefit professionally from the exchange, and hone their skills.

Mentoring Development

Although some mentorships develop along vague pathways at first, you should eventually try to focus it on a few areas that the mentor has specific skill or pull in arranging for the mentoree. Some subsidiary lessons might be learned on the side, but try to stay on target, and when that's finished, then the mentorship should formally end a phase. For example, one mentor may be great at botany and biology, and after a few years of guiding study for the student, they may choose to reclassify their relationship as colleagues or fellow researchers or even friends. Networking.

Mentorships are rarely contracted or defined on paper and can vary widely in time and harshness. One mentor may be a spoon-feeding coddler and another may be a hickory-switch bearing martinet. Don't pick someone whose teaching style doesn't fit you, just because they are conveniently nearby and available. If they go too far in some manner (see Section Three), then you might wish to cancel it and find another suitable person.

Not all Druids are able to find a mentor within Reformed Druidism. Most Druids piece things together on their own with a little help from their friends. It is a privilege and stroke of luck to secure a mentorship, you can't force or strong arm a person into that role. Either they are too far away, the most matching person is too busy or a variety of other factors may require you to look elsewhere, or to wait a long time for things to line up.

Finding a Mentor

If you are looking within the Reform, the best thing to do is to ask around for who has done it before. A mentor might not necessarily be an Arch-Druid. If you find a reading in ARDA 2 that indicates a close kindred spirit, you might follow up and contact the author.

Perhaps a member of another Druidic community might exist, or in a completely different religion. Don't limit yourself to the word, "Druid". There are many folks going by other names who are doing similar things.

If you need to look elsewhere, then consider the various prominent or widely respected women and men of your community (clergy, politicians, coaches, teachers, doctors, lawyers, activists and other get-it-done folks) in addition to those more hermetic types like artists, writers or monks who may be less easily spotted. One won't find much if you don't search.

So I hope this concept, even if not possible now, will one day blossom for you

Public vs. Private

By Mike the Fool, 2010

When you hold services in the woods, golf courses, local parks and beaches, you'll have people stop by to ask what you are doing. If you have a large-enough group, or one with many dependents hanging about nearby, someone can be designated to hand out a leaflet that explains things or welcome visitors to join. The various branches of the Reform have been mostly semi-public to public, in the sense that they weren't secret or invitation-only. Groves would vary about how and where they might advertise the ritual and may request an RSVP. Some groups, like ADF groves, are very public and required to be so. Reformed groves have more discretion, but it would be odd to refuse passersby who were friendly and curious. You might ask them to wait until the service was done and to join you for the picnic or chat session afterward. Part 4 of ARDA 2 has some fliers that you can adapt for local needs. Some events, such as a healing, may be more suited for private services.

Possible Public Outreach

If you are going to run a very public grove, you might want to follow some of ADF's suggestions for reaching out to the community in which you live, proactively. Think of it as being a good civic participant in your neighborhood. They might not like you or approve of you, but if you are a known quantity and deemed mostly harmless, then relations with the community will go better. If you are the first new-age or Neo-Pagan type group in your town or village, you might wish to visit some of the larger churches, support local teams and drives, join an ecumenical council, participate in community events, adopt a road, teach classes at community centers, visit the police and explain between odd good groups and what would constitute a dangerous cult. You might run an article in the local newspaper, especially around May Day or Halloween. At the very least, you should meet your neighbors and the caretakers of any public property that you meet, and give them some notice of when you will be having events, answer any questions or concerns, and try not to mess up the site.

Screening Regimens

On a similar note, while anyone could conceivably become a Reformed Druid in some sense as I describe elsewhere, a grove has a right to choose who joins it. If someone is not a good fit for your particular grove, I would encourage you to not dissuade them from being/remaining a Reformed Druid and rather you should encourage them on a solitary path in the RDNA and give them a few resources to do so. There are some unlikeable or unworkable folk out there, and some groves have a designated person to screen possible applicants via phone, email or interviews in neutral locations (e.g. a café) to learn more about an individual's background and interests. In my years of responding to inquiries, I think a lot of people are applying to multiple groups at the same time, so it's important to steer them to a Druid or Wiccan organization that fits their needs, interest and temperament.

Weeding the Garden

by Bardd Dafydd of ADF

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I'm reprinting it not because I advocate his style, but it is thought-provoking. –Editor

This article is about chronically disruptive people in Neo-Pagan groups and what we can do about them. We'll examine who these people are and why we seem to attract so many of them and talk about some of the common types of troublesome people. Finally, we'll explore a simple yet effective strategy for dealing with the problem.

As Senior Druid of Red Oak Grove, ADF, I have been leading a Neo-Pagan group for almost 7 years and have had to deal with at least 9 individuals who were disruptive to the point where they became a major problem. All eventually left the Grove, but some of them caused serious problems for years before they left. I've also talked to the Senior Druids of many other Groves and found out how they handled their problem members. In addition, I have been on the Mother Grove of ADF (its international Board of Directors) several different times, and we have had to deal with disruptive members on an organizational level. I've also been the leader of several non-pagan groups and been teaching leadership skills for the past 11 years.

All of this experience has given me some insights into this problem that I'd like to share with others. Hopefully, other groups can learn from all the mistakes we've made and the result will be more Neo-Pagan groups that grow, blossom and bear fruit.

Acknowledgment

I am indebted to the book [Antagonists in the Church](#) by Kenneth C. Haugk for getting me to think about this problem and its potential solutions. Although written by a Pastor expressly for Christian congregations, it's a good book and ought to be studied by any Neo-Pagan group leader. It does an excellent job of exploring why certain people behave antagonistically and gives some excellent general advice on how to deal with them in the early stages of their discovery, but I don't think he ever gets specific enough about what to ultimately do about them. In this article, I try to explore the problem in light of our own unique situation and take his advice to its next logical step.

What do we want?

You probably belong to a small Neo-Pagan group. You most likely joined this group, or started it yourself, because you wanted to worship the Old Gods in your own way and you want company. For most of us, it's a lot easier and more fun to do this when you have a group of friends and supporters to help. You can share the roles and speaking parts in ritual, and the magic seems so much stronger. You also probably like the social interaction of a group. There is friendship, opportunities to learn from people who are knowledgeable in areas you are not, and there may even be romantic possibilities. You can share jobs, like cooking and cleaning up, and there will be people to help you put your tent up when it's getting dark. And you can share resources, like books and ritual tools and camping gear.

When you join or start a group, you hope that everyone will be friendly and open and nice. While you may love the diversity and excitement of associating with many different kinds of people, you don't want them to be too different. While it may be interesting to talk openly with someone who, for example, has a sexual lifestyle that is completely different from yours, you expect them to follow

the same rules of behavior that you do: to take turns speaking, to listen attentively, and not be too offensive or rude, etc.

Many times, when a group first forms, everything seems to work out fine. You get all of the above benefits and then some. And as the group gets bigger many of these positive aspects blossom even more, and you have more opportunities, more resources, and more support than ever before. It's great!

But sooner or later, the group has a problem.

What's the problem?

All too often a small Neo-Pagan group begins to notice that one member, or a small group of members, are repeatedly causing problems. They might be arguing more than most people, or raising their voice a lot more than average, or disrupting the flow of meetings or rituals in some way. They may be making demands about changes they want to make in the rules or Bylaws of the group. Or the problem may be with their interpersonal relationships with other members of the group. There may be sexual factors involved, or financial problems, or erratic behaviors, or an inappropriate number of personal favors that are asked for. Frequently, there's a combination of several of the above problems.

When this disruptive behavior is first noticed, the other members of the group will begin talking about it and how it is affecting them. Chances are it will be ignored for quite a while—maybe months, maybe even years. While many people will agree that "something should be done" to change the behavior, there probably won't be a consensus of what that "something" should be. Most people will agree that any steps they take to try to correct the problem will only have a slim chance of being successful but will almost certainly be uncomfortable, so they won't be anxious to take them.

Many people will hope that the problem just goes away. Maybe the person will change on their own. Maybe they will get tired of acting like that. Maybe they will just quit the group and move on. "Let's just wait and see what happens. Maybe it will all work out."

And sometimes that's exactly what happens. Sometimes people change drastically, on their own, for the better. It could happen. But it usually doesn't. And if the problem doesn't go away, it will probably get worse.

Perhaps a few hints are dropped. Perhaps a go-between has a few words with the troublemaker, asking them to be more "reasonable". That might work; but even if it does, the change usually doesn't last. The leader of the group will get involved at some point. They may try official means to stem the disruption. Once that happens, the troublemaker will usually turn against the group's leader (if that hadn't already happened) and begin a concerted campaign to show everyone what a poor leader they have. It will become very personal.

In all too many cases, the behavior just gets more outlandish, more noticeable, and more troublesome as time goes on. The severity of the behavior will increase and so will the frequency. There may be loud arguments in which the "good people" say some not-so-nice things and some things they shouldn't. There may be some vicious emails exchanged, full of accusations and defenses. Sometimes the content of these emails will become a new problem in itself. And sometimes that problem becomes even more important than the original problems were. A tremendous amount of time can be wasted in reading and writing emails which do little more than attack or defend the contents of other emails.

Other people in the group will find themselves talking about the troublemaker a great deal of the time. It becomes a favorite topic, something that almost everyone can agree on. Sometimes people may even enjoy talking about the problem person. They'll make jokes at his or her expense, behind their back. People will roll their eyes when the person speaks or indulges in their objectionable behavior. They will catalog the many instances of

the bad behavior and recite them to each other, back and forth, many times, memorizing the details and fixing the chronology in their minds. This division of "us good folks" vs "that problem person" can actually become a focus for bonding—bringing other people closer together in a mutual cause. Bonding is good. But there are healthier ways to do it.

Very often innocent people that had nothing to do with the original problem will quit the group or just quietly fade away. New guests may show up once or twice and never be heard from again. It will probably be suspected that the troublemaker is the reason for this, but it may be hard to prove.

If the problem gets bad enough, eventually something will have to snap. People will form clear sides and make a stand. Someone may say something like, "Either she goes, or I go!" The troublemaker may quit or be forced out of the group through social pressure or by established group procedure. Because almost everyone has a few friends, very frequently other members of the group will also leave at the same time the troublemaker does. If the group survives the split, it will usually be weaker and probably quite bitter about all the aggravation that it went through. Many groups completely dissolve over a situation like this. Other groups stay together but grumble about each other for years after the split. Their ongoing mutual hatred can hang over the entire Neo-Pagan community in that area, influencing decisions about who to invite to what events.

It's a very nasty scenario, and unfortunately it has occurred over and over again. Will we ever learn?

Why us?

All churches attract a share of "odd" people. Even the most conservative Christian church is likely to contain a few individuals that don't integrate well with the others. It's to be expected. Most people desperately want to associate with other people in groups for mutual support and social interaction. The vast spectrum of human personalities covers a very wide range, from saints to sociopaths. While most of us would be called "normal" (by definition), there are plenty of people on the fringes, and many of them want to belong to clubs and churches as much as we do. So in any group, there are bound to be a few that fall far enough outside the norm that they cause problems for the others.

A Neo-Pagan group is probably much more likely to attract unusual people than the local Presbyterian congregation. The fact that we are a minority religion with beliefs and practices far outside the mainstream makes it more likely that we will attract people who live far from the mainstream in other areas. Neo-Pagans are usually very open to alternative lifestyles and sexual behaviors. Count how many people have tattoos and body piercings in your Neo-Pagan group. And how many are either gay or bisexual or engage in alternative practices? Compare that percentage to other groups you have been in, and you'll probably see a big difference. Perhaps there is some correlation between people who choose a Neo-Pagan lifestyle and the tendency to exhibit other unusual behaviors. Or perhaps the range of Neo-Pagan behaviors is wider than it is for non-pagans.

Because Neo-Pagan groups are usually much smaller than the average small-town church, the presence of even a single disruptive member will cause far more damage and commotion than it would in another group. In a group of 150 Methodists, a single person complaining about the service is far outnumbered by all the people who liked it. If the dissatisfied person finds one or two friends to agree, they are still in a very small minority. But in a group of 10 Neo-Pagans, that person would make a considerable influence and, if joined by one or two others, would seem to be a much larger percentage of the group than they really are.

Neo-Pagan groups are so small, in fact, that many of them are constantly on the verge of being too small to function. We tend to have fairly complicated rituals that are normally conducted by 6 to 12 different people, all working together. Frequently, every

member of the group has a part in the ritual. If several people all seem upset at the same time, maybe we bend over backwards to keep them happy, rather than risk losing so many people that we feel we need. So we tolerate outrageous behavior and let it grow worse.

And because Neo-Pagan groups are composed of many people who live outside the mainstream in other areas of their life, we are probably conditioned to be extra tolerant of strange behavior. So we might not notice a problem person as quickly as the First Baptist Church would, and once we do notice the problem behavior, we may be more hesitant to object to it because we aren't so "normal" ourselves. Our standards for "normalcy" are far more flexible than those some people.

What can we do about it?

We want to play in a garden of beautiful flowers. We want to be supported by their company while we enjoy their diversity and be enriched by their abundance. But every so often, we find a nasty weed right in the middle. No amount of watering and fertilizing is going to turn it into a rose or a lily. It just gets bigger and tougher, and usually it spreads. Where there was one weed, now there are two or three. They are taking over the garden. There's only one thing we can do: we have to pull out the weeds and throw them out of our garden.

Do we have the right to weed our garden?

Of course we do! In America, we talk about Democracy so often that we sometimes get mixed up about what it means. It means that every sound-minded person over 21 years of age has the right to cast a vote and be represented in the Government, but it does not mean that we have to let a few individuals spoil things for the rest of us. The Bill of Rights grants us the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We have the right to associate with whom we want, when we want and to not associate with people we find objectionable.

Although there are certain cases where a person cannot be excluded (you can't refuse to serve Spaniards in your restaurant, for example), we generally have the right to form groups of supporting individuals to accomplish common goals. We have the right to restrict membership to those people who are actually helping and to keep others out.

On June 28, 2000, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the Boy Scouts of America had the right to bar homosexuals from membership because the scouts felt that the homosexual lifestyle was inconsistent with the BSA message. It doesn't matter what you think about that particular case, the important thing is that based on the right of associative expression, the Supreme Court has upheld a group's right to determine who its members are. It is unlawful to bar membership based on certain specified characteristics, such as race or gender, but the law does not require clubs to accept everyone who seeks admission to the group. Ironically, the same law is being used by the United Way to protect its right to withdraw financial support to the Boy Scouts because of the Boy Scouts' homophobic practices!

But aren't we supposed to be making the group grow?

Yes, that's probably a goal of your group. That makes it extra difficult to pull a weed and possibly lose some other members at the same time. But your focus must be on the long-term health and well-being of the whole group, not just the short-term number of members.

Remember, a noisy weed can cause other people to quit and scare off many potential members before the weed is pulled. The longer the weed is in the group, the more damage it can do. The faster it is pulled, the faster the group can recover and begin growing again. More than once I've noticed that as soon as a weed was pulled, a couple new members suddenly turned up to take their place.

Who are these weeds?

There are many, many kinds of weeds that can invade your garden. They have a wide variety of attributes and come in many sizes, shapes, and colors. The one thing that they all have in common is that they cause trouble. They draw an inordinate amount of attention to themselves in some way, and the rest of the group has to work extra hard to deal with the results.

Here are 15 varieties that I've managed to identify, so far:

- The Know-It-All
- The Sexual Predator
- The Amateur Lawyer
- The Evidence Collector
- The Needy Person
- The Generous Giver
- The Vocal Minority
- The Whiner
- The Shouter
- The Questioner
- The Latecomer
- The Alcohol Problem
- The Outlaw
- The Nut
- The Antagonist

We'll probably never finish compiling the definitive list of all the different types of weed, because new varieties are bound to show up from time to time. But by studying some of the common types of weed, we'll learn to recognize them quickly; and we'll be able to deal with them fast, before they spread too far or get too deeply rooted.

Some varieties require special handling, too, so we need to understand them and know what to do when we encounter each one. And as new varieties appear, we need to be alert for new techniques and new strategies for dealing with them.

Please understand that the use of the term "weed" is only meant as shorthand to identify:

a person who repeatedly exhibits one or more objectionable behaviors to a particularly annoying degree within the context of a specific group in a given set of circumstances and doesn't seem capable or willing to change those objectionable behaviors.

I don't really believe that there is any such person as a "Know-It-All" or a "Whiner", and I don't believe these people are "weeds" within the context of general humanity. They are only "weeds" in the very limited context of a specific Neo-Pagan group, which is trying to attract and keep a number of similar individuals who get along together. In reality, each person is a unique and priceless individual, made by the Gods and worthy of being loved. But some of those people are so annoying that it's best to stay away from them.

Keep in mind that most weeds exhibit behaviors from more than one of these "types". Most importantly, remember that just because a person exhibits some of the following behaviors, that doesn't mean that the person is so bad that they should automatically be thrown out of your group. Talk to them first. Give them another chance. None of us are perfect.

Here's a few of the types that I've noticed:

The Know-It-All

This annoying weed frequently contradicts others who are speaking, no matter how little they know about the topic at hand. No matter what the subject, this pesky weed always seems to have contrary information and proof that some other point of view is

correct. They will interrupt a speaker with a phrase such as, "No, actually...." or "The real truth about that is..." and then launch into a long explanation that may or may not make any sense or have any relevance.

The Sexual Predator

There is nothing wrong with joining a group because you are looking for friendship, company, or even a romantic relationship. In fact, Church is one of the very best places to go looking for a potential spouse, because the two of you are more likely to share similar values and beliefs. That common bond will help you in many aspects of life, especially if you plan to raise children together. But some people seem to join a Neo-Pagan group because they think that it is an easier way to get sexual gratification. While it might be true that some devout Neo-Pagans happen to have a more casual attitude toward sexual encounters, the weeds are there for sex first, religion second. They may begin flirting through email, before they even meet you; or they may try to strike up a romantic relationship the first time they visit your group. If they are rebuffed, they may very quickly move on to someone else. I've seen people like this try to form sexual bonds with three different people during three consecutive events.

The Amateur Lawyer

Some people have a love affair with rules and laws and cannot resist interpreting them in interesting ways. Beware of anyone who asks to see the Bylaws very early in their involvement with the group. (Most people are with a group for years and have no desire to ever see them.) The Lawyer will scour the Bylaws and find conflicting passages or instances where someone has broken the letter of the law, even while following the spirit of the law.

The Evidence Collector

Weeds love to gather evidence. Yet just collecting evidence is not proof of a weed, because the good leader may need to collect evidence against the weed to get them out. But weeds seem to start collecting evidence before anyone knows there's even a problem. They will often tip their hand by quoting back emails to show that they are "right".

The Needy Person

We all enjoy doing favors for each other. It feels good to help someone out. And it feels good when a friend does something nice for you, in return. But there is a subtle balance that goes on in a true friendship; and if it starts to tip over too far in one direction, both people will feel it, and someone will take steps to put things back in balance. The needy weed loves that imbalance—as long as it's tipping in her favor. She'll request favors continually—small ones as well as big ones. There may be very compelling reasons why this favor needs to be done. It may be a matter of a child's health or the family's income or some such important issue. But the requests will keep on coming, and they may get larger and larger.

The Generous Giver (with strings attached)

The Giver uses the opposite strategy from the needy weed—she gives and gives and gives, but always with some string attached. The string may be just emotional support, or public attention, or expression of gratitude. The gifts may be inappropriate. They may be too expensive, or too personal, or given at inappropriate times. They will usually require a lot of attention to acknowledge them.

The Vocal Minority—Misplaced

This will frequently be a person following a slightly (or vastly) different path from the rest of the group. They might be Norse in a Celtic group or a Wiccan in a Grove of Druids, or a Reconstructionist with a bunch of eclectics. Whatever they are, they will feel oppressed and under-represented. They will loudly lobby for more equal time. While there is certainly a lot of value in accommodating all of our beliefs or preferences to some extent, it quickly becomes obvious when a small minority makes unreasonable demands upon the majority in the interest of fairness.

The Whiner

The Whiner seems to complain about everything: the dates and times you pick for rituals or meetings, the parts you assign to them and to others, the food, the weather, everything. You can waste a lot of time trying to logically explain why a certain date was chosen or a certain course of action was undertaken, but that won't satisfy the Whiner. They don't really want the answer, they want the attention.

The Shouter

This weed makes lots of noise. He gets upset easily and yells and screams at other people at high volume. All other conversation in the area will usually have to stop as people sit around uncomfortably and listen to the ranting.

The Questioner

It's great when people ask questions about the ritual and your beliefs and the mythology you use. But when someone seems to ask too many questions, or asks the same questions over and over, beware! They may be just manipulating your time and attention, and they can't think of any better way than to repeat a question you've already answered.

The Latecomer

This late-blooming weed can be particularly annoying if you like to start things on time. They will repeatedly arrive late, or find something else they have to do when all the rest of the group is getting ready to begin a ritual, a business meeting, or some other event. They will beg you to wait for them, and you'll be surprised by how long it takes them to use the restroom, or to change their clothes.

The Alcohol Problem

This might be a person who drinks every day, or it may be a person who only drinks a few times a year—but those times seem to be at your events and always seem to cause problems with your group. Conversely, this might be a person who is very opposed to alcohol and loudly complains when alcohol is present. Most people are tolerant about the moderate use of alcohol, and most people use alcohol moderately. When someone falls too far outside the norm and causes problems—whether they are falling down drunk or screaming at someone for drinking—they are disruptive. Most of this applies to other intoxicants, as well.

The Outlaw

Many people break a law from time to time—maybe by driving too fast or not reporting every dollar of their income. I think we can expect that and live with it. But when someone has legal problems that seriously interfere with the normal functioning of the group, they become a disruption. Some people seem to have recurring legal problems, or their legal problems are just more severe than the group can stand. For example, if a member of my group were a rapist, I'd want him gone.

The Nut

I think it's very important that we don't pretend to have medical expertise that we don't really have. To do otherwise is to invite legal trouble, or self-delusion at the very least. But at the same time, it's obvious that some people have behavior that is so far outside the norm that they are uncomfortable to be around. They might be too happy, or too sad, or too scared, or too brave. They might see or hear things that no one else does, or they might come to conclusions that no one else can understand. Just exhibiting one or two of these traits to a mild degree doesn't usually make a person a problem—but if someone exhibits them to an extreme, or too often, they can be impossible to be around. This type of person is very perplexing because their thought processes are so hard to understand. In fact, they may be beyond comprehension. If you seriously think someone in your group is a danger to themselves or to others, I think you have an obligation to alert the authorities. But many nuts are not dangerous, just terribly annoying; and in those cases, you might just want to be rid of them.

The Antagonist

This is a person who is hungry for power and influence and will use various methods to attain his goals. He is well described in [Antagonists in the Church](#) by Kenneth C. Haugk.

What do they all have in common?

Many of them seem to want attention and power over the group. Getting a greater-than-average share of attention and holding on to it are ways to control the group. If we are focused on the troublemaker, we can't be doing other things. Sometimes we can be pretty sure that they are acting very deliberately and with great cunning.

Others seem to be oblivious to the trouble they cause, or seem to be victims themselves. I sometimes wonder if subconsciously they are very much aware of what they are doing. But we have no way of knowing, do we?

The only thing they all have in common is that they are causing trouble and problems for you and the others.

How serious is the problem?

Look, we all have problems. And we expect that we will have to deal with a certain amount of problems that come our way through others. Just because a given person causes a problem or two doesn't mean they aren't worth having in your group. But when someone has consistent or serious problems that interfere with the smooth functioning of the group, you have to ask yourself if they are worth the aggravation. Most people will be. But some people will be more trouble than they are worth. These are the ones that I am calling "weeds".

How do I really know this is a weed?

You don't. Despite your very best intentions and all the care you are taking, you might be making a mistake. So you don't pull a weed lightly.

The very first thing you should do is make darn sure the person's complaints are not actually valid. Be open to the possibility that the root cause really lies elsewhere. Perhaps there is a problem with the leadership of the group, or a certain clique of members, or a particular policy. You should be especially cautious if you find the same sorts of complaints coming up repeatedly. Maybe you really have a problem with your own leadership style or something else within your group that you need to fix. Since most of us don't see our own shortcomings, it's a good idea to ask one or two trusted members of your group to give you some honest feedback on whether you might be contributing to this situation in ways you don't realize. Then listen to them carefully and without argument. You want to be on very firm footing before you cast the blame in another direction.

Even if you are sure the problem stems from the person in question, you should still think about it carefully and pray about it and ask your Gods for guidance. You need to thoroughly explore other ways of dealing with the issue, preferably when it first appears and hopefully hasn't grown to be a major problem. You might offer the person some pastoral counseling, if anyone in your group is qualified to give it. Or you might recommend that they get help from outside your group.

If none of the above works, and you are convinced that the group would be better off without the weed, you consult with the other officers in your group, or the other members, and you act only when you are reasonably sure that you're pulling a weed—not a strange flower.

Ultimately, you accept the responsibility that you might be making a mistake, but that you are doing it with good intentions and very careful thought. You are doing the best you can. You acknowledge that you may not be perfect, but you have to act. Then you just do it. It's not easy. But I believe it's one of the prices of leadership.

So what do we do now?

Once you are reasonably sure you've identified a weed, and the important decision makers have decided that it's got to go, you should pull it as soon as possible. You want to minimize contact between that person or their group and the rest of your group. Don't worry about legalities and rules—just send a short, polite letter to the individual or individuals, on behalf of the group, saying that they are no longer welcome in the group. Use the most euphemistic, generalized language you can. Resist the impulse to make your case and prove that you have the right to expel them. Anything you say at this point will most likely fall on deaf ears and only open you up to further questions and conversation.

We made a lot of mistakes over the years and tried many different approaches. Here's an example of the kind of letter you might consider sending:

Dear Weed,

As we told you in January and again in March and May, you have repeatedly created a disturbance in our group by raising your voice in meetings and demanding equal time for the Hawaiian Gods you worship. When you told Mary that she was "a low-down, conniving snake" for voting against your pot luck supper idea, we felt that you were being mean-spirited and an obstruction to the joyful camaraderie of our little group. When you were late for ritual on August 3rd, after being warned about unnecessary tardiness on at least three or four occasions, you disrupted the energy of the whole group.

Therefore, it is with deep regret that we must ask you to please resign from our group. If you refuse to resign, we shall be forced to banish you in accordance with Bylaws 5, 6, and 9.

Do not write to any of our members; and if you show up at any more of our functions, we will be forced to contact the Grand Bishop of Eris to have your membership revoked. We might also be forced to call the police to have you removed.

Sincerely,

Joe Smith

High Priest, Local Congregation, Church of Eris

PS: We've all talked it over at great length, and we think you need professional counseling. As your friends, we strongly recommend that you seek the help of a competent psychiatric professional. If you get the help you need and can prove to us that you are significantly better, we might be willing to take you back.

Sounds pretty reasonable, right? In fact, this is the worst possible letter you could write. I should know—I have personally tried all of the techniques within it, and they usually backfired on us. Here are some of the problems the letter has:

1) *As we told you in January and again in March and May...* Too many details, and it sounds like you are collecting evidence. The weed can claim that he didn't get that email, or remembers the meeting differently. It's unlikely that you can prove that he received every email, and it's unlikely you recorded all the meetings. It becomes your word against his.

2) *...you have repeatedly created a disturbance...* That's subjective. The weed might find a member or two who disagrees with that conclusion.

3) *...by raising your voice in meetings...etc.* More details that are subjective and can be refuted.

4) *...we must ask you to please resign from our group.* This technique has worked for us a couple times, but what if they refuse? It prolongs the process and creates more pain.

5) *If you refuse to resign, we shall be forced to banish you in accordance with Bylaws 5, 6, and 9.* Anytime you have to use specific Bylaws to justify your actions, you are opening yourself to those Bylaws (and all other Bylaws) being interpreted differently and possibly even have them being used against you.

6) *Do not write to any of our members...* Don't tell them what to do. You have no authority. If you expect a barrage of hate email, warn your members and help them set up filters, if they want. Or ignore them. Or set up an auto-delete filter for all their email. But you might want to keep a copy of all email from them in a folder, just in case.

7) *...and if you show up at any more of our functions, we will be forced...* It doesn't hurt to have a couple of backup plans in mind, if things don't go the way you want, but you gain nothing by tipping your hand or making threats. And what you lose is the element of surprise, and you also risk their using the threat against you.

8) *...to contact the Grand Bishop of Eris to have your membership revoked.* If the person has been that much trouble, you should have already told the Grand Bishop about the problem, privately and confidentially. But you probably don't have the authority to have their membership revoked, so you're just being dramatic and unnecessarily confrontational.

9) *We might also be forced to call the police to have you removed.* This is escalating the problem unnecessarily. Some sorts of people will take this as a personal challenge and show up, just to see if you'll follow through with your threats.

10) *Sincerely,...Joe Smith* The more impersonal you can make the letter, the better. If you sign it with a single person's name, all of their anger will be focused on that person. It can easily become a personal battle, with name calling and accusations against the leader, if pointing out any flaws of the leader, whether real or imagined, would make the troublesome person somehow more acceptable to the group. Sure, the leader of the group probably wrote it, or maybe just approved it, but the recipient doesn't know that for certain. Their anger will be diluted by being diffused.

11) *We've all talked it over at great length...* Sure you have. You'd be foolish not to. But to point this out to the person you've been talking about is overly rude and humiliating. You're just trying to ease your conscience by spreading the blame around to more people.

12) *...we think you need professional counseling.* I know how tempting it is to do this: on one side, you feel in your gut that no sane person could act like that, and you'd like to think that a mental health professional would agree with you. It would give you validation. On another side, you naturally feel bad about pushing a person out of the group, and this makes it seem like you are actually doing it partly to help them. But save your breath. They are not likely to take your advice; they will resent the suggestion and take it in the worst possible way. They might even think that you have overstepped your bounds and are practicing medicine without a license. (Which might be true, depending on exactly how you phrased your suggestion, what your position is, what your training is, and the laws in your area.) Just come to terms with the fact that you are kicking them out to make the group better. That's your job. Let someone else be their counselor. If you feel they are a danger to themselves or others, call the police. If you simply must tell them to seek counseling, for your own conscience, then have an individual member of your group (or several of them) do that on their own. And make sure that they make it perfectly clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the group—they are just expressing their own personal concerns and opinions to a "friend".

13) *...If you get the help you need and can prove to us that you are significantly better, we might be willing to take you back.* What, are you crazy?! That's the last thing you want to offer. You think that they are going to visit a therapist for a few months and run back to you with a note saying that they are nice now? Sure, it could happen, but don't count on it. Again, you're just trying to make yourself feel better. Make a clean break. If they actually do get their heads together and decide to come back to you (both are unlikely), then cautiously reevaluate them.

Almost every point in the above letter is, at best, an opening

for a weed to come back to you for clarification, rebuttal, and endless argument. And at worst, some of the above could be used against you as evidence to show that you are in some way unfit to be the leader. Some of it might possibly be used against you in court. Either way, you will just be dragging out the process and probably causing more pain.

But there are no laws that say we have to like anyone. A much better approach is a very short and polite note that doesn't contain any specifics. Like this:

Dear Weed,

We've noticed that the interpersonal dynamics between you and some of the people in our group are not as smooth as we'd like. We've agreed that while you have many positive qualities that would be an asset to most groups like ours, in our specific case the overall balance would be disruptive.

We wish you all the best in your future spiritual path.

Sincerely,

Local Congregation, Church of Eris

You might want to customize the above letter a bit to better fit the circumstances, but avoid the impulse to add any more detail than absolutely necessary. Notice that this letter doesn't accuse them of anything, doesn't mention any specific details that could be refuted, and doesn't make any sort of legal claim or give any internal justification. It just says that the way they act doesn't mesh with the group. It's short and simple.

Don't we need to prove our case?

No, that's the LAST thing you want to do! You are not "charging" the troublesome person with a crime, so they don't have to defend themselves. In fact, if you try to get rid of someone because they broke Bylaw 6.3, and according to Bylaw 8.5 you have the right to banish them, subject, of course, to Bylaw 9.2b, you'll probably regret it. Many troublesome people (or their friends) will delight in scrutinizing your Bylaws and finding loopholes, inconsistencies, different interpretations, etc. You'll end up arguing over the Bylaws even more than you argued over their initial obnoxious behavior! You're trying to END the problems, remember?

So what you do is simply make it clear, in polite, general, non-threatening language, that your group doesn't care for the way they act and doesn't want them to be a part of the group. End of story. What are they going to do? Sue you to make you like them?

That's awfully rude, isn't it?

Maybe it's a little rude to tell someone you don't like them (or to be more PC, you don't like their behavior), but it's true. And they were being far more rude to you or you wouldn't be resorting to this. Yes, it's a little harsh, but it's quick and far less painful than any other method we've tried.

Will that be the end of it?

Yes, if you're really lucky. But lots of times, you'll hear more from them. If they send you a blistering email telling you what you can do with your %\$#@! group and what a terrible leader you are, you got off easy. At the other end of the extreme are people who will bad-mouth you every chance they get, on every public list they can. You may have to defend yourself from some of these attacks and tell your side of the story. But I urge you to do so with the utmost restraint and brevity. Then ignore their counter-strike. If your group was right and they really are the problem, other people will see that, too. The weed will be known for what they are and will be shunned and banned by others. Everyone has had experience with this type of person, and they will sympathize with you. Have some faith in yourself and your group and in the good

wishes of others in our community. It'll all blow over.

A little preventive medicine

It might not hurt to put a clause in your Bylaws that makes it clear that you will not tolerate disruptive people at your events. You can also discuss the issue with the whole group and make a group decision that you will tell disruptive individuals that they are not welcome. It might have a preventive effect on some potentially troublesome people, and if not, at least they were warned.

Conclusion

There are a good many troubled and troublesome people in the world, and Neo-Pagan groups seem to attract more than our fair share of them. These folks are usually loud, obnoxious, and a constant nuisance to the majority of us that just want to enjoy a smooth-functioning community of like-minded individuals. We have the legal and moral right to form communities that nurture and support us. We have the right to choose our friends. When a particular individual is found to consistently disrupt the harmony of our group, or to cause more trouble than the group is willing to put up with, it is the group's right to exclude that individual from its presence.

And as the leaders of Neo-Pagan groups, we have certain additional duties and obligations: We must be observant of the actions of our members and guests, so we will notice disruptive behavior early, rather than late. We must listen carefully to the words of people in our groups that we trust, because they may be trying to tell us about a disruptive person, in a subtle way. We must try our best to be fair and open-minded so that we don't mislabel a person as disruptive, just because they happen to disagree with a certain policy or decision or don't get along with a certain individual. And finally, when we become convinced that a person is truly a "weed", we must act swiftly and surely to remove them from our garden.

(As an end-note, I would remind RDNA folk that while there is no organization-wide method for evicting members, groves can incorporate a system for removing troublesome folk from grove membership.)

Coming out of the Woods

Telling your loved ones and enemies that you are a Druid.

By Mike the Fool, Mango Mission, 2009

Many of us are Druids and the people around us don't know. Come to think of it, do you really know the denomination of most of your co-workers and friends? Bob's Jewish, Sam's Christian, Alice is an atheist, etc. is about all you know. We don't know much about our neighbors and relatives like we used to when they were vital to our survival in previous centuries, we're kind of anonymously floating about in our current society, changing location, affiliation, employment and such.

We all have concerns about not being liked or accepted by others because of labels or affiliations. Most would rather be in the majority rather than in a minority, especially when that minority has ever been persecuted in the past. Druids, Wiccans, Neo-Pagans, New Agers, Atheists, Baha'i, Jews, etc all have been targets of larger mainstream scorn, dislike or prejudice. One might worry about the security of one's job, family relations, reputation, children's custody, vandalism by stupid bigoted teens, or biting gossip by neighbors. It's enough to have second thoughts.

Why "come out" at all? Maybe you're the extrovert, open-book type, that blurts out your innermost thoughts and feelings to each and every person that passes by. Most are a bit more reticent about talking about spiritual beliefs, which are actually often more personal and vital to our core identity than nationality, sexual orientation, ethnicity or social class. Many Reformed Druids continue for quite a long time without people catching on, while they continue their activity in a mainstream religion that attracts and nourishes them. But in many cases, there may seem no other option but to come out to certain people. Just like a chick coming out of an egg, if it keeps growing, eventually the shell cannot contain it any longer.

No two "outing" stories will be the same. There are too many variables and possible outcomes. You'll have to think carefully about how it will unwind and whether you want to do it.

Druidism is simply not as popular as Wicca, there aren't dozens of Hollywood movies & TV characters (pro or anti) about it every year. Most modern Druids seems to come from well educated stock, it seems, not to get big-headed or anything. So most likely, the parents/family of the new Druid have probably heard of "Druids" either historical or those guys mucking about Stonehenge recently. More than likely we'd still get lumped together with the Wiccans during an explanatory phase.

This is natural, if I were in Japan and became Christian, most likely my parents would confuse Catholicism and Protestantism, since to an outsider, the differences seem small compared to the differences between Shinto/Buddhism and Christianity.

The stages of coming out are probably:

1. Deciding who to tell. Probably a friend first, to test the waters.
2. When and where to tell. Perhaps on a hike or on a lazy sunset on a porch drinking mint-juleps, but not in the middle of a Thanksgiving dinner. Often, though, it just happens, when you're parents stumble across your altar or they see a book on your shelf, and a panicky "what's this?" moment occurs.
3. How to tell. Either pick a day on the calendar and screw one's courage to the sticking point or waiting for that conversational "sweet point". Or dropping hints in advance. Perhaps, when

your mother is talking about putting some rocks in the garden, you could mention that it would be nice to align them, or leave an offering to little faeries to help the plants to grow.

4. Tell them.

Telling them and Reassuring them:

I think the big points I'd want to get out in advance are somewhat similar to coming out of the closet for homosexuality (except that condition is more genetically determined):

0. I'm not stupid or weak-willed enough to join a "cult", so don't worry about brain-washing. I can explain to you this difference between a small controlling strange religious movement and a small strange religious movement, i.e. the word "controlling".

1. This is nobody's "fault" in raising me. You all did a fine job of educating me.

2. I'm still a kind and gentle person, and have no intention of hurting anybody, including you.

3. This is a permanent thing, probably.

4. It "fits" me, and I like it and it makes me a stronger, better person.

5. Yes, it is not a "popular", and so I'll face discrimination from bigots, so I'll need your support and love to carry through.

6. I have no intention of "converting" you or my relatives, we're not into proselytizing.

7. What I learned in my previous religious phase will continue to influence me and help me, but some aspects/tenets cannot be followed any more, so I am making an official break with, or "bending" them to remain in loose association. I don't "hate" that religion, more like a divorce for irreconcilable reasons, we can still be friends.

8. I'll eventually tell most folks, when I feel its right, probably gradually.

9. I love you, that's why I'm telling you about a new aspect of what defines me.

10. I'm no super-theological expert, but I can explain the basic tenets and structure of the group/beliefs to you when you're curious, but I don't expect you to believe all of them yourself.

11. If you are Druidic in a purely philosophical or supplementary fashion to your old religion, then say so, but if you are polytheistic, explain it in a way they can grasp (many facets of the same gem, archetypal images, kind of like Catholic saints with more autonomy, etc.)

The aftermath

No telling where this may go. You may lose friends. One person may blather the story to all and sundry, against your wishes and desire for timing. You might be ganged up upon, or shunned. Who knows? I suppose everyone responds differently.

1. Supporting love and kisses and curiosity and well-wishing, well, that's the ideal.

2. Tears and wailing for a while, self-blaming for your "decision"

3. Indifference. "Whatever"

4. Anger and attempts to "fix you". Perhaps seeking professional help.

5. Something completely unexpected (positive or negative).

6. A combination of these, one after the other, not unlike the cycles of grief after a death (denial, anger, negotiation, sadness, adaptation, etc.)

The questions:

Hopefully they'll get around to asking some of the contents of your religion. Think carefully, when your friend told you they are now a born-again baptist, how much did you really want to know about being a Baptist?

0. Earth centered, affirming of life and celebration of changing seasons. No animal/human sacrifices. Yuck.

1. Modern interpretation of the ancient practices of Celtic/Indo-European people, adapted for modern times.

2. Not a very strict hierarchy, no one tells me what to do. I could change religions tomorrow and there would be no obstacle to that, but I think I'm here for awhile.

3. Lots of research and putting pieces together.

4. Lots of materials, some quite inspiring, some I don't agree with.

5. Not a lot of people in the group, but most are quite interesting, and the exchanges have helped me.

6. I can interact with any religion, borrow even, and not get "in trouble". So, I'll still be studying some aspects of Christianity that blend well.

7. Interpretation of the "gods" can be philosophical or religious.

8. Not buying a lot of stuff, just books at Amazon for research.

9. Meet each season, sometimes monthly, when I feel like it.

10. Not doing sex, drugs or crime. It's not dangerous.

11. Pretty folksy stuff mostly.

12. Spending a lot of time outside, thinking, asking questions.

13. This is something like what my ancient ancestors once did, and those millenia of beliefs and wisdom are important to me. I revere my recent Christian ones too.

When you have time, after each occurrence, think about your "presentation" and how to "tune" it appropriately to the next likely person. Perhaps it might be a year or two until the stars align, or it might be the next day.

There will be certain relatives "Fundy uncle John" that you'll never directly address, or perhaps your boss. But one by one, everyone will know that you've got some unusual ideas, but most will probably know that you've always been unusual and add this to the list. The ones who know you're a good person, should continue to believe so, since your actions and words will reflect this.

What is most amazing is that, it feels good to be honest about who you are, the double-act is gone, the pretense and shame of not telling those who should know is gone. It won't be easy, it won't be painless, but down the road, it will be right.

Sincerely,
Michael the FoOl

Section Four: Proto-Grove Liturgical Primer

2005 Introduction

ARDA 2 has oodles of liturgies and Ordination rites, and it is a bit confusing for new comers to know which of these the average Druid can perform officially. So I've put together this little collection of services and activities that should keep you busy for several months or even a year or so.

Most of these activities in UWP can be practiced by a Druid of any Order, or by complete outsiders to Reformed Druidism, if there are any. They may enrich the breadth of possibilities for Druids wishing to diversify their event portfolio, especially when unwillingly alone, or not feeling in the mood for group activities.

Indeed many Druids do not feel the need to hold services with Groves and prefer to study and celebrate nature on their own, for them this section has been accumulated to give them activities to pursue outside the traditional framework of the liturgies. For me, liturgy is much like fungus. About 98% of the life of a fungus is spent underground, happily munching on earthy matters, then when the weather is good and moist, it pops out of the ground in a mushroom, disseminates seeds, then withers away, returning to earthy pursuits.

They have been culled from the Druid Missal-Any and various other sources, by Druids of varying degrees of ritual skill, and a few are a bit tongue-in-cheek from their outward appearance. I make no guarantees that they will actually work or that other Druids will recognize them, but here they are.

Of course, there is no requirement that Druids should pursue these, or limit themselves only to these activities. You're more than welcome to come up with more on your own if you think it is necessary. Early leaders may prefer activity-based meetings until they are brave enough to lead a service. As you gain confidence, you might add or subtract elements. Magic has rarely been that big an element of services, rather more on celebration, but it is conceivable that some Groves could devise a more theoretically sound magical service; and I recommend you to ADF for samples.

Even with the same liturgical outline, no two Druid services are the same. There are innumerable unpredictable factors that affect each service, and will surprise and perturb a desire for exact replication. Your service is influenced significantly by changes in location, congregation composition, participation interest, weather, season, pressing themes in social discourse, distractions, divination omens, selection of sacrifice, selection of poems/meditations/songs, quality of musician, and your moods.

You must expect and incorporate the unexpected. Like a harried orchestra conductor with a hundred instruments of varying performance, you try to create a concerted piece of beautiful music, despite snapping strings, ill-tuned instruments, trombone players falling asleep, etc. It's not always ideal, but it is usually good enough.

-Mike

The Drynemetum Press



Mike's Thoughts on Liturgy

Ritual is simply actions you like to do, over and over again. Your liturgies are only limited by your knowledge, imagination and experience. For those of us not gifted in public performance, it can be a series of difficult hard-fought lessons as you put together the pieces and styles that you can call your own, hopefully with the advice & example of a mentor, but often a result of trial & error and much reflection. It would be well for an aspiring liturgist to attend the services of as many different religions as is possible, to see in practice how different techniques are employed and how different elements are absent or held in common; especially since there are few comparative books on liturgy. You need not belong only to your Grove's community. A few acting lessons, a public speaking course, and simple practice in a mirror or before a trusted friend will vastly improve your performance ability. Explore, contemplate, try, decide and repeat. Then with honed skills and a fresh appreciation for the diversity, you may see how other parts of ARDA 2 may enrich your own liturgical design.

One interesting trend is the element of randomness. In early traditions of Carleton and Berkeley, although the winds are divined, in nearly every case, the sacrifice was accepted in the summer and rejected in the winter. Since the 1980s, many Groves have begun to actually acknowledge that the sacrifice is a less assumed item. How you deal with a "failure" is a good sign that we don't "control" nature and it's a good test of a leader's mettle, requiring some quick thinking, in which case it is good to have a "back up" plan. Proper rest, eating, contemplation, familiarization and rehearsal will do wonders for you.

The Liturgy has an unusual place and role in Reformed Druidism, unlike that found in most other religions. Reformed Druidism began as a protest against enforced attendance and fixed liturgies as found at the mandatory Carleton College Chapel service of the early 60s. It would be a very sad day when a fixed or forced liturgy were to become established in Reformed Druidism itself! There are several points about Reformed Druid liturgy that should be remembered: irregular attendance is acceptable (perhaps even desirable), it isn't fixed in its final form and the existence of the liturgy may even be antithetical to Reformed Druidism itself

Irregular Attendance:

While many earlier college members may have enjoyed going to every Saturday services and to every one of the eight great festivals; this was not the case with everyone. For many, the need to gather in a group for "formal" worship is an urge that only comes once in long time. One can have a great many religious moments outside of a group, perhaps even purer moments. Many a person would come to a Druid ritual and just sunbathe, ignoring the ritual in effect, being there just to be with the people. Attendance has no reflection on how "Druidic" you are. Others took it quite seriously.

Nor is liturgical attendance the only way to be with other Druids. Over the years, both at Carleton and abroad at our missionary Groves, there have been many other group activities that have developed that don't use a standard liturgy (or even need a liturgy). Such activities include: sweat lodges, candle-making parties, Bardic sing-a-longs, group-feasts, nature-walks, group meditation sessions, pseudo-theological debates, magic-working groups, book reading clubs, herbology and many other activities (depending on local talents that exist within the group). However, some groups just did the services 4 times a year and nothing else.

The Liturgy isn't fixed in its final form

Even from the beginning, the liturgies have been constantly changing. Although the Council of Dalon Ap Landu had voted that they:

"adopt the Order of Worship of the Carleton Grove (as formulated by David H. Fisher) as the **basic** order of worship of the Reformed Druids of West America."

This restriction has been stretched and experimented with. Every priest is expected to change, adopt and mutate the liturgy to fit the existing mood, their religious sensibilities, and the specific purposes of the moment. Ad libbing and spontaneity, within reasonable bounds, is encouraged. As a result there are dozens and dozens of alternatives to every single ritual example that will be presented to you in this book.

Many a person has added Wiccan elements or Cabalistic elements or Judeo-Christian elements, etc. The purpose of the liturgy is to bring people together, and if the majority of the people in the Grove belong to one particular tradition you can add elements from that tradition (if you want to). However, the original version has been judged over the years to be relatively ecumenical enough and dogma-free to be acceptable to most people, so we recommend it when dealing with a "mixed" crowd.

The Liturgy isn't Sacrosanct

There is no claim of divine origin for these liturgies, although a few writers may have felt a bit inspired when they wrote them. Sanctity is in the eye of the beholder, isn't it? For many, the liturgy is merely a philosophical exposition by the Priest who is using deities in the Jungian sense of the archetype. For others, the liturgy is the direct invocation and worship of whatever deities are being invoked. For some it is merely being quiet together at someplace while someone reads something out loud. For some, powerful magickal energies are conjured forth by the magickal words and the power is delegated to various tasks. For others, it's a quaint little service that's fun to attend. Let us respect the right of the beholder and individual congregant to have their own interpretation of the liturgy.

The liturgy may even be antithetical

Perhaps it was the Protestant streak in the early founders which made Reformed Druidism into the religion of the individual. The goal of Reformed Druidism, for many, is a never-ending search for religious truth; a truth which can be meaningful only to the particular individual who grasps it. Words and gestures cannot communicate the subtleties that define our thoughts (little can, unless you have telepathy). Let us beware from ever taking the liturgy as the only effective way of expressing our religious thoughts!

Who can say whether the individual with the title "Priest" has any better understanding of her/his religion than the young first-order Druid sitting near them? For all we know, the role/title of "Priest" within Reformed Druidism may be merely an "ego-stroke" of comfort for those who feel the need to make sure that someone in the group holds a service every now and then. I hope not, although I have been a priest, for three years as of writing this, I don't feel any more divine than the next guy.

Michael Scharding
Day 31 of Geimredh, Year XXXIII of the Reform
December 1st, 1995 c.e.

Zero Order Club: The Order of the Acorn

Unofficial. Recently invented by Mike, 2002

More of a club, really, for people who wish to become Reformed Druids, yet due to age, distance, handicap or some other hardship, are unable to meet with a Grove. The Book of Maccabees says, "Don't make a long introduction to a short story", so let's keep it simple, but feel free to elaborate if you wish.

The Acorn ordination should ideally be done outdoors between Beltane and Samhain. Perhaps you'd wish to reaffirm this status annually to yourself ("Next year in Carleton!" or some sort of deadline)? It is basically, the affirmation of the two basic tenets, bringing you into the organizational body of the Druids. In a way this is fulfilling half of the 1st Order requirements (Druid Chronicles, the Book of Customs, Chapter 1). Someday, if fate arranges it, you will meet a Druid who can take you into other Orders, if you wish or need.

Praise:

Insert whatever warm ups you think necessary. Perhaps a song.

Invocation:

O Dalon Ap Landu and Earth-Mother,
I know not the ways of the Druids, yet I wish to become one.
I cannot join their activities, yet I wish to act.
I know not when I'll enter Orders, but I wish to start now.
Please bless my search, and fill me with wisdom and Awareness.

Offering of some seeds, preferably acorns:

I wish to be a Reformed Druid and I believe that:

The object of the search for religious truth, which is a universal and a never-ending search, may be found through the Earth Mother, which is Nature; but this is one way, yea, one way among many.

And great is the importance, which is of a spiritual importance, of Nature, which is the Earth Mother; for it is one of the objects of Creation, and with it we do live, yea, even as we do struggle through life are we come face to face with it.

It is an unclear path that I begin today, but I will learn by doing. I offer you my activities in the time to come, as a sacrifice, whether it be for a few days or many years.

During this upcoming year, I intend to do the following.....

Please show me your favor, by bringing the path of the proper Druid across mine, in the proper way, at the proper time, at the proper place. If I am to follow this course by myself, so be it with great wisdom and small discoveries from your lessons around me.

Meditation:

Think on the signs that may appear during this ceremony.

Conclusion:

Be there with me through these trying times. Thank you.

Ordination of First Order Druids

By Founders, 1963
Written up by Mike, 1996

Unlike the other Orders of Reformed Druidism, there is no fixed liturgy of ordination, and at least during the first year 1963-1964, anyone who partook of the waters or claimed to be a Druid was considered one; which is a quiet tradition among many for Druids to this day.

There is a general custom which can be elaborated upon as the Priest sees fit, derived from the Book of Customs in the Druid Chronicles that they must believe the two basic tenets and partake of the Waters of Life. Usually the Priest will ask for aspirants to the First Order, just before the waters are about to be passed around. The Priest will then go to the aspirant and ask if the aspirant believes in the two Basic Tenets of Reformed Druidism, such as this version:

The object of the search for religious truth, which is a universal and a never-ending search, may be found through the Earth Mother, which is Nature; but this is one way, yea, one way among many.

And great is the importance, which is of a spiritual importance, of Nature, which is the Earth Mother; for it is one of the objects of Creation, and with it we do live, yea, even as we do struggle through life are we come face to face with it.

If the aspirant replies affirmatively, the Priest takes the chalice and dips their fingers in the Waters and draws the Druid Sigil on the forehead of the aspirant (not anointed in every Grove). Then the aspirant drinks some of the Waters. The Priest then declares them to be a First Order Druid.

If there are several aspirants to the First Order, say a half-dozen or more, instead of going through each separately, they may be asked the basic tenets as a group, followed by separate head-anointings.

Another custom has developed at Carleton College. There, anyone of the first or second orders being able to ordain another person into their own orders, in the absence of an existing Priest. This tradition kept the Carleton Druids going from 1985 to 1992.

Ordination of Second Order Druids

By Founders, 1964

To be inserted after the **consecration** and before the **meditation** in the Order or Worship. It can of course be the sole purpose of the Order of Worship, or an incidental part. It is generally only done in the Summer Half of the Year as it requires Alcohol or Potent Sugar-water. Usually the Priest of the service asks if anyone wishes to enter the Second Order, after having consecrated the Waters and performs this service.

Another alternative is to bring the aspirant forward during the Order of Worship's **invocation** and after asking the **Questions, shown below**, have the aspirant respond to the normal **Catechism of the Waters**. After the **Consecration of the Waters**, proceed to the **Sealing to the Second Order**.

(**NOTE** Have everybody sip the Waters before the initiate, but leave plenty for her/him to drink. It is often a good idea to consecrate a second chalice to ensure there's enough)

Invocation

PRIEST: O Earth-Mother, bountiful and ever flowing forth, we Thy children, invoke Thy blessing upon this aspirant to serve thee.

Questions

PRIEST: Do you, in full consciousness, promise to serve faithfully the Earth-Mother, ministering to Her followers, and following you duties as a Druid of the Second Order to the best of your ability? Do you?

Aspirant: I do. (or close enough)

PRIEST: Do you understand from whence comes the source of all life, and the nature of the source of all life? Do you?

Aspirant: I do.

PRIEST: Do you understand the partaking of the Waters-of-Life, and the sacrifice of life that we offer-up to our Mother? Do you?

Aspirant: I do.

PRIEST: Are you ready, then, to be sealed up to the service of the Earth-Mother? Are you?

Aspirant: I am.

Sealing to the Second Order

(Priest dips fingers in consecrated waters and makes a Sigil on forehead of the candidate every time the word "seal" is spoken in the following:)

In the name of the Earth-Mother;

I **seal** you to Her service in the house of the spirit of the South.

I **seal** you to Her service in the house of the Spirit of the North.

I **seal** you to Her service in the house of the Spirit of the West.

I **seal** you to Her service in the house of the Spirit of the East.

Finally, I **seal** you to the service of the mighty, the blessed, all powerful and fertile All-Mother Earth, thus consecrating your life to Her cause.

The Ordeal

(Hand the candidate all the remaining Waters-of-Life)

PRIEST: Take and drink, all of it!

(Return to the Order of Worship, usually at the Meditation)

Order of Common Worship for a Proto-Grove

By Isaac Bonewits, 1976

This SDNA service is designed for a Proto-Grove, i.e., one without a true Arch Druid (a member of the Order of Dalon Ap Landu). It is designed for 4 Speakers. If there are fewer, they may reassign the parts. P=People. Service starts with all some distance away from the altar, which is usually a rock at the foot of a tree, or any other place of natural beauty.

Invocation

SP 1: O lord, forgive these three sins that are due to our human limitations; Thou art everywhere,

P: But we worship Thee here;

SP 2: Thou are without form,

P: but we worship Thee in these forms;

SP 3: Thou has no need of prayers and sacrifices.

P: Yet we offer Thee these prayers and sacrifices.

SP 4: O Lord, forgive these three sins that are due to our human limitations.

P: O, Mother, cleanse our minds and hearts and prepare us for meditation.

Procession

Here occurs the Procession, often with the Grove singing the hymn from Customs 2:1-3. Upon arrival near the altar, all divide to form a circle around it.

Praise

Here an Incantation, Poem or Hymn of praise is recited or sung by any.

Offertory

SP 1: From the Earth-Mother comes the gift of Life, and it brings us together here. In thanks we bring these gifts, wrought of Her bounty and our effort. O Mighty Eagle, bear these gifts of love aloft as bread for the Gods, that they may bless our works.

(People bring any gifts they may have for the Gods to the altar. There follows a brief silence, in which each person asks for the fulfillment of material or external needs.)

SP2: From Be'al comes the gift of awareness, and it brings us together here. In wonder we bring this praise, wrought of His light and of our effort. O Flowing Winds, carry our songs of love on high as wine to the Gods, that they may guide our sight.

(People offer songs, poetry, etc, if they have them, individually or as a group. There follows a brief silence, in which each person asks for the fulfillment of spiritual or internal needs.)

Sharing

SP 3: Places filled chalice of Waters (Summer-alcoholic, Winter-plain water) on the altar and speaks:

SP 3: O Earth-Mother, bountiful and ever flowing forth, we ask your blessings on these Waters. In them, help us to find strength and enlightenment, like a circle of trees on the top of a hill. With them, make us one with each other, and with all thy children, like a ring of trees in the heart of the forest. Through them, bring us one consecrated in Dalon Ap Landu, and make of us a Grove in the midst of the world. O Be'al, who dwellest in every heart, lead us on the path to

awareness.

SP 3: retrieves the Chalice and sips from it, passing it to the one on hir (Summer-left, Winter-right). Each person sips and passes it on. When it returns to SP 3, a small amount should be left. SP 3 pours the remains onto the altar, saying:

SP 3: To thee we return this portion of Thy bounty, O our Mother, even as we must return to Thee.

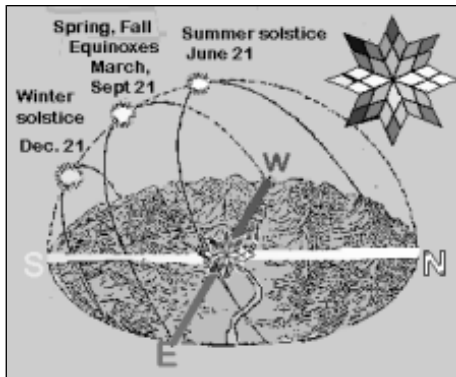
Meditation

Benediction

SP 4: Let us go forth into the world, secure in the knowledge that the Gods have heard us, that Be'al will answer our prayers and that we go forth with the blessings of the Earth-Mother.

The Druid/ess blesses the Grove with three Sigils in the air, left to right, saying:

Peace! Peace! Peace!



Another Proto-Grove Service

This service is designed for a Proto-Grove, i.e., one without a true Arch Druid (ordained in the Order of Dalon Ap Landu).
By Weinberger, 2002

The service starts some distance from the altar.

D: Druid E: Everybody

Invocation

O Earth Mother!

We praise Thee that seed springeth,
That flower openeth, that grass waveth.

We praise Thee for winds that whisper
through the graceful elm,
through the shapely maple,
through the lively pine,
through the shining birch,
through the mighty oak.

We praise Thee for all things,
O Earth Mother,
Who givest Life.

D: O Be'al, forgive these three errors that are upon us due to our mortal limitations:

Thou art everywhere,

E: Yet we worship Thee here.

D: Thou art without form,

E: Yet we worship Thee in these forms.

D: Thou has no need of our prayers and sacrifices,

E: Yet we offer Thee these prayers and sacrifices.

D: O Be'al, forgive these three errors that are upon us due to our mortal limitations.

All: O Mother, calm our minds and hearts and prepare us for meditation.

Procession to the Grove.

Upon arrival near the altar the Druid/ess uses a stave to mark the Druid Sigil upon the ground around the altar. After the Druid/ess steps around to the front of the altar, the members divide to form a semi-circle around the front of it.

Praise

D: Does anyone have any praise or requests of the Gods?

At this time people may give thanks, make requests, and/or bring any gifts. They may have for the Deities of their choice to the altar. There follows a silent time in which each person asks for the fulfillment of their material/external or spiritual needs.

Offertory

The Druid/ess holds up the offering to the sky, while saying:

D: From the Earth Mother comes the gift of life. In thanks, I offer up this gift, wrought of Her bounty and of my effort and dedication. Oh, Mighty Eagle, bear this gift of love aloft as bread for the Gods, that they might bless my works.

D: From Be'al comes the gift of awareness. In wonder I bring this praise, wrought of His light and of my effort and dedication. Oh flowing Winds, carry my songs of love on high as wine for the Gods, that they may guide my sight.

Sharing

Druid/ess takes up the chalice filled with plain spring water.

D: O Dalon Ap Landu, Lord of this and every Grove, bless these waters that are held in Thy Name. Cleanse our hearts and join us together by Thy power.

D: O Earth Mother, bountiful and ever flowing forth, in these waters help us to find strength and light. O Be'al, who dwells in every heart, lead us unto the path of awareness.

The last person should NOT finish the contents of the chalice. This is returned to the Presiding Druid/ess with the last exchange of blessings. Then the Presiding Druid/ess takes the last sip, pouring the remainder upon the altar and down the offering shaft, saying:

D: To Thee we return this portion of our bounty, O our Mother, even as we must return unto Thee.

Offering

At this point, at the Orinda Grove site, the Druid/ess pours out the offering to the trees.

Meditation

Here follows an appropriate reading, from any Nature-oriented scripture the Druid/ess may choose for that purpose. After this comes a few brief words of meditation from the Druid/ess and a period of silence and private meditation (usually two to three minutes-though longer with some Groves) by all. Eventually the Druid/ess signals the end of the Service with:

Benediction

D: Let us go forth into the world, secure in the knowledge that Be'al will answer our prayers, that our offering has found acceptance in the Earth Mother's sight, and that we go forth with Her blessing.

The Presiding Druid/ess blesses the Grove with three Sigils in the air, left to right, saying:

Peace! Peace! Peace!

The Sigil is taken up by the Druid/ess.

An offering is made to the Big Oak.

END OF THE ORDER OF COMMON Proto-Grove WORSHIP
FOR SAMRADH AND FOGHAMHAR

Order of Common Worship

Simple Summer Version

For Full Groves with a true Arch-druid

From May 1st up to, but on Nov. 1st

By Mike Scharding, 1993

The Invocation

O Lord, forgive these three errors that are due to our human limitations:

Thou art everywhere, **but we worship thee here;**

Thou art without form, **but we worship thee in these forms;**

Thou hast no need of prayers and sacrifices, **yet we offer thee these prayers and sacrifices;**

O Lord, forgive us these three errors that are due to our human limitations.

O Mother, cleanse our minds and hearts and prepare us for meditations.

Optional Procession

Drawing the Sigil & The Incantation

The Sacrifice

Priest: Our praise has mounted up to thee on the wings of eagles, our voices have been carried up to thee on the shoulders of the winds. Hear now, we pray thee, our Mother, as we offer up this sacrifice of life. Accept it, we pray thee, and cleanse our hearts, granting us thy peace and life. *Place sacrifice on Altar*

Priest: Hast thou accepted our sacrifice, O our Mother? I call upon the spirit of the North to give answer... of the South...of the East...and of the West.

The Reply

Priest: Praise be, our sacrifice, dedicated to the fertility and renewal of life, and to the cleansing of our minds and hearts, has been accepted!

The Catechism of The Waters-of-Life

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

PRECEPTOR: THE WATERS-OF-LIFE.

PRIEST: From whence do these Waters flow?

PRECEPTOR: FROM THE BOSOM OF THE EARTH-MOTHER, THE NEVER CHANGING ALL-MOTHER.

PRIEST: And how do we honor this gift that causes life in us?

PRECEPTOR: BY PARTAKING OF THE WATERS-OF-LIFE.

PRIEST: Has the Earth-Mother given forth of her bounty?

PRECEPTOR: SHE HAS!

PRIEST: Then give me the Waters!

The Consecration

O Dalon Ap Landu, Hallow these waters by thy seven-fold powers and by the three ways of day and one of night. Cleanse our hearts and join us together as we take and drink of thy secret essence!

The Communion & Optional

Ordinations & Libation

To thee we return this portion of thy bounty, O our Mother, even as we must return to thee.

The Meditation followed by The Benediction

Go forth into the world, secure in the knowledge that our sacrifice has found acceptance in the Earth-mother's sight, that she has answered our prayer, and that we go forth with her blessing.

Peace! Peace! Peace!

* * * * *

Order of Common Worship

Simple Winter Version

For Full Groves with a true Arch-druid

From on November 1st to, but not on May 1st.

By Mike Scharding, 1993

The Invocation

O Lord, forgive these three errors that are due to our human limitations:

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Thou hast no need of prayers and sacrifices, **yet we offer thee these prayers and sacrifices;**

O Lord, forgive us these three errors that are due to our human limitations.

O Mother, cleanse our minds and hearts and prepare us for meditations.

Optional Procession

Drawing the Sigil & the Incantation

The Sacrifice

Priest: Our praise has mounted up to thee on the wings of eagles, our voices have been carried up to thee on the shoulders of the winds. Hear now, we pray thee, our Mother, as we offer up this sacrifice of life. Accept it, we pray thee, and cleanse our hearts, granting us thy peace and life. *Put Sacrifice on Altar*

Priest: Hast thou accepted our sacrifice, O our Mother? I call upon the spirit of the North to give answer... of the South...of the East....and of the West.

The Reply

Priest: The four winds are silent; the Earth-Mother sleeps.

The Catechism of the Waters-of-Sleep

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

PRECEPTOR: THE WATERS-OF-LIFE.

PRIEST: From whence do these Waters flow?

PRECEPTOR: FROM THE BOSOM OF THE EARTH-

MOTHER, THE NEVER CHANGING ALL-MOTHER.

PRIEST: And how do we honor this gift that causes life in us?

PRECEPTOR: BY PARTAKING OF THE WATERS-OF-LIFE.

PRIEST: Has the Earth-Mother given forth of her bounty?

PRECEPTOR: SHE HAS NOT! THE WATERS ARE HERE, BUT THE SPIRIT HAS GONE OUT OF THEM.

PRIEST: Of what, then, do we partake?

PRECEPTOR: THE WATERS-OF-SLEEP.

PRIEST: Then give me the Waters-of-Sleep.

The Consecration

O Dalon Ap Landu, descend once again into these waters, and hallow them. Give us to know Thy power and the promise of life that is to return.

The Communion & The Libation

To thee we return this portion of thy bounty, O our Mother, even as we must return to thee.

The Meditation followed by The Benediction

Go forth into the world, secure in the knowledge that our prayers will be answered, that the bounty of life will return to the face of the Earth, and then will the Earth-Mother shower Her blessings upon you.

Peace! Peace! Peace!



**Nelson, Frangquist & Fisher
on Hill of 3 Oaks, 1964.**

Order of Common Worship

New Reformed Druids of North America

Detailed Summer Version

For Full Groves with a true Arch-druid

By Isaac Bonewits, 1976

For use from on May 1st up to, but not including Nov 1st

Preparatory Details

This is the basic Order of Common Worship from which all the others are adapted, and is to be used during the Summer Half of the year (i.e., from Beltane to Samhain). The chalice is to be filled with the Waters-of-Life.

The service starts with all participants standing some distance away from the area where the ritual is to take place. If both safe and legal, a fire should be started in or near the altar. The Druid/ess who is presiding (usually, though not always, the Grove's Arch-druid/ess) should already have cut the sacrifice and have it tucked into his or her robe (or it may be held in one hand). The presiding Druid/ess may choose to speak the opening Invocation to Be'al alone, or may ask the Preceptor and/or the people (depending on Local grove custom) to join in speaking the bold words of the Invocation.

The Invocation

O Lord, forgive these three errors that are due to our human limitations:

Thou art everywhere, **but we worship thee here;**

Thou art without form, **but we worship thee in these forms;**

Thou hast no need of prayers and sacrifices, **yet we offer thee these prayers and sacrifices;**

O Lord, forgive us these three errors that are due to our human limitations.

O Mother, cleanse our minds and hearts and prepare us for meditations.

The Procession

Here occurs the Procession, often with the Grove singing the hymn from Customs 2:1-3. Upon arrival near the altar, the Preceptor and the Server or any two others designated by the Grove use their staves to mark the Druid Sigil upon the ground in front of the altar (usually on the South side), leaving the bottom of the circle incomplete. The Druid/ess step into this Sigil, which is then close by the two staves.

The Praise

Here an Incantation, Poem or Hymn of praise is recited or sung by the Druid/ess, the Bard(s) or the entire Grove.

The Sacrifice

The Druid/ess holds up the sacrifice to the sky, while saying:

Pr: Our praise has mounted up to thee on the wings of eagles, our voices have been carried up to thee on the shoulders of the winds. Hear now, we pray thee, our Mother, as we offer up this sacrifice of life. Accept it, we pray thee, and cleanse our hearts, granting us thy peace and life.

(Here the Priest places the plant offering upon the 'altar' or the ground if there is no altar. As each of the directions are questioned, the members may turn to face that direction.)

Pr: Hast thou accepted our sacrifice, O our Mother? I call upon the spirit of the North to give answer... of the South...of the

East....and of the West.

The Reply

(If the sacrifice is accepted, and it almost always is accepted, then continue. If bad omen, the service ends at this point.)

Pr: Praise be, our sacrifice, dedicated to the fertility and renewal of life, and to the cleansing of our minds and hearts, has been accepted!

The Catechism of The Waters-of-Life

(The preceptor holds the Waters-of-life while the priest ask the Catechism of the Waters-of-Life. The local custom may or may not replace the Preceptor's response with a chorus of the members.)

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

PREC: THE WATERS-OF-LIFE.

PR: From whence do these Waters flow?

PREC: FROM THE BOSOM OF THE EARTH-MOTHER, THE NEVER CHANGING ALL-MOTHER.

PR: And how do we honor this gift that causes life in us?

PREC: BY PARTAKING OF THE WATERS-OF-LIFE.

PR: Has the Earth-Mother given forth of her bounty?

PREC: SHE HAS!

PR: Then give me the Waters!

The Consecration

(The Priest/ess takes the chalice from the Server, who fills it if it is not already full. The Priest/ess then consecrates its contents with the following:)

PR: O Dalon Ap Landu, Hallow these waters by thy seven-fold powers and by the three ways of day and one of night,. Cleanse our hearts and join us together as we take and drink of thy secret essence!

Optional Ordinations

First Order consecrations can be done at this time, but it's not necessary to enter into the first order for a person to drink Waters. If a member of the Grove is to be ordained to the Second Order (in which case the Priest/ess will have consecrated an additional chalice, filled with the Waters-of-Life) the ceremony is inserted here, before the Communion.

The Communion

The Priest/ess drink from the chalice and blesses the Preceptor with the words, "the Waters-of-Life," and the marking of the Druid Sigil in the air.

*The Preceptor returns the blessing and receives the chalice from the Priest/ess. The Preceptor drinks, blesses the Server, is blessed in return, and gives the Server the chalice. The Server drinks, then goes around the circle of the Grove (usually clockwise) blessing each person, handing them the chalice, letting them drink, being blessed in return and taking the chalice to the next person. The Server does **not** drink more than once.*

In some Groves, the Priest/ess may merely turn to the left and exchange blessings with the person to that side, letting the chalice be handed around the circle by the members of the Grove.

*In either method, the last person in the circle should **not** finish the contents of the chalice. This is returned to the Priest/ess with a last exchange of blessings. Then the Druid/ess takes the last sip returning the remainder on the altar or fire, saying:*

PR: To thee we return this portion of thy bounty, O our Mother, even as we must return to thee.

The Meditation

(Here follows an appropriate reading, from any Nature-oriented scripture that the Priest/ess may choose, read by the Druid/ess or by someone appointed for that purpose. After this comes a few BRIEF words of meditation from the Priest/ess and a period of silence and private mediation (usually 2 or 3 minutes in length, though longer with some Groves) by all. Eventually, the Priest/ess signals the end of the Service with:)

The Benediction

Go forth into the world, secure in the knowledge that our sacrifice has found acceptance in the Earth-mother's sight, that she has answered our prayer, and that we go forth with her blessing.

Drawing the Sigil in the Air

The Priest blesses the Grove with three Sigils in the air, left to right, saying:

Peace! Peace! Peace!



**Press, Weinberger (hidden), Nelson, Frangquist, Shelton & Webber, 2003
Little Bird Grove (Stone Circle) 40th Reunion**

Order of Common Worship

New Reformed Druids of North America

Detailed Winter Version

For Full Groves with a true Arch-druid

By Isaac Bonewits, 1976

For use from on November 1st up to,
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The service starts with all participants standing some distance away from the area where the ritual is to take place. If both safe and legal, a fire should be started in or near the altar. The Druid/ess who is presiding (usually, though not always, the Grove's Arch-druid/ess) should already have cut the sacrifice and have it tucked into his or her robe (or it may be held in one hand). The presiding Druid/ess may choose to speak the opening Invocation to Be'al alone, or may ask the Preceptor and/or the people (depending on Local grove custom) to join in speaking the bold words of the Invocation.

The Invocation

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The Procession

Here occurs the Procession, often with the Grove singing the hymn from Customs 2:1-3. Upon arrival near the altar, the Preceptor and the Server or any two others designated by the Grove use their staves to mark the Druid Sigil upon the ground in front of the altar (usually on the South side), leaving the bottom of the circle incomplete. The Druid/ess step into this Sigil, which is then close by the two staves.

The Praise

Here an Incantation, Poem or Hymn of praise is recited or sung by the Druid/ess, the Bard(s) or the entire Grove.

The Sacrifice

The Druid/ess holds up the sacrifice to the sky, while saying:

Pr: Our praise has mounted up to thee on the wings of eagles, our voices have been carried up to thee on the shoulders of the winds. Hear now, we pray thee, our Mother, as we offer up this sacrifice of life. Accept it, we pray thee, and cleanse our hearts, granting us thy peace and life.

(Here the Priest places the plant offering upon the 'altar' or the ground if there is no altar. As each of the directions are questioned, the members may turn to face that direction.)

Pr: Hast thou accepted our sacrifice, O our Mother? I call upon the spirit of the North to give answer... of the South...of the East....and of the West.

The Reply

(The sacrifice is not accepted, except in emergency situations.)

PR: The four winds are silent; the Earth-Mother sleeps.

The Catechism of The Waters-of-Sleep

(The preceptor holds the Waters-of-Sleep while the priest ask the Catechism of the Waters-of-Sleep. The local custom may or may not replace the Preceptor's response with a chorus of the members.)

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

PREC: THE WATERS-OF-LIFE.

PR: From whence do these Waters flow?

PREC: FROM THE BOSOM OF THE EARTH-MOTHER, THE NEVER CHANGING ALL-MOTHER.

PR: And how do we honor this gift that causes life in us?

PREC: BY PARTAKING OF THE WATERS-OF-LIFE.

PR: Has the Earth-Mother given forth of her bounty?

PREC: SHE HAS NOT! THE WATERS ARE HERE, BUT THE SPIRIT HAS GONE OUT OF THEM.

PR: Of what, then, do we partake?

PREC: THE WATERS-OF-SLEEP.

PR: Then give me the Waters-of-Sleep.

The Consecration

(The Priest/ess takes the chalice from the Server, who fills it if it is not already full. The Priest/ess then consecrates its contents with the following:)

O Dalon Ap Landu, descend once again into these waters, and hallow them. Give us to know Thy power and the promise of life that is to return.

Ordinations

No ordinations are normally done in the Winter Half of the Year.

The Communion

The Priest/ess drink from the chalice and blesses the Preceptor with the words, "the Waters-of-Sleep," and the marking of the Druid Sigil in the air.

*The Preceptor returns the blessing and receives the chalice from the Priest/ess. The Preceptor drinks, blesses the Server, is blessed in return, and gives the Server the chalice. The Server drinks, then goes around the circle of the Grove (usually clockwise) blessing each person, handing them the chalice, letting them drink, being blessed in return and taking the chalice to the next person. The Server does **not** drink more than once.*

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PR: To thee we return this portion of thy bounty, O our Mother, even as we must return to thee.

The Meditation

(Here follows an appropriate reading, from any Nature-oriented scripture that the Priest/ess may choose, read by the Druid/ess or by someone appointed for that purpose. After this comes a few BRIEF words of meditation from the Priest/ess and a period of silence and private mediation (usually two or three minutes in length, though longer with some Groves) by all. Eventually, the Priest/ess signals the end of the Service with:

The Benediction

PR: Go forth into the world, secure in the knowledge that our prayers will be answered, that the bounty of life will return to the face of the Earth, and then will the Earth-Mother shower Her blessings upon you:

Drawing the Sigil in the Air

The Priest blesses the Grove with three Sigils in the air, left to right, saying:

Peace! Peace! Peace!



**Nelson, Fisher & Frangquist on Hill of 3 Oaks, 1964
with original record-stand altar.**

Daily Druid Devotional

By Pat Haneke, Akita Grove, August 2002

(Editor's Note: Included as an example of how one might develop a daily/frequent regimen, suiting one's tastes and needs.)

I do this (almost) every day, and it is my incremental regimen, beginning with a cup of steaming coffee. No too much at any time, but like a snowball rolling down the hill (or Milo of Crotona carrying a calf up the stairs everyday) it strengthens your wits and brings you into a greater communion with the world of Nature and profusion of ideas around you. Most of it is stuff we do everyday, but taken one step further in Awareness. It becomes rather difficult to continue finding new examples after a hundred days, and it thus would be an excellent journal activity during the 180 days in the Time of Sleep between Samhain and Beltane. It's as easy as 1, 2, 3. Every day, when possible:

The Zeroes:

- Listen to someone, without a preconception of them.
- Do nothing for a moment in the midst of your busiest time.
- Purposely skip one of the following activities.

The Singles:

- Touch a new and different organism every day. If you don't know the real name, give it a temporary name.
- Read one page that you don't have to, on a topic you don't know much about.
- Greet or salute one person you've never acknowledged before.
-

The Doubles:

- Notice one parallel or lesson between Nature and human society; such as nesting and mortgages.
- Resist one urge and give into another urge every day; until you are master of them.
- Notice an opposite in the world; and see if you can find a "gray" example.

The Triples:

- Take one idea of whose veracity you're sure of, and think of three counter arguments against it or three people who would object to it.
- Take one idea you think is wrong, and think of three supportive arguments or people who would support it.
- Now, take one idea that you're unsure of and bring it up in conversation with three people.



Some Optional Activities for Voluntary Simplicity

By Alex Strongbow, 2003

Looking back on earlier Missal-Anies, it seems that Samhain and Yule activities are well covered. Besides if you can't think of things to do on those two holidays, then you probably couldn't find your butt with both hands. So, instead, I'd like to write for a few issues about volunteering and simplicity, a different type of activity, one that involves you with others.

Winter is one of the harshest time in the year, when the Earth-Mother withdraws much of her nourishment from the northern temperate areas. Birds, animals and people are hard put to survive outdoors in our towns and cities. We've all seen those Thanksgiving soup-kitchens and Christmas toy charities, but these are just the apexes of the daily, continual efforts to assist our fellow citizens who haven't been able to meet all their needs.

The greatest obstacle to the joys of volunteering is finding some time to do it in. Who wouldn't gladly lend their energy and expertise to serving our community, pro bono, if we could just solve those little technicalities-making a living, for example, or getting enough sleep? You've heard about the 5% rule, spending about 30 minutes a day or three hours a week on something meaningful? To assist a cause, you have to build up reserves of money, time, and inspiration.

One way, yea, one way among many, to acquiring more discretionary time is the path of voluntary simplicity. That has been defined as "living purposefully, with a minimum of needless distraction." Cut out the junk. Most people find that when they carefully coordinate their use of money and time with their deepest held values, the less important things fade away. This opens up more time and inner space for more discretionary activities, including volunteer services.

How to direct our money and time is a question that requires careful reflection and planning. You don't just throw all your possessions in a trash can and run out to save the world (although that might work). Some of the best ideas on this subject came from Steven Covey's classic *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. This is more than a book for just econometricians, it could also be called *The Seven Habits of an Aware Life*. It is chock full of good tips.

We all need "time off," a sabbatical to marshal our forces. Some tips for building space for solitude is in *Shelter for the Spirit: Creating Your Own Haven in a Hectic World* by Harper Perennial, 1997. A quick Druidic paraphrasing of this will now follow:

1. Say No. Save your time and stamina for what truly speaks to your heart. Don't chase every rabbit that you see.

2. Tithe Your Time. Tithing was a time-honored tradition of giving money to charities in a planned, orderly way. Time can also be tithed, giving to something that really speaks and tugs at your heart. You say "no" without guilt to the rest, and things that are beyond achievement.

3. Put Things with Feelings First. Put more importance to the condition of sentient beings than the quality of your stereo sound. This is not to deny the effect that a healthier environment has on living creatures. One hour helping the environment, might be helping hundreds of critters and people in small ways.

4. Allow More Time. We often waste time by cutting things close, by rushing about and forgetting and making mistakes. If you always budget in an extra 5-10% of time for a task, then you will usually have time to finish things in a careful controlled manner. No more half-ass mules, my mom would say. If all things go well, then you can read or chat or just breathe. What a gift! You might

also be able to notice things that need fixing.

5. Prioritize with the ABC method. Label your daily task sheet with A for “priority-must be done today,” B for “important--needs to be done soon;” and C for “necessary-should be done sometime.” That way, even if only the A list gets done that day, at least everything that really needs to be done will be done. As time passes, the Bs and Cs will rise in importance or drop off the list.

6. Stay Well. There is nothing more time-consuming than being sick. You’re little use to anyone, stuck in bed. Time spent preserving health-nutrition, exercise, spiritual practice, sleep-is a no-risk, high-return investment. Think twice before running to catch the bus in the rain, on what a slip and sprained ankle would do to your weekly schedule.

7. Let the machine get it. There is no requirement to drop everything and run to the phone if it rings. Let your answering machine and e-mail be your secretary, and check in every few hours, and you can return your calls at your convenience.

8. Turn off the TV. It takes up time. Choose consciously how much time you wish to spend with your electronic friends (TV, VCR, computer) and don’t use them when you’re just feeling bored.

9. Put off Procrastination. Some goldbricks spend twice the effort to avoid work. Do the things on your list or drop them. Your list will shrink quickly.

10. Schedule in Fun. Recreation is nourishment for the soul. It is a necessity not an option. Keep it high on the list, and you’ll realize what motivates you keep plugging away through a dull job.

By the way, volunteering can be a fun way to spend time with the family, and build up their civic responsibility. For more on “voluntary simplicity,” go to Northwest Earth Institute’s site (www.nwei.org) or look for more on a web search.



Fields of Study

Druids are often incessant students. Rivers with the same quantity of water flowage can run wide and shallow or they can be narrow and deep. I feel a liberal-arts education is an excellent base for an aspiring Druid. Even if you can't attend a university, you can get a book and study on your own. Sermon writing, parish handbooks and ministry guides are out there if you look hard. I think the following topics may likely improve your Druidry in unexpected ways;

Botany, biology, environmentalism, geology, medicine.
Administration, leadership, management, public speaking
Theology, mythology, Paranormal Science, liturgical design.
History, sociology, anthropology, political science.
Drama, poetry, music composition, choreography.
Comparative religion, Jungian philosophy, ethics

Sigil Construction 101

By Mike, Order of Lugh, 2002

For 40 years, the RDNA, ADF, and Keltria have been flashing those Druid Sigils with a circle and two parallel lines. We don't know where it came from, except possibly from Fisher's feverish mind (see <http://www.rdna.info/sigil.html> for more on sigils), but people have been asking me to sell them one, and I get this wonderful idea. Why don't we just make them? We make up everything else in this group, so why not? Revolt against pre-fab, mass-made religious articles!

Being inspired by Lugh, and being a cubicle-bound secretary, I open the drawer to actualize my words. All the materials I need are in there. First take a book ring which will form the ring base of the sigil, and they come in many sizes. A side benefit is that you can clip your final sigil on to a button hold, hand it from one of your pierced body-parts, use it to remove ticks and chiggers, or to pick-up and turn-over bacon.

Now to lay the bars onto the circle, balanced on either side of the joint-hinge and the snap-close. These bars can come from snipped coat hangers, paper clips, wire stocks at a bead and jewelry store, or hardware store by the foot. To avoid a sigil that is heavy on the front side, and looks funny when it inevitably flips over, you may wish to in-set the bars. If you have access to a metal shop with a fine-quality metal file (or a simple nail file and lots of patience) you can gouge the four grooves into the book ring. I like to divide the circle into three sections of equal horizontal width, but perhaps you like each section to contain equal amounts of area (remember your geometry classes?), follow your muse here. The bars or rods can then be either welded, set with epoxy, or tied on with clear fishing line (if you're skillful). Don't have the bars extend past the circle too far, or they'll catch on things and poke you (round and polishing the edges is advisable) Goldish bars on a silvery ring make a nice contrast. To avoid the problem of flip-over, some put a circle on both sides of the sandwiched bars. A weight of about one ounce (four ounces is the same as a quarter-pounder patty) will make it hang well, any lighter and it will flop about. I caution against soldering, since the lead prevents you from dipping your sigil into the Waters (if you're into that custom).

The final step is getting the string. You can use yarn (if you're daring), leather, waxed cotton cord (found at bead and craft stores in various colors, I like black), ribbon, parachute cord, fishing line, or twine. Just remember if you catch your necklace on something, you'll get garroted! For the knot to close the string, I like to tie a double-fisherman's knot, which has the added advantage of allowing you to adjust the length while you're wearing it, by pulling the knots closer or farther apart.

Attaching the pendant. The following is one way, yea, one way among many. I detest running the cord simply through the book ring, as it never lies flat, the knot closing the string always works its way around to the pendant, and the book ring might open (unless you solder it shut) and you lose the pendant (life is about giving up possessions too, I suppose). I like to hide the joint of the book ring by binding a "prussic knot" over the hinge, between the two bars on the top of the sigil. That way the knot closing the loop of the necklace will lie at the nape of your neck, and can be lengthened and shortened easily.

Cost of the materials, with borrowed tools and free labor, about \$2 each. You're welcome to mass-produce them with this design and process. They're not copyrighted. Enjoy.

(See also www.amuletsbymerlin.com for sigils on sale.)

The Four Salutations of the Day

Circa 1986 by Emmon Bodfish

(Editor' note: Not commonly done, but an intriguing exercise)

Many readers who have been doing the Proto-Grove ritual on their own for awhile write to us asking "What is the next step?" and "Is there a Druid training program?" There is no Druid Training program yet for those not involved in active Groves. We are working on it. But meanwhile a fruitful place to start your training is with the Four Salutations to the Day. If you have been at one of the regular bi-monthly Summer Services of an R.D.N.A. Grove, you have heard the invocation of the "three ways of day and one of night." In this contemplative exercise you will be marking these four turning points of the day with a short, specific ritual, an active meditation in which you will be learning several basic essentials of all psychic or meditative work. It will keep you mindful of your intention to train and of your specifically Druidic vocation and heritage.

These four times, "trathan" in the old Gaidhlig, are noted in Welsh and Irish folklore as magical times when the "other world" is especially close to ours and communication or passage between the two is easiest. The old epic and Bardic poems speak of these times as power-times when spell working was done and an adept person might receive a vision or message from an ancestor or a patron Deity, a moment when a bard, inspired, might speak a prophecy. These are DAWN, NOON, SUNSET, and STARS. STARS is usually interpreted to be midnight.

One of our former Arch Druids recounts that when an acquaintance of his was traveling through rural Ireland recently he found that the cottagers stayed indoors or stayed quiet around the noon point of the day. When he rose to go out, or to move on about some mundane business, they would say, "Oh, sit a while. Have another cup of tea." When asked, they would say something vague to the effect that it is a tricky time, unlucky to be bustling about. He did not ascertain whether they did not know why this was so, or if they were just cautious in talking about such matters to a stranger. Most, he felt, did not know why, and this taboo on activity is the last little remainder in folk memory of the old custom of observing the trathan.

The first purpose of the four Salutations is to put you in tune with the natural, celestial rhythms of the day and the changing seasons. The second purpose of the Salutations is a meditative practice, to practice entering an altered state of consciousness at will. The third purpose is to remind you of your Druidic commitment and to organize your day around the four natural turning points of Earth's time clock, providing stop-points in which you take stock of your day, of the passage of time, of nature and your own existence in it.

You will begin by learning to achieve mental silence, to stop thought, and to hold your mind silent for the time it takes the Sun to rise or set. In the temperate latitudes this is about 2 1/2 to 4 minutes counted from the Sun disk's first contact with the horizon to its last contact, assuming a flat horizon for averaging's sake.



The first skill to be mastered in the Salutations is the ability to hold the mind silent. You must learn to stop thought. By thought I mean the sentences that are normally running through your mind all day and in your dreams at night. I do not mean

becoming unconscious, hypnotized, nor losing awareness of yourself or your surroundings. In the Silence you will in fact become more aware than usual of your immediate surroundings. Some Easter sects consider this the only “true” form of meditation. This is “outward directed” mediation, as contrasted with inner contemplation, “astral travel,” or hypnotic trance. It is harder than it sounds, at first, though most people can do it for a few seconds right off. That’s enough to start you. Here are some techniques to help you get further into that state and to help you learn to use it. In this wordless state, your consciousness may be turned by your will either inward or outward. In the Salutations it is turned outward. It surprises many people to find that they can perceive, and in acute detail, without any thoughts or words going through their minds. You will progress through this silent space to other states of consciousness. As you are able to hold the Silence longer you will learn from it and be able to explore with it.

1. Repeat a simple phrase, silently in your mind until all other thoughts cease, then let the phrase grow fainter and fainter and fade out. For the solar Salutations, “Hail Belenos!” This is a crutch; drop it as soon as you can.

2. Enter the Silence. Listen to your breath. Listen as though it were the most important instructions you were ever to hear, and which you must memorize. This will stop your mental sentences.

3. Listen to all the ambient sounds as if they were music.

4. Think to yourself down in to the heels of your feet and the heels of your hands. Feel yourself exist.

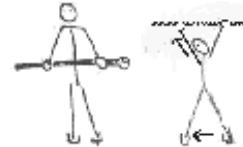
In doing the Salutations four times a day, you are learning to enter a different state of consciousness at will, regularly and often. These three: will, consistency, and practice are the keys to meditative and psychic progress. The goal is to be able to enter, at will, the state of consciousness that you will need in order to do a particular psychic or spiritual work. Small amounts of frequent practice achieve more than an occasional long session.

Do the four Salutations by the celestial clock, at Dawn, Noon, Sunset and Stars whether you are “in the mood” or not. This way you will become capable of entering this clear, silent state at any time, regardless of moods and circumstances, “to find a refuge outside the passions” of the moment, as an old book says. This practice builds and furnishes that refuge, a base-of-operations, for your further work. When you can hold silence for twelve to thirty seconds at a time, alert, eyes open, taking in perceptions as far around toward the corners of your peripheral field as you can, you will notice that things look different from the way that they do in your normal, “mundane” state of consciousness. I won’t list the changes because I do not want to bias your perceptions, the self-fulfilling prop. Not everyone gets all the different changes, but you will discover yours. (Write to the Missal-Any when you do, we like feedback, and we can answer questions individually.) These changes will be your signal that you are in a meditative state, at the Silent Place, rung one of the metaphorical ladder of meditative training. When you have completed the Salutation, the, in line with the third purpose, take some time to consider from this higher perspective what you have been occupied with since the last Salutation. It is a step in getting control of your time, your habits and your life.

Stand, waiting for the first bit of the sun’s disk to appear over the horizon. Hold your staff in front of you, your hands in front of your breast bone. Your left hand is above your right hand and the staff is not touching the ground.



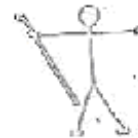
When the first bit of the sun’s disk clears the horizon, turn your staff horizontal and raise it over your head in one motion. Breathe in a full breath as you raise the staff, and at the same time step to the right with your right foot. Hold the breath; silence your mind. Your arms and your legs now form two triangles and you are looking at the first sun through a “trilithon” formed by your arms and staff.



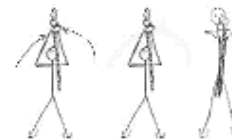
Holding the breath, turn your staff back vertical, and, holding it at arm’s length, exhale slowly as you lower the staff between your gaze and the morning sun, momentarily blocking it out, until it seems to rise again over the top of the staff.



Let go your left hand from the staff and holding it in your right, sweep both of your arms up and outward, breathing in until you reach full extension. Your head, arms, and legs form a pentagram, your lungs are filled with the new air and you are fully open to the morning light. This is true even when there is rain falling in your face in the winter. Then you are open to that truth, that dawn and that aspect of Nature. You hold mental silence here in the open position until the sun’s disk clears the horizon.



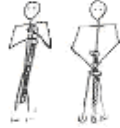
When it is free of the last horizon (horizon is trees, buildings, mountains, freeway “on” ramps, whatever is between you and the setting or rising sun) sweep your hands up and together over your right hand, as you inhale. Hold the breath for an instant, then begin slowly exhaling as your turn the staff back to vertical again and lower it again with your line of sight and the risen sun.



Continue on down, touching your staff to the ground, arms fully extended and your head bowed between them. Concentrate on the ground and your staff and feel the earth energy move up the staff, through your arms and to your lungs as you inhale another full breath. Raise your head and pull your staff in toward your heart as you straighten up and inhale fully.



Your hands on your staff, touch your breastbone. Hold silence. Perceive the dawning light all around you. Take several (three to nine) calm breaths. Then as you exhale, lower your staff and step right bringing your feet together and the staff to rest on the ground between your two big toes. Press it down. "Ground down" mentally; return to the mundane mental level and worldly functioning. The day has begun.



At NOON you face due south. At solar noon, as opposed to clock noon, the sun will be at the highest pint in the sky that it will reach that day, and it will also be directly South. The movements and the breathing for the NOON Salutation are the same as for the DAWN, however do not look directly at the noon sun. Look at the southern horizon directly below it. Feel the rays and the warmth. Hold silence in the open position for twenty four breaths. Finish the Salutations as at DAWN.



Open Position

At evening, when the sun is about to set over whatever is your local western horizon, take your stance facing it. When the sun's disk touches tangent to the first bit of the horizon, inhale and raise your staff over your head in the first movement of the Salutation. Holding silence, draw it down between yourself and the setting sun until the sun reappears over the top of the staff. Breathe out as you do this. Move to the open position as before and hold it out as you do this. Move to the open position as before and hold it in silence until the last bit of the solar disk is about to sink below the horizon. At that moment, inhaling, bring your arms up and together with the staff between you and the sun. Then as in the other Salutations, exhale as you bring the staff down to ground at arm's length in front of you, bowing forward as the last gleam disappears under the horizon. Feel yourself "bowing down the sun" in synchronization with it. When you feel the ground energy move up along the staff, through your arms, and body, inhale, mind silent, eyes totally perceiving. Hold your staff and hands at heart level as before. See the night begin around you. One day is over; a new day has begun. Press your staff down to the ground again at your feet. "Ground down" mentally. Come back to the mundane world, refreshed. Recall what has happened since NOON.

At celestial midnight, STARS, the sun is on the other side of the world directly below your feet. At this midnight or just before you go to sleep, do the Salutation to the STARS. Face the North Star. Calm your mind. Recall what you have been doing since the last Salutation. When you have achieved mental silence once more, then raise your staff over your head and inhale. View the North Star then raise your staff over your head and inhale. View the North Star through the "trilithon" of your arms and staff. The rest of the Salutation proceeds like the NOON Salutation. Here you will draw your staff down until the North Star seems to rise over the tip of it. You hold silence in the open position for twenty four breaths, then complete the movements as at NOON. Ground down. Retire. Sleep.

Druid Seasons of the Year

This was written by Isaac Bonewits and Robert Larson for DC(E) contains lots of trivia about the origins of these ancient festivals. As such, this information could be useful for everyone in the Reform and can be useful. Much more can be found about RDNA calendar habits and festivals in Part 4 of Main Volume and Green Book 7. Most folks hold festivals on the nearest weekend, college or family groups might have weekly services, some groups have services on new or full moons. Try not to overload on the minutiae of seasonal lore.

The Druid year is divided into four seasons, marked by the four Major High Days of Samhain, Oimele, Beltane and Lughnasadh (see below).

Samhain begins the season of Geimredh (gee-ru), in Modern Irish an Geimhreadh (uN gee-ru); which is Winter, running from roughly the beginning of November till the end of January.

Oimele begins the season of Earrach (u-RoCH), now an tEarrach (uN tu-RoCH); which is Spring, running roughly from the beginning of February till the end of April. Together, these two season constitute "the Winter Half of the Year", otherwise known as "the Season of Sleep".

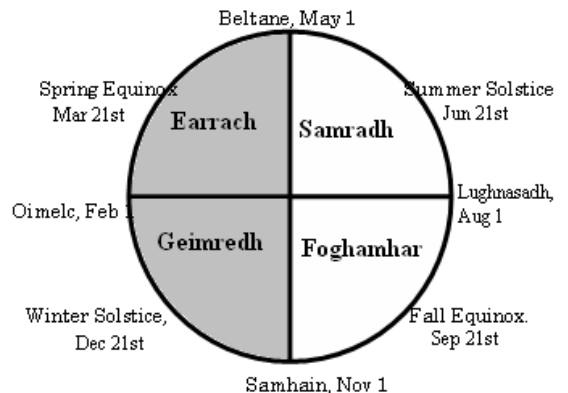
Beltane begins the season of Samradh (S,u-Ru), now an Samhradh (un S,u-Ru); which is Summer, running from roughly the beginning of May till the end of July.

Lughnasadh begins the season of Foghamhar (FÛr), now an Fomhar (uN FÛR); which is fall or autumn, running from roughly the beginning of August till the end of October. Together, these two seasons constitute "the Summer Half of the Year" or "the Season of Life".

The Major and Minor High Days

There are four Major High Days (Samhain, Oimele, Beltane & Lughnasadh) and four Minor High Days (Winter Solstice or "Midwinter", Spring Equinox, Summer Solstice or "Midsummer", and Fall Equinox) in the Druid year. While the Minor High Days are easy to obtain from any good astrological ephemeris or almanac, the methods for calculation of the Major High Days will vary from Grove to Grove and branch to branch of the Reform.

The most common practice for the calculation of Samhain, Oimele, Beltane and Lughnasadh is to use the civil calendar days or eves of November 1st, February 1st, May 1st, and August 1st, respectively. Another way is to use the weekend closest to these dates. Still others use the sixth day after the new or full moon closest to each of these dates. Astrologically oriented Druids use the days upon which the Sun enters 15 degrees of each of the "Fixed Signs" of the Zodiac to wit: Eagle Point- 15 deg Scorpio, Man or Angel Point - 15 deg Aquarius, Ox Point - 15 deg Taurus and Lion Point - 15 deg Leo.



8 festivals, 4 seasons and 2 halves of the year.

Samhain is pronounced “Sô-un” or “sow-” [as in female pig] “-en” — not “Sam Hain,” and is known in Modern Irish as *Lá Samhna*, in Welsh as *Nos Galen-Gaeaf* (“Night of the Winter Calends”), in Manx as *Laa Houney* (“Hollantide Day”), *Sauin* or *Souney*. *Samhain* is the original festival that became “All Saints’ Day,” or “All Hallow’s Evening,” which was contracted into “Hallow-e’en,” now usually called **Halloween**. *Samhain* is often said to have been the most important of the fire festivals, because (according to most Celtic scholars) it may have marked the Celtic New Year. At the least, *Samhain* was equal in importance to *Beltane* and shared many symbolic characteristics. Whether it was the Celtic New Year or not, *Samhain* was the beginning of the Winter or Dark Half of the Year (the seasons of *Geimredh* and *Earrach*) as *Beltane* was the beginning of the Summer or Light Half of the Year (the seasons of *Samradh* and *Foghamhar*). The day before *Samhain* is the last day of summer (or the old year) and the day after *Samhain* is the first day of winter (or of the new year). Being “between” seasons or years, *Samhain* was (and is) considered a very magical time, when the dead walk among the living and the veils between past, present and future may be lifted in prophecy and divination.

Samhain basically means “summer’s end” (trust the Celts to begin something with an ending) and many important mythological events are said to have occurred on that day. It was on a *Samhain* that the Nemedians captured the terrible Tower of Glass built by the evil Formorians; that the Tuatha De Danann later defeated the Formors once and for all; that Pwyll won his wife Rhiannon from Gwawl; and that many other events of a dramatic or prophetic nature in Celtic myth happened. Many of these events had to do with the temporary victory of the forces of darkness over those of light, signaling the beginning of the cold and dark half of the year.

The **Winter Solstice** is a Minor High Day, usually occurring around December 21st or so of the civil calendar. Also known as Yule and Midwinter, this is a day sacred to Sun, Thunder, and Fire Deities. Large fires were built outdoors and Yule Logs lit indoors, in order to rekindle the dying Sun and help it to return brightly to the Northern skies. Burnt logs and ashes from the Midwinter fires were kept as a talisman against lightning and house fires. It was also a custom in many parts of Paleo-Pagan Europe to decorate live evergreen trees in honor of the Gods (cutting down a tree to bring indoors is a blasphemous desecration of the original concept). This is considered, along with Midsummer, the best day of the year to cut mistletoe. Among some Mediterranean Paleo-Pagans, a date on or near this was celebrated as the Birthday of Mithras and/or the Feast of Saturnalia (which the Christians co-opted to use for the birth of Christ).

Oimelec (“ee-melc”), is known in Modern Irish as *Imbolc* (pronounced the same) and as *Lá na Féile Bhríde* (“Festival of Saint Bridget”), in Manx as *Laán Arragh* (Day of Spring), and as Candlemas or **Bridget’s Day** in English. Brighid, Bride or Bridget is yet another Pagan deity turned by the Christians into a “saint,” in order to co-opt Her worship. This goddess was a triple-aspected deity (originally a Sun and Fire Goddess) of Poetry/Divination, Healing and Smithcraft, whose followers kept an eternal flame burning in Her honor. Note that Her three aspects are all the same age as each other, *not* the “Mother-Maiden-Crone” trinity promoted by Robert Graves.

By analogy with the Gaelic names of the other High Days, we may assume that the holiday was originally called *La’áOimelec* and was the festival of the lactation of the ewes. In Paleo-Pagan days (and, indeed, until the recent past) the sheep was a very important animal, providing both food and clothing. The occasion of the birth of lambs (not to mention kids and calves) was a cause for rejoicing and a sign of life in the “dead” world of a Northern winter.

The name “Candlemas” (candle-mass) is a Roman Catholic term for a holiday occurring February 2nd, called the “Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” This is yet another theft/co-option of a Paleo-Pagan holy day. At this festival, the priests bless candles, which are then used on February 3rd in a fire magic ritual to bless people’s throats, supposedly in honor of a “Saint Blaise.” This has no official connection with “Saint” Bridget and Her cult of fire, nor with the fact that this day was one of the four major fire festivals of Paleo-Pagan cultures throughout Western and Northern Europe. Of course, they also neglect to mention a certain Slavic god named Vlais, Who was the Patron of cattle, wealth and war, and Who was worshiped with fire... *Oimelec* begins the spring season of *Earrach*.

Feb. 2nd is also known as Groundhog’s Day, a holiday so-called because American groundhogs were the local counterpart to the Irish hare that was sacred to Bride. Celtic belief is that good weather on *Oimelec* means that winter will continue, and that bad weather means winter is on the way out — hence the importance of the presence or absence of a sacred animal’s shadow.

The **Spring Equinox** is best known as the feast of (the German Fertility Goddess) *Eostara*, called “Easter” by the Christians. It is a celebration of the returning of life to the Earth. Rabbits, eggs and children are sacred at this feast and Pagans in need of fertility talismans now color hollow eggs and pass them through the ceremonial fires (quickly) to take home and hang over their beds and in their barns. A fascinating source of almost forgotten Paleo-Pagan symbols can be found by examining carefully the fantastically decorated eggs produced by folk artists from Europe (especially Eastern Europe and Russia), Mexico and South America.

A Minor High Day, it usually takes place around March 21st or so. Among some Paleo-Pagan cultures in Southern Europe, the Spring Equinox was the date of the New Year (instead of *Samhain*).

Beltane, known in Modern Irish as *Lá Be’altaine*, in Welsh as *Galan-Mai* (Calends of May), in Scottish Gaelic as *Be’altuinn*, and in Manx as *Shenn da Boaddyln*, *Laa Boaldyn*, or *Laán Tourey* (Day of Summer); is, of course, the day we know in English as **May Day**. It is also called by a variety of other names, such as Roodmas, Summer Day, *Walpurgistag*, St. Pierre’s Day, Red Square Day, etc. It is the beginning of the “Summer Half” of the Celtic year (the seasons of *Samradh* & *Foghamhar*) and is a festival of unalloyed joy.

A very large number of important Celtic mythological events are connected with this day, which balances out *Samhain* on the opposite side of the Wheel of the Year. It was on a *Beltane* that Partholan and his followers, the first inhabitants and partial creators of Ireland, landed on that isle. Three hundred years later, on the same day, they returned to the Other World. It was on a *Beltane* that the Tuatha De Danann and their people invaded Ireland. It was on a May Eve that Pryderi, the missing son of Rhiannon and Pwyll (Rulers of the Welsh Otherworld), was lost by them and later (on another May Eve) found by Teirmyon Twryf Vliant (and eventually restored to Them). On every first day of May “till the day of doom,” Gwyn ap Nudd fights with Gwyrthur ap Greidawl, for the hand of Lludd’s fair daughter, Creudylad. Most of these events, again, as all over Northern and Western Europe, have to do with stories of the forces of light/safety defeating the forces of darkness/danger. Why did you think the Marxists chose May Day as their international Holy Day?

The **Summer Solstice** is a Minor High Day, usually occurring around June 21st or so. Also known as St. John’s Day and Midsummer, it shares mythical elements with both *Beltane* and *Lughnasadh*. It is a feast celebrating the glory of summer and the peak of the Sun Deity’s power. But in many systems of belief,

it is the day of the biggest battle of the year between the Dark Sun God and the Light Sun God (the dangerous vs. the safe one), Who are usually brothers or otherwise intimately related. Midsummer is a peak from which the Sun can only fall, for it is the day on which the hours of light slowly begin to shorten.

Lughnasadh is known in Modern Irish as *Lá Lúnasa*, in Welsh as *Gwyl Awst* (August Feast), as *Lla Lluanyys* or *Laa'n Ouyr* (Day of the Harvest Season) in Manx, and as Lammas, apple Day and **Harvest Home** in English. Essentially a harvest festival, this signals the beginning of the harvest season and the ripening of the apples (as well as other fruits and vegetables). applejack, hard cider, mead and other alcoholic beverages are consumed at this time (it's almost a duty!) by many enthusiastic Neo-Pagans.

This holiday is a day of mixed joy and woe (Irish wakes are an *old* tradition), for it is by now obvious that the days are getting shorter. Stories of the battles between Lugh and Balor (the light Sun/Fire God and the dark one) are retold, as the autumn quarter of *Foghamhar* begins.

The last big holiday of the year, the **Fall Equinox** (sometimes called *Mabon* or Michaelmas) is a Minor High Day occurring somewhere around September 21st or so. This is a Thanksgiving feast and signals the beginning of the Hunting Season (for deer and other large game) in many parts of Europe and North America. Thus, it is dedicated to the Hunting and Fishing Deities and the Deities of Plenty, in thankfulness for benefits received and hoped for. Outdoor picnics in the woods are a popular tradition in those areas where the weather is still good at this time of year. Hunting magic may be minimized by those living in areas where game is a little deer.



Figure 2 Emmon Bodfish at Live Oak Grove, Fall 1982

See Green Book 7 of ARDA 2 for more on these festivals.

Non-Liturgical Festival Activities For 8 Seasons

All too often, festivals have over-emphasized the liturgy at the expense of the celebration. The following articles are mostly drawn from the Druid Missal-Any and should give you some ideas on how to draw the more activity-oriented members of your Grove into attending your rites, by appealing to their lower instincts to have a good time.

Uncommon Activities for Samhain

By Mortus, 2001

1. Visit & tidy-up the graves of family, friends and respected people.
1. Séances are popular at this time of year, but book in advance!
2. Hold a “dumb feast” with no talking and plates for ancestors.
3. Contemplate your own funeral arrangements, especially if you want to fight “The Industry” and have a natural funeral free of chemical and air-tight sealed caskets.
4. Include the dead in your thoughts during the daily grind.
5. Begin a custom of thanking the things we kill and eat.
6. Visit an abattoir or kill your own dinner (fish is the least unpleasant), which will open your eyes & heart to some cold facts.
7. Work on your will, living-will, powers-of-attorney, and insurances.
8. “Sacrifice” some fun, for retirement planning.
9. Discuss deeper issues of after-life with your children & spouse.
10. Research genealogy and visit elderly relatives (research for Eulogies).
11. Get a health-check-up and other medical appointments. Quit smoking.
12. Rake leaves, plan a composting heap (done properly, they don't stink)
13. Plant acorns, salt meat & jerky, pickle things.
14. Go hunting or fishing [or “camera-stalking” of prominent politicians...]
15. Volunteer to escort children for Halloween (you get candy, too!)
16. Adopt an overseas child or assist a charity.
17. At Carleton, we'd pour molten-lead or wax into cold water and divine things.
18. Protest the most recent prejudiced horror-flick of the season.
19. Lobby against the funeral industry.
20. Make a list of 100 things you've done, and 100 more you want to do.
21. Contemplate capital punishment, war, crime, sanitation & vegetarianism.
22. Bless your pets with smoke (yes, jumping through a fiery hoop is okay...)
23. Clean your home, extinguish your oven/furnace's pilot-light and relight it.
24. Replace the batteries in your smoke detector, buy a fire extinguisher, etc.
25. Write long-winded, disconnected rambles & lists about Samhain & Sacrifice.

Various Winter Customs to Try Out

By Eric, ex-Akita Grove, 2001

I enjoyed the Samhain activities, and spent four hours searching for good customs to complement the next issue. It's a simple list of what I plan to do, because I'm not much of a writer.

- Nov 23 Divining the best presents after a hearty Thanksgiving meal by asking relatives and the Gods..
- Dec 1st Cleaning out the house thoroughly- Any remaining dust is "Not mine, please ignore it."
- Dec 2nd Light "advent candles" or Yule Candles marking down the Solstice Sun's arrival.
- Dec 15th Decorating the House- Holly, Mistletoe, tree setup, bunting, Yule-logs, front lawn décor. Mail out blessings (Christmas cards) to friends & curses to enemies.
- Dec 19th Donate 10% of December Paycheck to charities closest to my house. And carry small presents to distribute to beggars & muggers in NYC.
- Dec 20th Wassailing and Caroling.- Nothing more than Trick or Treating for the winter, fun to do with the Christians.
- Dec 21st Vigiling in the Grove- Spend the longest night of the year in the Grove with a fire, several blankets and some friends to encourage the sun to make a come back.
- Dec 21st Mari Lwyd in Wales (Lair Bhan in Ireland)- The Welsh visited houses with a draped horse skull, interrogated their neighbours with strange questions, and got free booze if the homeowner couldn't come up with decent answers.
- Dec 22nd Namahage- In Akita, drunken barefoot men in demon masks, straw clothing, flaming torches (my that's dangerous sounding) would burst into pre-decided homes "surprising" a family at dinner and terrorizing the bejezus out of small kids. The father would ransom their children's lives with more booze, and the demons would bless the house to protect it from fires and further burglar intrusions. Very similar to German house visits by Father Christmas (Weihnachtsmann or Julknep) & his point man, the "Black Moor" (Knecht Ruprecht Don't you pity my neighbours?)
- Dec 23rd Celebrate the Emperor of Japan's Birthday (he is the descendent of the Sun Goddess after all)
- Dec 24th Presents and Party
- Dec 25th Hanging out sheaf of corn or bird seed AFTER Christmas for the all-winter birds.
- Dec 26th, Divination- by dropping a handful of pine-needles into a bowl and Rorschach patterns.
- Dec 26th Boxing. Put away boxes and decorations. As for the Tree: Put the tree in a safe spot in the yard (needles still on) away from the house. Allow to thoroughly dry and use it to light Beltane fire. WHOOSH! What a sight!
- Dec 27th Return presents and Buy discounted goods at stores for next year!. A gift of the Gods!
- Dec 30th New Year Resolutions- Adding thanks for last year's completed ones and a tweak from everyone in the room for not finishing the last ones.
- Dec 31st Fireworks, all-night parties are fine to continue.
- Jan 1st, Sleep to Noon. Pray to Braciaca for forgiveness and mercy.
- Jan 6th, "Epiphany". Credit card bills arrive. Holidays are officially over.

Yule Time Caroling

By Sine Ceolbhinn, 2001

Strangely enough, Christmas is one of the few times of the year that we feel like singing with our neighbours outside of a karaoke bar. Easter songs? A few. Groundhog Day songs? Not likely. We all want to sing, but trip over the uncomfortable lyrics, right? I decided to but together a little list of songs that a pagan could use in company with their monotheistic friends.

A few hours of scanning the internet has given me a collection of popular songs that didn't dwell on babies in food troughs, righteous crowns, deceased people with bird wings, and ecstatic shepherds hearing voices in the dark (won't even go there). I prefer my own improbable stories (grin). Just change "Christmas" to "Yule time" and most are okay. Santa Claus is rather unavoidable, but he's nearly pagan, and so I let him slide. Many of the songs on the list below have on-line free music-files and lyrics at: <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/~ai251/xcarol.html>

- Auld Lang Syne
- Christmas Song (Chestnuts roasting)
- Deck the Halls
- Do they know it's Christmastime at all?
- Frosty the Snowman
- Grandma Got Hit by a Reindeer
- The Grinch's Theme Song
- Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas
- Here Comes Santa Claus
- Holly Jolly Christmas
- Home For The Holidays
- I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus
- Jingle Bells
- Jingle Bell Rock
- I'll Be Home For Christmas
- It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas
- It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year
- Jolly Old Saint Nicholas
- Let It Snow
- O Christmas Tree
- Rocking Around the Christmas Tree
- Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer
- Silver and Gold Silver Bells
- Sleigh Ride
- That Christmas Feeling
- Up on the Rooftop
- We Wish You a Merry Christmas
- White Christmas
- Winter Wonderland

Now, I was going to make a list of fillable songs, but surprise, somebody's gone ahead and re-done most of the Christmas songs in a Neo-Pagan flavor. Isn't it great that people do all the work for us? You could spent weeks studying the solstice. Enjoy!!

Christmas Plants & Picking the Yule Log

By Mairi Ceolbhinn, 2001

Druids love and respect their plants and truly wish them to return to full vitality in the spring. Without plants, how'd we do our sacrifices? What we'd eat? What'd we wear? It's nice to know that in the depths of winter, when the days are shortest, that some plants are doing rather well. We wish to celebrate this with Christmas trees and such and bring their blessings into our homes. See also the site. <http://www.circlesanctuary.org/pholidays/SolsticePlanningGuide.html>

Mistletoe, as we all know, was considered sacred, by our ancient Siblings and has remained such throughout the years. Its Gaelic name still means "all healing," although I'm not sure how to use it safely, since it is rather poisonous. Perhaps, it is by its poison, that it fends off winter's blight, and manages to bloom around the solstice? Its persistent fertility is therefore an established trait that gives us that great custom of "kissing under the sprig of mistletoe" which would happen in a night of partying and debauchery. That age-old theme of commemorating the death of the "old Sun" and birth of the "new Sun" is now popularly incorporated into the images of "Old Man Time and Baby New Year" doing a tag-team on January 1st every year.

Holly berries, like Mistletoe, bloom amidst the snow as if to defy winter and encourage the return to life. Its green boughs were of course common decorations on buildings, holy places and public buildings during the winter festival, and this tradition has fortunately continued to this very day. Even the Japanese, Mike Scharding says, have a "kadamatsu" placed in front of the door at New Year's Eve.

Yule Log Tradition:

Not to be morbid, but a sacrifice is necessary to rekindle the life of the dying sun (no, I'm not pro-Aztec, which sounds like a marketable drug), and it seems the Yule Log has filled that role for several centuries. "Yule" comes from "hweol," meaning "wheel," which is a frequent European symbol for the Sun. So you're basically giving the Sun a good-needed torching to warm it up.

According to various sources, it is widely agreed that the hearth of the Celtic House was the home of a protective spirit, and (for practical and symbolic reasons) the fire was rarely allowed to die out except once or twice a year during the big fire holidays. Special prayers were and are still spoken before leaving the banked fire of turf for the night in rural areas. Much magic also went on around the fire during cooking, story telling, and entertaining of guests. The hearth was basically the pre-modern "Home Entertainment Center." If you've ever noticed, televisions also send comforting relaxing flickers of light into a darkened room while you stare blankly?

Now, back in those days, people had access to common forests surrounding their village. The choice of the wood varied greatly among locales, but one good size tree would provide several logs for a neighborhood. But under no circumstances, should you steal one from a neighbor's private land (and no buying one at a parking lot, good religion is do-it-yourself). I've not heard of any special methods of cutting a tree down, but a short ceremony, and posting a few days advance notice for malevolent or uninterested spirits to depart, would certainly be in order. (No, that Golden Sickle is no more effective that a haddock, get a good steel axe.) Angry spirits will make the tree conk you on the head; so be forewarned.

Once cut down, a goodly size log was the festooned and

regally dragged back to town through the streets. As the Log entered the house, some cultures would give it a hearty drink of oil, salt and mulled wine, with a song perhaps. In more recent times, it was burned on Christmas Eve (which is close enough to the Solstice), with music, activities and frolicking. To kindle the fire, splinters from last year's logs (saved by the eldest daughter) were used to get the substrate of dry logs going, since those Yule-logs are hard to burn by themselves. Guests were encouraged to toss sprigs of holly on the fire to take away bad luck. The way it burned would prognosticate the future.

Splinters of the log and cinders were taken home to protect against fires, lightning and tax-collectors at their home. Now the Yule Log tradition, widespread since the 12th century, nearly died out with the change to pot-belly stoves and grills in the late 19th Century. The tradition still survives in sizeable pockets today in the country-side today. For fire sensitive areas, a smaller log-shaped cake now decorates the dinning room table. I've tried this custom for a few years in my little BBQ next to my house (sneaking one from the River Creek National Park), and saved some ashes, and no disasters have yet befallen my home (well, except the Pentagon in Virginian Commonwealth, but that's the workplace, perhaps the White House and the "Mystic District" of Washington, D.C. were spared because of their National Yule Log?).

For me a Christmas tree is just another elaboration on "bringing the greenery in," and it certainly is a younger tradition than the Yule Log, perhaps a merger of pagan Nordic tree worship and perhaps the 13th century morality plays' "Tree of Life" (from the Garden of Eden) which was often the only stage prop, and conveniently performed around the Solstice. Perhaps, the inability to have a Yule Log burning and urbanization led to the soaring popularity of the Christmas tree in the 19th century? So go get your plants!



Figure 3 Minnesota in early summer.

Some Optional Things for Oimele

By Alex Strongbow, 2002

Well, here's my list of things to do for Oimele, Imbolg, Candlemas, Ostara or whatever you wish to call it. It's a multifaceted festival reflecting Bridget's diverse talents. If you were to combine them all you'd be "writing poems by candlelight about flaming metallic sheep." Sounds strange, but where do you think "steel wool" is from? Do not put it in the microwave, though, unless you want to see visions of Pikachu!

- Banana-Split candles (Cherry, banana, pineapple ring; possible imagery...)
- Make decorated candlestick holders.
- Try to Predict (e.g. candle divining) whether winter will end soon and what day the last snow will be gone in the Grove or some other spot.
- Start planting seeds in little pots.
- Get a candle-making kit at an art store.
- Spring Cleaning Party
- Make homemade butter or ice-cream (try goat's milk)
- Fireworks (if legal, secretly if illegal...)
- Make a contest to find first flowers or awakened hibernators
- Decorate the house: Bridget's Straw Crosses, ironwork, stained glass, candelabras, lava lamps, anything that's bright,
- Melt lead and pour into molds to make items.
- Sharpen knife, repair or replace tool collection
- Rent "Lambchop's Funniest Songs"
- Write poems together (perhaps within 5 minutes on a theme)
- Rent "Babe" or "Ground Hog Day" with Bill Murray
- Rent "Bell, Book, Candle" with James Stewart or "Silence of the Lambs"...
- Rent "Wallace and Grommit" (Perhaps "A Close Shave" is best episode)
- Decorate chair by fireplace.
- Burn the dried up Christmas tree (watch it go fuuumph!)
- Have a sheep day
- <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Hills/9609/sheeptxt.html>
- Call up a farmer and have the kids come down for a sheep birthing.
- Do some knitting with wool.

Also see:

<http://pages.ivillage.com/paganparent/imbolic.html> packed with stuff

<http://www.web-holidays.com/candle/> fun

<http://www.circlesanctuary.org/pholidays/CandlemasCustomsLore.html> overview

<http://www.partytown.com/menus/imbolc.htm> for a meal

http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson048.shtml about Groundhog Day

<http://orderofthecauldron.homestead.com/candlemas.html> nice discussion on Candlemas

<http://www.ghostdragon.net/sabbats/imbolcactivities.html> more activities.

<http://members.tripod.com/acorns3/archives.html> pagan kids activities back issues (look also under ostara)

Things to Do for Spring Equinox

By Alex Strongbow, 2002

Well, that's a really hard question. We know that most sowing in the fields would be done by now and it was time to change to spring clothes and spend more time outdoors. When it comes down to, we're talking about eggs and sunlight, right?

1. Break down, and enjoy the Easter egg decoration party. Especially the Ukrainian style wax and decoration. If you're an overachiever, go into Faberge.
2. Have half an omelet, sunny side up, of course.
3. Hide treasures in the forest or park. Tall grasses equals stepped-on eggs.
4. Be early for April. Fool's day.
5. Go out to the pub for Saint Patrick's day and live it up.
6. Spend the whole day with a watch and see if day REALLY equals night.
7. Set up and synchronize your solar-calendar (that rock-henge in your back yard. A great site, for setting up your stones in a parking lot or a field is www.efn.org/~jack_v/AstronomicalCalendar.html Strangely, the design looks like a basketball courts lines! Could there be a connection?!
8. Get your garden planted, if you haven't started. Try old-fashioned "heirloom seeds" at www.seedsavers.org or Seed Savers Exchange (SSE) at 3076 North Winn Road, Decorah Iowa 52101 at 319-382-5990.
9. Make waffles. Write "Clinton" with maple syrup. Hee. Hee. Enjoy taking half-way opinions on important subjects and carefully study both sides of issues.
10. Change your wardrobe to summer-style suits, sandals and wear a flower. I've been thinking. Many religions have strange headgear or hair-styles, and we haven't since that weird "bald-forehead" style in the 450s AD, so let's go out for straw hats?!



10 Things to Do for Beltane

By Alex Strongbow, 2002

1. Sex. Of course!
2. Wake up early, greet the sun, wash your face in the morning dew. Collect flowers and make garlands for those you care about.
3. An Oak King can be selected by various athletic competitions such as: races, wrestling, archery, stone tossing, sit-ups in one minute, fire kindling contest (first to boil cup of water), greased pole climbing, rodeo riding, or a combination of foolish macho things.
4. A maypole dance for the women (men too if not enough people). Last woman holding the ribbon will become the May Queen The May Queen and Oak King should symbolically (or actually) consummate their "marriage" in a symbolic gesture.
<http://altreligion.about.com/library/howto/htmaypole.htm>
5. Picnic, leaving a symbolic offering of one piece of everything. Possibly foods are oatmeal, dairy, berries, greens, wine, barley, honey, eggs, sweets.
<http://www.keirle.freeseerve.co.uk/page18.htm>
6. Drama or play of Persephone returning from the underworld or a story of a woman returning from the fairy lands. Divination is a possibility.
7. Enjoy the Waters of Life (i.e. whiskey). If you're solitary, do some self-nurturing type of activity, like a walk in the woods of a state park and camp out or vigil.
8. Raise stones. Its always a good time to bring the community together to haul rocks around and make a memorial of some type to the event. I recommend using car hoods from a junk yard, long levers, and 15 ropes and a pulley.

Build a Bonfire.

This might be hard for those of you in fire-prone areas like California, but a cauldron fire might be possible, or just use a barbeque/hibachi for the job. Some of you are girl-scouts, but here's some advice for the rest of you.

Apparently, the traditional wood to burn is oak, ash, thorn, rowan, apple, birch, alder, maple, elm, gorse, holly, hawthorn, and others from a story about the Battle of the Trees. I'd add a piece from any other tree in your forest. Collecting the woods and maypole would be a nice combination activity, and give time for certain members to "dally".

Be sure to remove all the dry materials in the vicinity and dampen the area. Now you can just pile a lot of logs if you'd like, or you can stack them. A pyramid shape or teppe shape is considered ideal, as boxy shapes tend to fall to the side rather than collapse inward (1999 Texas A&M disaster, anyone?). I recommend that you don't get too close to the fire, just in case a log rolls out. Leave spaces between the logs to allow air to circulate. Old Christmas trees make great center pieces (whooom!). Put the kindling and ever large pieces in the center.

There are many ways to make the initial flame. Magnifying glass, parabolic mirror, iron & flint, rubbing two sticks (use a bow to spin faster), magma, lightning, natural forest fires, and matches. As always, the key is to start small with shaved wood, dried grass, lint, cotton (yes, toilet paper is good) and add that to small sticks than keep adding bigger stick until the logs reach the magic temperature of 451F. If all else fails, CAREFULLY throw a cup of gasoline onto it.

Dance around it, watch it, talk to your friends. Throw negativity away into the fire. Or send up prayers with the fire.

Young couples may wish to jump over the fire together after it burns down.

As always, stay with the fire until you are able to handle all the ashes with your bare hand. If you can, you take a candle home and relight your furnace, like the ancient Celts did.

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Oracle/6992/bonfires.html>

Or you can do something no one else has thought that you really like! See these sites for ideas:

http://altreligion.about.com/c/ht/00/07/How_Celebrate_Beltane0962933966.htm Fun.

<http://www.circlesanctuary.org/pholidays/Beltane.html> Good customs.

<http://www.witchvox.com/holidays/beltaine/beltainehistory.html>

A lot of info.

<http://paganwiccan.about.com/cs/beltanemaydayb/>

www.cyberwitch.com/wychwood/Temple/beltane.htm good history

Summer Solstice Activities

By Alex Strongbow, ex-Carleton Grove
A Druid Missal-Any, Summer Solstice 2002

It is not a major holiday, but here are some activities to surround the holiday.

Short and simple, the list looks like this:

- Picnics, beach parties, and fireworks
- Bonfire (It's always a good time)
- Fire-Fly searching, bug collecting (and release?)
- College or family reunions
- Charging magical tools
- Hardest work on a long-term project or making a journey
- Eating a super-big sundae
- Hauling rocks and attuning your megalithic calendar
- Baseball, soccer, hurling, outdoor games.
- Searching for St. John's Wort
- Backyard volcano building (see familyeducation.com site)



Some Possible Lughnasadh Activities

By Alex Strongbow, 2002

Basically, early August is a “hey, the farming is turning out alright!” agricultural festival and horse race time. Because it is a rather warm time of the year, and like other parts of the Northern Hemisphere, it is also a good time for big crowds of people to travel and have some constructive fun. Taitiu, Lugh’s mom, is commemorated in funeral games that last a week or so. I’ve put together a list of some events that might be done throughout August.

- Food was scarce before the harvest, so you might consider fasting before the festival begins, eating only seasonal foods that you can research as being available before world-grocery began. Perhaps combined with a camping trip, to test your rigor.
- Brehon Wedding/Handfasting: A young couple will put their hand through a hole in a stone and pledge to officiant and public their intention to try living together for a year before deciding on a permanent marriage.
- Settling of Legal Disputes: Advice or mediation in long-term disputes could be sought from other members of the Grove (perhaps on slips of paper pulled from an anonymous box). Alliances with other organizations may be approved now.
- Horse racing: Well, few of us have horses, but a trip to a derby, dog track, or Nascar race would be appropriate, as would attending a summer track and field meet. Gambling is encouraged. If you do have a few horses (or can rent them), it is traditional to race along a river or ford a river mid-race.
- Bonfire: Not associated with hearth-fires, but just for fun and illumination of nocturnal partying. Sacrifice bad habits and unwanted things from your life by throwing symbols of them into the fire, this is good anytime. Perhaps, a competition between teams to build the biggest/oddest Lammastower?
- Prearrange to collect the last sheaf of wheat from a farmer and make it a Cailleach doll (old woman), much like the Bride-og at Oimeal in February. It should be placed on the mantle over the winter and destroyed in the spring, perhaps ploughed into the ground.
- Celtic Olympics: Yes the games of Tailtean, were held until the time of the Norman invasions in the 12th century. Perhaps modeling them on a highland games, which are frequent this time of year, would be apt. Events could include:
 - Wrestling in either Greco-Roman fashion (pinning shoulders to the ground), Sumo (no touching ground except feet or leaving circle) or WWF smackdown rules.
 - Hurley, Cricket, Soccer, or Rugby matches.
 - Foot races, wheelbarrow races, bicycle, piggy-back, sack-races, obstacle courses
 - Hammer Toss, Shot put, heavy rock lifting or caber toss
 - Sword dancing, country dancing, interpretive dance etc.
 - Long jump, high jump, pole-vaulting with walking sticks
 - Boffer-sword/Quarter-staff bouts, preferably on a log over a river.
 - Massive tug-a-wars, wacky relays, tag, human pyramids, or egg-toss contests.
 - Archery, fire-arms, catapulting, slinging or spear toss contest

- Have a “Rhibo,” a welsh game where people line up facing each other, making a bed of arms and then fling them up in the air. It is advisable to catch them on the way down.
- Mental contests for the less physically-gifted: Chess, poetry, story-telling, lying contests, geometry jousts and math matches (bring out old SAT prep sheets), joke-telling, banjo-dueling, scavenging hunts.
- Large elaborate parades or activities to test the strength and endurance of young folk, usually through a forest, to a special spring or well or curving up and around a hill.
- Make plans for the winterization preparations.
- Feasting!: Foodstuffs include Beef, broccoli, cherries, spinach, any type of early berry, corn, potatoes, homemade bread (particularly wheat, oat, and especially corn bread), berry pies, barley cakes, nuts, apples, rice, roast lamb, acorns, crab apples, summer squash, turnips, oats, and all grains. Drinks: Elderberry Wine, Mead, Ale, Meadowsweet Tea, and Cider
- If you live near an abattoir, you could attempt a Tarbh Feis (cattle meditation) by wrapping yourself in a freshly killed bull’s hide after eating 10 pounds of beef at a crossroads and sleeping overnight while Druids sing around you. You could then prophesy the 2002 elections by this method, perhaps, or the fertility of the harvest might be gauged from your dreams.
- Offer first-fruits from your garden and plant all the seed of fruits eaten at festival. Bake a loaf of bread in the guise of a man and tear him apart by wild-cats. Include bilberries or blueberries in your feast; these were a traditional fruit, whose abundance was seen as an indicator of the harvest to come. Make a corn wheel of ripe grains.
- Gather and make acorn bread.



Figure 4 Another View of Druid Bridge in Northfield over Cannon river with 165+ Druid Sigils, built around 1997 near the Contented Cow Pub.

Some Optional Activities for Fall Equinox

By Alex Strongbow, 2002

Fall Equinox is the opposite twin of Spring Equinox, only that life is now giving fruit and dying at this point in the year's cycles, sometimes known as Michaelmas in the Catholic calendar; when contracts and rents were collected (as at Easter). What harvesting began in Lughnasadh should be about finished by the Equinox. In times past, autumn was a dreaded season, as people scrambled to prepare food for the long, deadly winter. Only in recent centuries, with assured food supplies, have we begun to romanticize the season. For modern society it is a time for starting school and the end of summer vacations.

- It's possibly the last chance to have the types of fun summer outdoor group activities that characterize Beltane, Mid-summer and Lughnasadh. So it offers an opportunity to repeat previous ones, or try out one that you didn't have time for.
- A picnic is definitely in order or participation in final harvesting. Traditional choices would be grapes, acorns, wheat bread, goat, Indian corn, horn of plenty, cornbread, corn, root crops (i.e. onions, carrots, potatoes, etc.), pomegranates, nuts, goose, mutton, dried fruits, apples, beans, and squash.
- Prayers towards protection, balance, and success in life are auspicious.
- Building a doll of grains to be burnt in the spring or fed to animals.
- Sitting under trees with nets to catch falling nuts and leaves, perhaps saving a leaf from each year in a collection. The rest should be made into a leaf pile for the kids.
- The changing leaves can also be dipped in paraffin and put on wax paper. After the leaves dry, they may be placed around the house or in large jars with sigils of protection and/or abundance
- Take notes on which trees turn color first, which fall soonest, and into which colors.
- Follow the migration of birds.
- String nuts into a necklace.
- Plan a trip to see the fall colors in the mountains.
- Do the Halloween farm-visit early and beat the crowds.
- Make a grapevine wreath for the door.
- Deer season opens. Contemplate it and find some deer. Vegetarians can protest the sporting elements of it.
- A good time to give to local charities to feed the poor.
- When do certain animals begin to disappear?
- Bake bread from scratch (i.e. grind the grains into flour).
- Note the date of the first frost and its effects on plant life.
- Put up storm windows, check insulation and pack away the air conditioner.
- Start notice the location and time of sunrise, noon and sunset and continue through winter.
- Plant acorns and other nuts and wait for spring growth.

101 Non-Festival Activities for Groves

It is quite common for Druids to mistakenly assume that being a Druid is all about showing up for liturgical services. This is simply not the case. Most religions encourage people to examine their everyday lives for questions and lessons.

Actually, Groves can choose to do ABSOLUTELY NOTHING at all. Some Groves are just cover for a group of friends, whose various activities sometimes get celebratory in a Nature sense. If your group is not comfortable with liturgy, then perhaps holding varying activities is the better way to develop at the start and see where it goes?

I've put together a list of activities that are generally fun to do as a group or with one's family or coterie. It'd be awful hard and fatiguing to do all of them, but a couple might be possible, and it gives you a chance to delegate responsibility to others to organize events they are experienced at. I've found that political causes tend to divide the group as do many types of intensive activism. Groves tend to be small, so don't be proud, take advantage of already set up programs in your community, it saves you headaches, and the results are good.

1. Book club discussions
2. Video club viewing & discussion
3. Park or neighborhood clean-up
4. Participation in inter-faith councils
5. Prison visits for Druids in jail or hospital
6. Tea and crumpets and topical debate
7. Camping trips
8. Sponsoring a scholarship
9. Adopting and following a charity
10. Group healthy life programs
11. Sleep-over parties
12. Barbecue parties
13. Garage sales
14. Form a sports team (cricket, croquette, orienteering, kickball, dodgeball, broomball, badminton, softball...)
15. Poetry contests
16. Bardic sing-togethers
17. Put on a play
18. Collect stories for an anthology
19. Start a garden
20. Plant trees
21. Quilting
22. Produce paraphernalia for services
23. Visit and observe other religious ceremonies
24. Weekend retreats (monasteries, community centers or various camps exist in your area)
25. Be a source of counsel for local police
26. Take night classes
27. Build a group book or video library
28. Start an on-line conference
29. Attend conventions
30. Invite a speaker
31. Go fishing
32. Work in a homeless shelter
33. Follow local environmental issues
34. Write all documents in ogham for a week.
35. Do a recycling workshop
36. Assemble or try a collection of recipes
37. E-mail a newsletter
38. Work on tree/flower/rock identification skills
39. Old-fashioned fire-making workshop, fire from scratch, firewood collecting, torch, lamp & candle making.
40. Join tours by local historical society
41. Research history of local indigenous peoples

Public Presentation Skills

By Mike the Fool, 2005

42. Attend town meetings
43. Do story presentations at library
44. Teach people to read
45. Make a Grove flag, seal, coat of arms, Grove name, slogan, anthem or mascot.
46. Group photo day
47. Divination workshop
48. Craft workshops
49. New home/car/boat/job blessing
50. Weddings, funerals, memorials, graduations
51. Feng-shui or Taoist design orientation seminar
52. Folk dance or Country Line-dance classes
53. Staff, cloak, wand, sigil workshop
54. Society for Creative Anachronism (medieval)
55. Set us a Grove website
56. Carry a common item, like a ring, a small rock or bark chip or acorn as a sign of fellowship.
57. Puzzle, joke and riddle collections and passing about.
58. Role Playing Games
59. Pressed plant collections for local herbs
60. Build bird and bat homes.
61. Make a parade float
62. Hold a concert
63. Write letters to newspapers
64. Raise a stone or log circle
65. Choreograph a simple liturgical dance
66. Secret handshakes and password nonsense
67. Build an altar (portable is advisable)
68. Meditation class (yoga, tai-chi, aikido, zen)
69. Encourage people to start personal journals
70. Star-gazing workshop
71. Wildlife photography project
72. Responsibly start a bird feeder
73. Painting or drawing workshop
74. Walk about your town
75. Start a daily prayer regimen
76. Investigate types of alternative therapies
77. Visit your neighbors more
78. Check the lists of available books in your library
79. Find ways to simplify your life of distractions
80. Start a Grove-wide pen-pal with somebody from an interesting overseas land.
81. Practice toast-mastering and public speaking
82. Have a whiskey tasting party to select official spirits
83. Notice where large numbers of accidents happen and see if you can improve the location.
84. Big Brother/Big Sister or Boys/Girls Club of America
85. Natural disaster awareness planning
86. Share knowledge of what community education and night school classes are in your area.
87. Brush up on home conservation tips
88. Explore organic and conventional food nutrition
89. Temporarily train pets and socialize them for a shelter
90. Note which religious groups are in your area.
91. Learn an entertainment skill like juggling or performance magic
92. Volunteer to lead or chaperone field trips
93. Exercise more... outdoors.
94. Attend a concert
95. Get a Grove mailbox
96. Do group subscription for a magazines
97. Help get rid of non-native invasive species in area.
98. Gentility lessons at a finishing school
99. Give an award to someone who has gone unnoticed in your community for good deeds.
100. Help poorer members improve their work skills and access helpful services in the area.
101. Be nice to other folks, for no good reason.

In modern society, it is quite rare outside of church for non-evangelical folk to speak about religious or philosophical matters with anyone but a very close friend. There are people from just too many religious and atheistic persuasions out there, and most are not comfortable with the topic of religion. Many believe their way is the only viable one, and do not brook dissent on many points. Leading a diverse crowd often can be frightening if you look at what divides you, but when you touch on common goals and aspirations, it becomes much more thrilling and pleasant. Know well what brings you together, and hit those points a lot.

In most Groves, the people know you a lot better than the average Catholic congregation knows its parish priest. Why? Because you are a smaller group, and you haven't been separated from them by an impassible chasm of dogma and years of seminary training. You are pretty much just like them. They know you don't have professional training, and most are willing to give you a lot of lee-way on minor flubs. I laugh when I make an amusing error, and it dissolves the tension.

It might be daunting the first time you stand in front of six or seven people and start doing the mumbo-jumbo of a liturgy, while keeping track of the pace, looking about, remembering your lines, and practicing smooth transitions. It gets better with practice and simple but careful planning on what the purpose is.

You have to just be yourself. If you are extroverted, then be the noisy entertainer, with lots of pomp. If you are introverted by nature, then solemn and quiet might be your style. Other participants with complementary skills or personalities might balance out yours. Watch how others perform in public, and take notes, but do not ape them. Most of us are not good enough actors to fake another priest's style, other folks would see through the impression. There is no style that pleases everyone or is "the best way," do the best you can at the time, for what it's worth. And, crucially, you don't have to do everything you know how. Pick.

You can run a bare-bones service, or you can greatly elaborate it. It can be solo or interactive. Watch televised services, attend local church meetings. Look at the stylistic diversity out there. Think of the many types of clothing, various seating/standing/kneeling arrangements, the musicians/choirs, the incense/bells/candles/lighting, the use of readings/speeches, the use of mudras, and movement/dance or the clumsy choreographed maneuvering of altar boys.

Some Druids in the ordinary service will read a few meditations and then give a short sermon and a period of silence. Presenting a sermon or inserting ad-libbed comments is quite daunting for people unaccustomed to leaving a script.

With a sermon or a pre-liturgical speech, 5 minutes is usually plenty, you only need to hit at most three points on a topic of importance to you, or present an alternative summary of how you interpreted the readings, or schedule a workshop if you'd like to give a hour-long lecture. Those types of impromptu speeches have a beginning, a middle, and an end; just like essay writing in school with a few supporting facts or lovely examples from your own humble life. Don't stick in too much, or it will overwhelm and stretch too long. You can discuss points in greater detail after a service.

The more you do public speaking, the better you get at selecting better words and feeling more relaxed to concentrate on the rhythm, pace, tone, gesturing and other little helping steps.

Our TV generation is used to highly practiced and polished programming and commercial music, so remember to you're your hopes realistic. Don't get too hung up about any SINGLE service.

Look beyond it to an overall series of improving performances. Even the worst one will teach you to be better. Think about what types of topics you'd like to raise over a season or two. If your Grove doesn't really need to celebrate the Fall Equinox, or it doesn't really enthrall them, then tone down the service and do more activities instead. The service does not have to be the centerpiece, but might be an aperitif or dessert or a salad to the main meal of the evening.

When you are first preparing, especially for the first time, it might be good to do a few dress rehearsals on your own next to a tape recorder or video camera, just to get a better picture of how you appear, and remove any annoying mannerisms, remove "uh, ers" in your speaking, and work on that posture. Are you too monotonic, do you look too stiff, should you move about a bit? Do you need someone to hold something at a certain spot to free up your hands?

Encourage rotation of public presentations by the Grove, so that they will understand what it's like to be in the hot seat. They will then be able to give you even more constructive advice than before. Sometimes the quietest members may surprise you when they reveal hidden speaking skills.

There are numerous books out there on public speaking, night classes, toastmaster clubs, and internet web-sites full of tips. Access these sites and dispel those myths and hang-ups that inhibit you from talking about your favorite subject, Druidism.

Tips For Successful Public Speaking

Feeling some nervousness before giving a speech is natural and healthy. It shows you care about doing well. But, too much nervousness can be detrimental. Here's how you can control your nervousness and make effective, memorable presentations:

1. **Know the site.** Be familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and practice using the inherent area's sound quality and any visual aids.
2. **Know the audience.** Greet some of the audience as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.
3. **Know your material.** If you're not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech and revise it if necessary.
4. **Relax.** Ease tension by doing exercises.
5. **Visualize yourself giving your speech.** Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.
6. **Realize that people want you to succeed.** Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining. They don't want you to fail.
7. **Don't apologize.** If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have with your speech, you may be calling the audience's attention to something they hadn't noticed. Keep silent.
8. **Concentrate on the message -- not the medium.** Focus your attention away from your own anxieties, and outwardly toward your message and your audience. Your nervousness will dissipate.
9. **Turn nervousness into positive energy.** Harness your nervous energy and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.
10. **Gain experience.** Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. A Toastmasters club can provide the experience you need.

Section Five:

RDNA Writings of Interest



A selection of a few historical documents that may be of some assistance to a fledgling Druid or Proto-Grove, named

1. The Druid Chronicles (20 pgs)

How the RDNA got started at Carleton College in 1963-64

2. End notes of Druid Chronicles (4 pgs)

Little back-stories to de-mystify some strange events in the Chronicles

3. Letters of the apocrypha (6 pgs)

These are some later essays by prominent members which are well-written.



Druid Chronicles (Reformed)

a.k.a.

The Chronicles of the Foundation

Written 1963 - 1964 by David Frangquist

1996 Introduction

Originally published under the title of The Druid Chronicles (Reformed), abbreviated DC(R) and nicknamed The Chronicles, these books contain the basic history and beliefs of the first year of the original branch of the Reform founded at Carleton College from which all the past, present and future Branches of the Reformed Druidism spring. Thus the Chronicles are the about the only section of A Reformed Druid Anthology that is acknowledged by every group. The primary author, David Frangquist, has made no claim of divine inspiration; nor has any other branch of the Reform. These five books have no canonical status, but they're chock-full of interesting and fun stuff. Don't take it too seriously and try to see the message that underlies all the outer-trappings, holidays and names.

For a more detailed discussion on the Chronicles see the End-Notes, Printing History and Historiography at the end of end of this Part One. Internal cross-referencing is indicated by raised numbers. The existence of detailed end notes related to a verse is signaled by asterisks. Both are listed at the end.

The Drynemetum Press

The Early Chronicles

Chapter the FIRST

1. The first of the chronicles of the disciples of the Earth-mother, and of the various and wondrous events which did

occur to them who gave themselves to the establishment of the reform, which branched off from the main body of the Reform was in Northfield, which is a city in Minnesota, the east part thereof. Peace be unto those who



the comfort of the Earth-mother.

2. In those days (when Nason was president at Carleton) a decree went out from the Administration that all Sundays must be accounted for. So each went to his own place of worship in order that there credit might be established on his record.
3. And it came to pass that there were those among these people who chose to pursue such forms of worship as were not at that time in general acceptance. And one of these was a man named David, who was also a Fisher.
4. Now he did appear in the area which is north of the Lake of Lyman, proclaiming the glory which was Druid. And a few there were who listened to him and consulted with him.
5. And it came to pass that when a group of the faithful were gathered on a hill, where there had been set up in a small monument in stone, they concluded among themselves that this place should be the new location of an altar, which would be built with the work of their hands out of rough stone.
6. And it also came to be revealed, at that time, that David, who was a Fisher, was a priest in the order of the Druids, and that his rank was that of the Third Order Priest.
7. Now it was decided that there should be a regular service of worship which would be held in the appointed place, and which would be held on the last day of the week, which is Saturday, according to the old custom.
8. All of those things, which have been presently related, did occur during the month of April., which is just before the celebration of Beltane, and that time is generally held to be the time of the beginning of the reform.

Chapter the SECOND

1. And it came to pass that when the celebration of Beltane (which is the first day of the month of May) was held, there was not yet completed the altar which was to be built of stone, according to the plan which had been adopted by the faithful.
2. And so it was that an altar which was small and portable and made out of steel came to be used for the service. And it was generally agreed that it was indeed an inferior type of altar.
3. Thus, a group of disciples began to assemble the rough stones which were necessary to build the new altar. And although their numbers were small in the beginning, those who did lend their help did increase until their number was nearly doubled.
4. Now when the last stones had been laid in the altar, the priest did step back from it, and did look upon it, and he said: "It is good.^a We shall hold services here around it today, after the noon" (for it was Saturday).
5. And the altar did measure about two cubits high, and about two cubits wide, and about three cubits long.
6. And it came to pass that there were in number about a dozen people who did gather at the altar that day, and who did partake of the waters-of-life.
7. After the waters of life had been passed, Howard who was called Cherniack, did rise up (for he was a Preceptor, and of the Second Order), and he did read to them from a paper.
8. The purpose of this paper was to establish for them a

^a Other authorities read: "It looks good."

constitution; so when the reading had been completed, the Arch-Druid (for such was the priest to be called) did ask those who were gathered if they did approve.

9. Now all who were present did give their assent, save one who was not yet of the First Order. And it came to pass that when the question was again asked on the week following, all did again approve, save one who did not disapprove of the paper, and so it was considered unanimous.
10. And so after the paper had been accepted in this manner, the congregation of the disciples was then known as the Reformed Druids.^b

Chapter the THIRD

1. Now after the paper had been read on the first Saturday after the celebration of Beltane, it was perceived that the sky was covered by clouds. And this was not good for a Saturday evening.
2. Thus did the Arch-Druid go and kneel before the altar and invoke the Earth-mother asking for a clearing of the weather.
3. And the Earth-mother did look upon the congregation of the faithful, and did look upon the altar which had been built to her glory, and saw that it was good.
4. And, behold, there was a great wind in the sky, and it did blow from the sky in the space of less than two hours all of the clouds, yea, even the last vestige thereof. And the sun shone brightly in the sky.
5. And this was taken to be a sign.^c
6. But some there were those in the area who did scoff, for their hearts were hardened. And they did conspire, saying: "Let us tear down the stones from the altar which has been built on the hill."
7. And they did go in secret to the altar, and did tear at the altar, each with his bare hands, and did take therefrom the stones which had been set there, yea, even down to the foundation thereof.
8. And the Earth-mother did look upon this with disfavor, for it was the defilement of the altar which had been built to her glory.
9. And so it came to pass that in that same day, even as the last stones were being removed, a storm did gather, and there was thunder and lightning and rain;
10. and it was exceedingly cold, and the clouds did not leave the skies for a period of four days.
11. And this also was taken to be a sign.^d

Chapter the FOURTH

1. And it came to pass that when those of the faithful who had built the altar, each one with his bare hands, did find that the altar had been defiled, they did rend the air with their lamentations.
2. And they did set themselves to the task there of once again building the altar, that is, of rebuilding it; and they did set each stone in the place which had been appointed to it.
3. And as they did complete their task, the sun did make a brief appearance unto them from in the midst of those clouds which were covered over the sky;

^b Other authorities read: "of North America."

^c See E.C. 3:11; 4:4, 13; 6:9; L.C. 1:7; 2:11; 6:8

^d See E.C. 3:5; 4:4, 13; 6:9; L.C. 1:7; 2:11; 6:8

4. and each took this to be a sign, each in his own way.^c
5. Now after the work was the second time completed, those whose purpose it was to do evil unto the altar did come the second time also;
6. and they did come in the darkness of the night, for they were the Anti-Druids.
7. Now when these Anti-Druids did come, their coming being covered by the darkness of the night, they did come with the smell of drink heavy upon them; yea, were they so filled with drink that they were under the influence thereof.
8. And they did pull at the stones of the altar, yea, did they tear at the altar with their bare hands, and they did pull the stones away, one from the other.
9. Now as the Anti-Druids did defile the altar in this manner, one of their number did shout in his loudest voice: "Blasphemy!....Blasphemy!" for so was he under the power of strong drink.
10. And it came to pass that the faithful did perceive that the altar had once again been attacked by the hand of violence, then did they again rend the air with their lamentation, so great was their grief.
11. Wherefore they did set to the task which was before them, which was the task of placing the stones the third time in their proper places; but they did fix them there this time with mortar,^f that they might not be wrested therefrom by the hand of the Anti-Druid.
12. And a curse was placed on the altar; and the Arch-Druid spake unto the Druids assembled saying: "Verily I say unto you, whosoever findeth him who hath done this thing, be he admonished to do whatsoever he will to make for him his life miserable."
13. And it came to pass that it was made known to them that one of the Anti-Druids had come to twist his ankle, yea, even to sprain it; and this was taken to be a sign.^g
9. And it came to pass that Howard, who was Preceptor, did arise and he spake unto them saying: "Have ye not forgotten that we are reformed, yea, even do we call ourselves by the name of reformed,^h wherefore we must put behind us those things which do bring offense to our senses;" for Howard was one of them who were in favor of the small sacrifice.
10. But another did arise, who did call himself Jan, for he was in favor of the sacrifice of an animal, and he spake unto them saying: "Have ye not forgotten the customs of old—which were the customs of our predecessors before us? Verily I say unto you, nothing will be acceptable to the Earth-mother save it were nothing smaller than an animal or fowl, yea, even a chicken."
11. Wherefore, there was about to occur a great schism between those on the one hand who were of the first faction and those on the other hand who were of the second faction.
12. And they were exceedingly wroth one with the other.
13. But behold, Jan did rise up and relent his position, asking neither that flesh nor blood be spilt upon the altar; for he did perceive that they were not strong enough and that such a schism would be their end, wherefore he did relent that the schism might not take place.
14. And it came to pass that the altar was consecrated by the burning of living leaves and branches of a tree;ⁱ and it came to pass that the altar was consecrated on the third Saturday after the celebration of Beltane (which is the first day of the month of May).

Chapter the FIFTH

1. And it came to pass that the time was near at hand for the altar to be consecrated.
2. Now it was the custom that when an altar was to be consecrated, that a sacrifice should be made upon it, which sacrifice should be of a living thing, yea, a thing which doth testify to the bounty of the Earth-mother.
3. And the purpose of this sacrifice is to consecrate the altar.
4. But behold, there did arise a dispute among the Druids concerning this sacrifice which was to be made upon the altar.
5. For there were some among them who were in favor of a small sacrifice and some who were persuaded that the sacrifice should be a large one;
6. those being in favor of the small sacrifice having a desire that it be of the living leaves and branches of a tree;
7. those being in favor of the large sacrifice having a desire that it be of the living flesh and blood of an animal or bird.
8. Wherefore, there did ensue a dispute among them concerning the manner in which this sacrifice should be made.

^c See E.C. 3:5, 11; 4:13; 6:9; Med. 6:1; L.C. 1:7; 2:11; 6:8

^f See L.C. 7:7

^g See E.C. 3:5, 11; 4:4; 6:9; L.C. 1:7; 2:11; 6:8

^h See E.C. 2:10

ⁱ See Med. 2:6

Chapter the SIXTH

1. Now it came to pass that on the fourth Saturday after the celebration of Beltane, it came to be decided that petition be made unto the authorities, that is the Administration, concerning recognition of the activities of the Druids.
2. And it came to pass that there were many among them who did approve; for they were in number about one score and two.
3. And each went and prepared his petition in the manner that was prescribed by the Administration.
4. But behold, there were then returned notices which did say: "Thy actions are not acceptable in our sight."
5. Wherefore, Howard, who was preceptor, did go up unto the authorities saying: "Do ye not see that there are many like us which do go by strange creeds?"
6. And he was answered: "Yea, verily we do see that there be many like ye which do go by strange creeds. Neither ye nor they are acceptable in our sight."
7. And Howard spake saying: "By what method do ye judge?"
8. And he was answered: "We are chosen that we should be judges. Yea, even do we judge according to our judgments."
9. But there were two of the petitions which were not rejected, for they were the domain of a different authority; and this was taken to be a good sign.^j

Chapter the SEVENTH

1. Now on the fifth Saturday after the celebration of Beltane, the Druids were assembled as usual; and after the waters-of-life had been passed, the Arch-Druid spake unto them saying:
2. "Behold, how our altar is attacked on the one side,^k and our recognition is rejected on the other.^l Are we not afflicted even as were our predecessors before us?"
3. "Our predecessors of old did take up the sword and fight with those who afflicted them, but they were defeated.
4. "Wherefore, we must not take up the sword, but remain tolerant and patient in our afflictions that there might be peace."
5. And he spake saying: "Behold, this is the last time we shall be together for a long time. The time is at hand when we shall depart, each of us going his separate way.
6. "Behold the flowers of the earth and the beauty thereof; and behold the sky and the clouds and the beauty thereof; and behold all the handiwork of the Earth-mother and the Beauty thereof.
7. "Be ye firm in the faith; and as ye go your separate ways take time to pause before all the glory of the Earth-mother (which is Nature); and fail not to meditate on that which has been said and done here, yea, even as the sun does reach it height in the north (which is Midsummer and an important day with us) should ye meditate on these things.
8. "For verily I say unto you, when the sun crosses the equator, shall ye be again reunited here with these thy brethren."^m

^j See E.C. 3:5, 11; 4:4, 13; L.C. 1:7; 2:11; 6:8

^k See E.C. 4:8

^l See E.C. 6:4

^m L.C. 1:2-4

9. And each went his own way glorifying the Earth-mother and singing her praises, yea, even unto the very ends of the land did they journey praising the beauty of all that is to be found in earth and sky.
10. Now these are the records which have been made to the glory and honor of the Earth-mother. Praise be to the Earth-mother for the beauty which is in her in the earth and in the sky; all the birds of the air and the animals of the ground are a testimony to her excellence. Even as the dawn of the new day brings new light, is there new hope.

Peace!



Figure 5 Nelson, Fisher & Frangquist on Hill of 3 Oaks, 1964 with original record-stand altar.

The Book of the Law

1. The Book of the Law as revealed by the Reformed Druids, in council at Carleton College, for the purpose of making more fruitful their existence.
2. And it came to pass that they did take upon themselves a name, which is “The Reformed Druids of North America.”ⁿ
3. And it came to be revealed that any person could become a member of them;^o but any who would become a member would be first required to submit humbly a petition, which petition is a declaration of his subscribing to the Basic Tenets. And this petition may be written with the pen, or it may be spoken aloud with the mouth.
4. Now the Basic Tenets of Reformed Druidism are these:
5. The object of the search for religious truth, which is a universal and a never-ending search, may be found through the Earth-mother, which is Nature; but this is one way, yea, one way among many.
6. And great is the importance, which is of a spiritual importance, of Nature, which is the Earth-mother; for it is one of the objects of Creation, and with it men do live, yea, even as they do struggle through life are they come face to face with it.
7. Now there shall be instituted in the Grove three officers whose duty it shall be to minister unto the needs thereof.
8. And first among them shall be the Arch-Druid, who shall be a priest of the Third Order or higher;^p and the Arch-Druid shall preside over the Druids assembled.
9. And second among them shall be the Preceptor, who shall be a Druid of the Second Order or higher;^q and he shall deal in the spiritual insofar as directed by the Arch-Druid, but he shall act foremost in affairs not of the spiritual, that is, the secular.
10. And third among them shall be the Server, who shall be of the First Order of the Druid or higher;^r and he shall assist the Arch-Druid insofar as she or he may be called to serve.
11. And none shall serve in these positions save it shall be that he is selected by the members; and none shall serve save it shall be that he is worthy to serve; and selection shall be made each year during the period of Foghamhar.^s
12. This is the Law which was revealed, but it is not all, for there is yet more. And no thing shall be revealed save it shall be to a majority of the faithful; and no thing shall be revealed save it shall be revealed twice, that is, at two meetings, the second of which shall be the first to be held after the first; and no thing shall be revealed save it shall be when one third are present to bear witness unto it.
13. Yea, and this record is a true one and an accurate one.
Peace!

ⁿ Other authorities add: “at Carleton College.”

^o Other authorities add “Save he were first a student.”

^p See Cus. 6:7

^q See Cus. 3:5

^r See Cus. 1:8

^s See Cus. 4:7

The Customs of the Druids

Chapter the FIRST

1. Now it was the custom among the Druids, who were reformed, that at every meeting of the congregation, the waters-of-life should be passed to those present.¹
2. Now he who subscribe to the Basic Tenets of Reformed Druidism, as prescribed in the Book of the Law, he is accepted into the body of Druidism which is the organizational body of Druidism only.^u
3. But, they who partake of the waters-of-life in communion with the congregation, they are accepted into the great body of Druidism which is the spiritual body of Druidism only.
4. But the whole and complete body of Druidism consists neither of the organizational body only nor of the spiritual body only, but of the both of them, which are then in whole and complete union.
5. Wherefore, he who has been accepted into the organizational body only is not of the whole body of Druidism;
6. wherefore, neither is he who is of the spiritual body only accepted into the whole body of Druidism.
7. Whereas, they who have been accepted into the spiritual body of Druidism and also into the organizational body thereof is thus accepted into the whole and complete body of the membership of the Reformed Druids;
8. and is thenceforth called by them a Druid of the First Order.

Chapter the SECOND

(A Chant)

1. O Earth-mother!
We praise thee that seed springeth,
that flower openeth,
that grass waveth.
2. We praise thee for winds that whispers.
through the graceful elm,
through the shapely maple,
through the lively pine,
through the shining birch,
through the mighty oak.
3. We praise thee for all things,
O Earth-mother,
who givest life.

^t See Cus. 5:5

^u See Law 4-6

Chapter the THIRD

1. Now some there are among the congregations of the faithful who shall be set aside from the others as better;
2. for, they it is who have been chosen to serve the Earth-mother and to do her work.
3. And none shall be chosen save he shall be pure in spirit and save he shall have bowed himself down in humility before the powers which are manifested in the Earth-mother;
4. And none shall be chosen save they shall be imbued with the spirit of the love of the service of the Earth-mother;
5. For those who are chosen to be honored are chosen also to be elevated to the Second Order, which is in the succession to the priesthood of the Druids.^v
6. And those who have been chosen shall be questioned, and they shall be questioned in the following manner:
7. "Do you, in full consciousness, promise to serve faithfully the Earth-mother, ministering to her followers, and following your duties as a Druid of the Second Order to the best of your ability?"
8. "Do you understand from whence comes the source of all life, and the nature of the source of all life?"
9. "Do you understand the partaking of the waters-of-life, and the sacrifice of life that we offer up to our Mother?"
10. "Are you ready, then to sealed up to the service of the Earth-mother?"
11. And none shall be honored with the Second Order save he shall answer these questions in the proper manner.
12. And none shall be elevated save he shall partake of the waters-of-life in communion with the Arch-Druid and save he shall partake of them to the fullest extent.
13. These are the things which are prescribed, for so it must be done. Thus it was, and thus it is, and thus it is to be.

Chapter the FOURTH

1. Now these are the commandments which were given concerning the observance of those days which were considered sacred to the Druids.
2. Ye shall observe always the festival of Samhain,^w for it is the beginning of the period of Geimredh, and also of the year. This day shall ye celebrate by the lighting of great fires, for soon is the land to become cold in the time of apparent death.
3. Ye shall celebrate on the day of Midwinter, for on that day doth the sun begin again to rise in the south; so shall ye celebrate it with the burning of logs and making merry. So also shall ye make merry on the day of Oimele,^x which is the first day of the period of Earrach;
4. and on these days shall ye glorify the mistletoe and the evergreen, for it is a living testimony to the continuance of life, yea, even in the midst of a dead world.

^v See Cus. 6:7; 8:1

^w November 1st.

^x February 1st.

5. Of great importance is the festival of Beltane,^y which is at the beginning of Samradh. Then shall ye observe great ceremony; and with the kindling of large fires on the hilltops, and the glorification of the renewed tree shall ye celebrate the renewed life.
6. Ye shall take note of the decline of the sun in the sky, which doth begin on the day of Midsummer. Ye shall light your fires and let them die in token of the great fire which doth roll down in the sky even as a ball doth roll down a hill.
7. Lugnasadh,^z which is the beginning of the period of Foghamhar, shall ye mark by the coming together in groups in order that ye might feast upon the fruits of the Earth-mother; and then shall ye offer up a sacrifice unto your prosperity.

Chapter the FIFTH

1. Also, shall ye observe the periods of the moon: the dates thereof when it is full and when it is new; for thus is seen reflected the birth and death, the growth and diminishing of all that is to be seen in Nature.
2. Ye shall begin new projects when the moon is waxing; but ye shall end old ones when it is waning.
3. And on the night of the full moon shall ye rejoice in the fullness of it; but on the night of the new moon shall ye be given over to vigils and to meditation.
4. When ye come together that ye might worship, shall ye come together in Nature, that ye might offer up on the altar of stone your sacrifice of life.
5. Then shall ye pass amongst you the waters-of-life, that ye may know the continual flow and renewal of life.
6. For they shall taste of the very essence of life, hallowed in the bosom of the earth, and purified by the worship of men.
7. And when all have partaken of the waters-of-life, then ye shall pour a libation of it on the altar, saying as ye do it:
8. "To thee we return this portion of thy bounty, O our Mother, even as we must return to thee."
9. Then shall ye go forth into the world of Men, secure in the knowledge that your sacrifice has found acceptance in the Earth-mother's sight.
10. Peace! Peace! Peace!

Chapter the SIXTH

1. Behold, there is not one among you who is greater than him who have given of himself in service to you.
2. For it is for this reason that the priests among you have been called to their station, that they might serve you.
3. And none shall be called except that they have sealed themselves up unto the Grove.
4. And none shall be called except that they have been Druids of the Second Order.
5. And none shall be called except that they have dedicated themselves to the search for truth in Nature.
6. And none shall be called except that they have kept the vigil upon the bosom of the Earth-mother.

^y May 1st.

^z August 1st.

7. This is the Third Order, the Order of the priesthood, the Order of Dalon Ap Landu.^{aa}
8. Unto it shall be given the consecration of the waters-of-life.
9. Unto it shall be given the consecration of the Second Order.
10. Unto it shall be given the sacrificing of life.
11. Unto it shall be given the mysteries of the worship of the Earth-mother.
12. For, even as priests are called unto it, shall they also call others.

Chapter the SEVENTH

(A Response at Samhain)

1. Ea, lord, Ea, Mother, thou with uncounted names and faces, thou of the many faceted nature in and above all, to thee we sing our chants of praise.
2. Go thou not from us.
3. Dalon Ap Landu, lord of this and all Groves, mover by night and by day, descend not beneath the earth, turn not thy pleasing face from us.
4. Go thou not from us.
5. The leaves wither; the trees and fields are barren; on what can we depend? Where is thy order, where thy strength?
6. Depart not from our midst, sleep not, O most high.
7. The sun, the bright fire of day withdraws his chariot; his face is veiled with clouds, and the breath of the north wind walks the land.
8. Return to us his warmth.
9. Lo, we are as wraiths; our fire is turned to ashes and darkness walks the land.
10. Preserve us O spirit of day. Keep us in thy mind, O spirit of power.
11. O Earth-mother, guide our paths. If thou wilt leave us, save us through the time of silence, keep bright within our hearts til spring.
12. So let it be, O our Mother, for we are faithful, and would keep thy ways.

Chapter the EIGHTH

1. Behold, some there are among you whose reflections and whose deeds are of exceedingly great merit.
2. And they shall be selected for the great honor of the high Orders of the priesthood;
3. and they shall be selected by the Patriarchs, each to his own Order.
4. The council of the Third Order, of Dalon Ap Landu, shall select the Patriarch of the Fourth Order, of Grannos;
5. and also the council of the Fourth Order shall select the Patriarch of the Fifth Order, of Braciaca;
6. and also the council of the Fifth Order shall select the Patriarch of the Sixth Order, of Belenos;
7. and also the council of the Sixth Order shall select the

^{aa} See Med. 4:12

- Patriarch of the Seventh Order, of Sirona;
8. and also the council of the Seventh Order shall select the Patriarch of the Eighth Order, of Taranis;
 9. and also the council of the Eighth Order shall select the Patriarch of the Ninth Order, of Llyr;
 10. and the council of the Order of Llyr shall have dominion over the selection of the Patriarch of the Tenth Order, the highest of them, which is the Order dedicated unto Danu.^{bb}
 11. For such are the Orders of the priesthood, and so are they also dedicated.
 12. And no one shall be Patriarch of more than one Order, for no one can be so dedicated.
 13. But no priestess shall be admitted into the councils of the priesthood, but rather she shall be given unto one of them as a gift of service to beauty.
 14. For she who is called to be a priest shall be sealed up unto one Order only, and unto her shall be given the service of it for all time;
 15. and she shall be called a priestess not of the Order, but rather a priestess unto the Order.
 16. For so it is written; thus it was, thus it is, and thus it is to be.

Chapter the NINTH (Incantation)

1. Fain we ask Erinn,
 Faring o'er oceans',
Motions to mountains,
 Fountains and bowers,
Showers, rills rushing,
 Gushing waves welling,
Swelling streams calling,
 Falling foam-thunder,
Under lakes filling,
 Willing-abiding,
Riding rounds, holding,
 Olden fairs meetly-
2. Fleet to lift loyal,
 Royal king's towers,
Bowers for crowning,
 Frowning foes over-
3. Rover Mil's warlike,
Starlike sons therein,
 Erinn shall longer,
Stronger, show honour,
 On our Milesians-
4. Wishing, in trouble,
 Noble isles' wooing,
Suing, we stay here-
5. Pray here to sail in,
Wailing maids royal,
 Loyal chief-leaders,

Pleader, blend pray'r in
So we seek Erinn—

Chapter the TENTH (Invocation)

1. I invoke the land of Erinn,
Much-coursed be the fertile sea,
Fertile be the fruit-strewn mountain,
2. Fruit-strewn be the showery wood,
Showery be the river of waterfalls,
Of Waterfall be the lake of deep pools,
Deep-pooled be the hill-top well,
3. A well of tribes be the assembly,
An assembly of kings be Temair,
Temair be a hill of tribes,
The tribes of the sons of Mil,
4. Of Mil of the ships, the barks,
Let the lofty bark be Erinn,
Lofty Erinn, darkly sung,
An incantation of great cunning,
5. The great cunning of the wives of Bres,
The wives of Bres, of Buaigine,
The great lady of Erinn,
Eremon hath conquered her,
Ir, Eber have conquered for her,
I invoke the land of Erinn.

Chapter the ELEVENTH (The Mystery)

1. I am the wind which breathes on the sea,
I am the wave of the ocean,
I am the murmur of the willows,
I am the ox of the seven combats,
I am the vulture upon the rocks,
I am a beam of the sun,
2. I am the fairest of plants,
I am a wild boar in valour,
I am a salmon in the water,
I am a lake in the plain,
I am a word of knowledge,
I am the point of the lance of battle,
I am the God who created in the head the fire,
3. Who is it who throws light into the meeting on the mountain?
Who announces the ages of the moon?
Who teaches the place where couches the sun?
If not I?
Peace!

^{bb} See Med. 4:13-20

The Latter Chronicles

Chapter the FIRST

1. The chronicles of the acts of the remnant after the faithful were scattered over the face of the land. Which record is a true and an accurate one of the Reformed Druids of North America.
2. Now it came to pass that on the fifth Saturday before the festival of Samhain,^{cc} a number of the faithful did gather on the hill where the altar had been built in the period of Samradh.^{dd}
3. And this was to fulfill the prophecy which had been made:
4. "For verily I say unto you, ye shall be reunited here with these thy brethren."^{ee}
5. And they did perceive that the altar which had been built did still stand upon the hill where it had been built.
6. And all did wonder, yea, they did marvel that the altar had been preserved in their absence from the hand of the Anti-Druid.
7. And this was taken to be a sign.^{ff}
8. But it came to pass that not all of the faithful had returned, for there was only a remnant that did come back.
9. Jan,^{gg} who was one of the faithful who was of the Second Order, and one of those who did not return, but who did choose to remain in a distant place to there continue in the work of the Earth-mother, did send unto them an epistle.
10. And this epistle was then brought to the faithful by the hand of Norman who was Server.^{hh}
11. And Norman did reveal unto them the epistle which had been written by the hand of Jan; and Jan did admonish them in the epistle to remain strong in the faith, and he did express to them his desire that the Reform should gain in strength.

Chapter the SECOND

1. It came to pass that the Arch-Druid was one day walking in the woods, and he was sore perplexed, for it did happen to begin to rain.
2. And he was exceeding wroth, so that he did feel tempted to utter a vile curse.
3. And it came to pass that he did so utter a vile curse, for such was his wrath.
4. And this curse which he did utter was a vile curse which was a vile curse which did call down the wrath of the Earth-mother, yea, even did it call upon the power of the Earth-mother.
5. And it came to pass that when he had spoken, there was a period of time which did last no longer than the space of a few seconds, and it passed.
6. And suddenly, there did occur a most horrible sound, and a blinding light did fill all the sky about.
7. For behold, all the power of Taranis was caused to be

^{cc} See Cus. 4:2

^{dd} See E.C. 4:11

^{ee} See E.C. 7:8

^{ff} See E.C. 3:5, 11; 4:4, 13; 6:9; L.C. 2:11; 6:8

^{gg} See E.C. 5:10

^{hh} See Law 10; L.C. 9:1

unleashed,ⁱⁱ and it did fly as a spear, and did strike a tree which was rooted in the earth.

8. And Behold, from the tree to the Arch-Druid was a space not more than fifteen cubits in length, and he was sore afraid.
9. So he did go back among the faithful, and he did say unto them: "Curse not in the name of the Earth-mother, for verily I say unto you: ye know not what it is that ye say."
10. And when he had told them of these things which he had seen and heard, they did marvel at it.
11. And it was taken by them to be a sign.^{jj}

Chapter the THIRD

1. It came to pass that the Druids did continue to meet and to pass the waters-of-life^{kk} for the period of one month.
2. But they did become anxious because there were left only a remnant of them.
3. Nevertheless, they did not come to be discouraged, for the size of their numbers did come to increase, though it was not by a very great amount.
4. And their efforts did continue to be thwarted, for the authorities had hardened their hearts against them.^{ll}

Chapter the FOURTH

1. But behold, it came to pass that they were gathered together on the hill, by the altar, on the Saturday before the eve of Samhain.
2. And it came to pass that there did gather on the hill a multitude of people, the number of them being great than any which had ever been gathered at any other time.
3. Wherefore, the faithful did rejoice greatly, for they did see that it was not all come to naught, but that the truth was now spread among the people.
4. And they did behold the success of the reform, and they were glad in their hearts.
5. And the Arch-Druid did look upon the great number who were gathered, and he said: "It is good."^{mmm}
6. And he did speak unto them and he did welcome them, and he did tell them of the wondrous things which were to occur on the eve of Samhain,ⁿⁿ which was near at hand.

ⁱⁱ See Med. 4:5

^{jj} See E.C. 3:5, 11; 4:4, 13; 6:9; L.C. 1:7; 6:8

^{kk} See Cus. 5:5

^{ll} See E.C. 6:4

^{mmm} See E.C. 2:4

ⁿⁿ See Cus. 2:4

Chapter the FIFTH

1. Now it did come to pass that the eve of Samhain did approach; and the moon was full.^{oo}
2. And they did gather in the light of the full moon, and did come together in the usual spot which was upon the hill near the altar.^{pp}
3. And there was a multitude of them, being in all greater than one score and ten in number.
4. The Arch-Druid did then offer up the sacrifice of life, but it was not accepted, for behold, the night of Samhain was at hand. Wherefore they did pass among them the waters, but they were not the waters-of-life, but rather the waters-of-sleep, for there was no life in them.^{qq}
5. And a great wailing did go up among them, for they did lament the ending of the summer, and the beginning of the winter season.^{rr}
6. The Arch-Druid did then light his torch and he did carry it before all those gathered as they did begin the pilgrimage. And they did all follow the torch, making their way to the Grove, which was a Grove of oak.
7. And when they had arrived at the Grove of oak, the Arch-Druid did take the torch and light with it the fire, and so the flames did rise high up out of the fire,^{ss} testifying to the glory of Belenos.
8. And all were cheered by it.
9. Now the Arch-Druid did ask all who were gathered that they might sit upon the earth in the fashion of a great circle, each holding the hand of him next to him. And he did ask that they might examine their souls,^{tt} and speak such as they felt they ought to tell the others.
10. And there did follow a period of silence which was exceeding long.
11. And behold, some did begin to speak, and their voices were lifted up above the crackling of the fire in the silence of the Grove.
12. And one did prophesy much, at times speaking in tongues, and then saying: "Someone is dead...I see a great many people...and a large circular room there...but they need not be afraid...everything is going to be all right."^{uu}
13. And behold, another did speak, saying: "I see... three stones on a black sky."
14. And many other great and wonderful things were spoken, for it was the eve of Samhain.
15. Now as the fire did die down, many did begin to leave the Grove; but some there were who did stay, and who did undertake to jump over the fire seven times each, thereby insuring their luck during the coming season.
16. And when the fire had died down to ashes, they did all depart; and the moon was full.

Chapter the SIXTH

^{oo} See Cus. 5:1

^{pp} See E.C. 1:5

^{qq} See L.C. 6:10

^{rr} See Cus. 7; Med. 1:2

^{ss} See Cus. 7:2

^{tt} See Med. 1:11

^{uu} See L.C. 6:3-5

1. Now it came to pass that it was not long after the feast of Samhain when the chief of all the land did go out in a long procession among the people of the land.
2. And as he passed among them, a man who was his enemy did attack him.
3. And behold, the chief of all the land was smitten by the hand of his attacker; and he was slain.
4. And a great crying and also a great wailing did go up from all the people.
5. And it came to pass that the body of the chief of all the land was taken up into the principal city of the land, and there was placed in the chief building, in the great circular room thereof.
6. But among the Druids there were those who were sore afraid at these events. For they did say among themselves:
7. Behold, for this is now the fulfillment of the prophesy of the night of Samhain; for it is now all come to pass as it was spoken.^{vv}
8. And they did marvel at it, for it was taken as a sign.^{ww}
9. Now it came to pass that during the periods of Geimredh and Earrach, the earth did have the appearance of death; for the wind of the north did sweep over the land, and barrenness did settle upon the branches of the wood.
10. And there were during this time no meetings of the Druids, for there was no rejoicing in the time of sleep.^{xx}
11. But it came to pass that the Druids did come together to celebrate the coming of the period of Earrach, which is the festival of Oimecl.^{yy}
12. And they did rejoice that the time was half passed in its course from Samhain to Beltane.
13. And there was a man who came unto them at that time who was called John the Messenger. And he came from across the sea from the land of Erinn.
14. And he brought unto them writings which were of the ancients: the incantations of Erinn.^{zz}

Chapter the SEVENTH

1. Now it came to pass that the festival of Beltane was near at hand; so the Druids did go up upon the hill of their altar, that they might see that all was in order.
2. And it came to pass that they did come up upon the hill, which was the one upon which was their altar, and they did look upon the altar which was there.
3. And they did say, one to the other, "Behold, our altar has not well weathered the periods of Geimredh and Earrach."
4. And they did say, one to the other, "Let us now go and fetch great stones, and place them together in a new altar, which shall be the greatest of all the altars which we have built."
5. Wherefore, they did go and fetch great stones, and they did bring them to the place of the altar. And they did begin to place them together in their proper places, according to

^{vv} See L.C. 5:12

^{ww} See E.C. 3:5, 11; 4:4, 13; 6:9; L.C. 1:7; 2:11

^{xx} See L.C. 4:4

^{yy} See Cus. 4:3

^{zz} See Cus. 9:1-5; 10:1-5; 11:1-3

the shapes thereof.^{aaa}

6. And each Druid did work at the building of the altar with his bare hands.^{bbb}
7. And they did fix the stones of the altar in their places with mortar, that they might not be wrested therefrom again by the hand of the Anti-Druid.^{ccc}
8. And when they had completed the altar, they did stand back from it and rejoice in its completion; for it was the finest of all the altars which had been built.
9. And the altar was about four cubits long, and about three cubits wide, and about three cubits high.^{ddd}
10. And there was a passage through the center of it which did extend from the top of the altar down to the very bottom thereof, and through it could pass the smoke of the altar fires.
11. And it came to pass that they did become apprehensive, for they did perceive that the mortar was still not dry;
12. and they did say: "Behold, the mortar is not yet dry, and the Anti-Druid will come and he will tear the stones from their places in the altar before they have been fixed there by the drying of the mortar."
13. And they were sore afraid.
14. But it came to pass that one of them did step forward, and his name was David (the Chronicler). And he did offer himself for the purpose of the guarding of the altar.
15. And he did take it upon himself to stay by the altar until the mortar had dried.
16. And as he sat by the altar he did see the sun go down in the west; and all the majesty of the heavens were opened unto him.
17. And he did keep his vigil upon the bosom of the Earth-mother^{eee} as the moon did rise in the east, and yet as it did set in the west.
18. And behold, as the sun did rise again in the east, and all the Earth was bathed in the warmth thereof,^{fff} the Arch-Druid did come up upon the hill of the altar.
19. And they did kneel before the altar; and the Arch-Druid did consecrate David (who was the Chronicler) as a priest of the Order of Dalon Ap Landu.^{ggg}

Chapter the EIGHTH

1. Now it came to pass that the festival of Beltane was near at hand; so the Druids did go up upon the hill of their altar, that they might see that all was in order.^{hhh}
2. And when they had come to the place of the altar, they did find it not. And they did find there not even the least stone thereof.
3. For behold, all that was the altar had disappeared, yea, even the last vestige thereof.
4. And they did perceive that the altar had been again

^{aaa} See E.C. 4:2, 11

^{bbb} See E.C. 4:1

^{ccc} See E.C. 4:11

^{ddd} See E.C. 2:5

^{eee} See Cus. 6:6

^{fff} See Med. 1:13

^{ggg} See Cus. 6:7

^{hhh} See L.C. 7:1

destroyed by the hand of the Anti-Druids.ⁱⁱⁱ

5. And this was the fourth time that the altar had been defiled by the Anti-Druids, and this was the most complete and utter destruction that had yet come to pass. For they had destroyed it with hammer and chisel and all manner of terrible weapon.
6. And it came to pass that a great wailing and moaning did go up, and the air was rent by the lamentation of the Druids.ⁱⁱⁱ
7. But behold, they did go up from that place, and they did celebrate the festival of Beltane;^{kkk} for even in the midst of their misfortune did they rejoice in the return of spring, and in the abundance of life which is the perpetual gift of the Earth-mother.
8. And they did go up upon the hill which was a short way off; and at the top of the hill they did find a Grove of three oaks.
9. And they did rejoice in the renewal of the flow of the waters-of-life; and they did pour a libation of them upon the rock which they did find upon the hill where the three oaks did stand strong against the dark sky.
10. And that place came to be revered among the Druids, for it was the place of refuge in the time of their troubles.
11. And they did call that place the Hill of the Three Oaks.

Chapter the NINTH

1. Now it came to pass that in the time after the festival of Beltane, which is the period of Samradh, Norman, who had been Server, did go up unto the Hill of the Three Oaks.
2. And he did go up onto the Hill of the Three Oaks in order that he might better appreciate the wonders of the Earth-mother which were to be beheld there.^{lll}
3. And it came to pass that he did remain there until darkness had fallen over all the land around; and behold, the firmament was opened up unto him and he did behold the glory of it.
4. And he did continue to make his vigil until the dawn.
5. And it came to pass that as the sun rose in the east, he was met by the priests of Dalon Ap Landu who had come up onto the Hill of the Three Oaks.
6. And they did consecrate Norman, who had been Server to Dalon Ap Landu.^{mmmm}
7. And it came to pass that after Norman had become priest of the Order of Dalon Ap Landu, the priests of the Order of Dalon Ap Landu did gather together in council.
8. And the Council of Dalon Ap Landu did call upon David, who was a Fisher, and declare him Patriarch of the Order of Grannos,ⁿⁿⁿ which is the first of the Patriarchs, and with all the powers thereof.
9. And it came to pass that the Patriarch of the Order of Grannos did call upon those who were priests of Dalon Ap Landu.

ⁱⁱⁱ See E.C. 3:6; 4:6

^{jjj} See E.C. 4:1, 10

^{kkk} See E.C. 2:1; Cus. 4:5

^{lll} See Med. 7:4

^{mmmm} See Cus. 6:8; Med. 4:12

ⁿⁿⁿ See Cus. 8:4; Med. 4:16

10. And he did consecrate them unto Grannos: priests of the Fourth Order.
11. And it came to pass that the priests of the Order of Grannos did gather together in council.
12. And the Council of Grannos did call upon Norman, who had been Server, and declared him to be Patriarch of Braciaca,^{ooo} with all the powers thereof.
13. And it came to pass that the Patriarch of the Order of Braciaca did call upon all the priests of Grannos.
14. And he did consecrate them unto Braciaca; priests of the Fifth Order.
15. And it came to pass that the priests of the Order of Braciaca did gather together in council.
16. And the council of Braciaca did call upon David (the Chronicler) and declared him to be Patriarch of Belenos,^{ppp} with all powers thereof.
17. And it came to pass that the Patriarch of the Order of Belenos did call upon those who were priests of Braciaca.
18. And he did consecrate them unto Belenos: priests of the Sixth Order.

Chapter the TENTH

1. Now it came to pass that in those last days a decree went out from the authorities;
2. and they did declare to be abolished the regulations which had been placed upon the^{qqq} worship of those at Carleton.
3. And behold, a great rejoicing did go up from all the land for the wonders which had come to pass.
4. And all the earth did burst forth into song in the hour of salvation.
5. And in the time of exaltation, the fulfillment of their hopes,^{rrr} the Druids did sing the praises of the Earth-mother.
6. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.
7. In all that we do we praise thee: In our getting up and in our lying down, in our sleeping and in our waking; in our eating and in our drinking: in our working and in our times of leisure; for we are alive only through thee,^{sss} and in our every act too we praise thee.
8. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.
9. In all that we see do we praise thee: in the sky and the sea, the hills and the plains; in the clouds and the stars, the moon and the sun;^{ttt} in the birds and the flowers, the butterflies and the myriad-colored fishes.
10. We praise thee with our admiration of the sunset and of the mountains, of the trees and of the streams. For thou hast made all things, and for all we see do we praise thee.
11. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.
12. In all that we hear and smell and feel and taste do we praise thee: in the song of birds
and the roar of the sea; in the perfumes of flowers and

- freshness of a summer rain;
13. in the softness of a kitten and the coolness of a lake; in the sweetness of honey and the savor of fruits; for all that we hear and smell and feel and taste is of thee,^{uuu} and for all sensible do we praise thee.
14. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.
15. For all that we love do we praise thee: for the love of our parents, and for the love of others; for the act and emotion of love is an act and emotion of praise, and in loving do we praise thee.
16. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.
17. In our meditations^{vvv} and services do we praise and think upon thy works and power.
18. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.
19. In all the whole world do we praise thee, from the east to the west do we praise thee and from the nadir to the zenith do we praise thee.
20. We praise thee in the day, and in the night, in all seasons of the year, and in the myriad of years.^{www}
21. We praise thee knowing and unknowing, believing and of little faith, for thou hast made all and art all, and we can praise and admire nothing without praising and admiring thee.
22. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.
23. Peace! Peace! Peace!

^{ooo} See Cus. 8:5, Med. 4:13

^{ppp} See Cus. 8:6; Med. 4:17

^{qqq} See E.C. 1:2

^{rrr} See E.C. 1:3; 6:1

^{sss} See Med. 5:6

^{ttt} See Med. 3:1-3

^{uuu} See Med. 3:6

^{vvv} See Med. 7:7

^{www} See Cus. 4:1-7

Meditations

Chapter the FIRST

1. I was standing alone. And behold, I heard my name called, and I went.
2. And I had been called to a place where there was a great fire, and the flames of the fire did rise as high as the tops of the trees.
3. Near the fire there stood a man; and he said unto me: "Follow me!" And I followed him.
4. Now we went far into the darkness of the night, and I followed him to an open space in the forest, which was like a small valley.
5. He said to me: "Behold;" and I looked where it was that he had pointed, and there was a pile of sticks.
6. And he said to me: "here you will stay; and do not allow sleep to overtake you, but keep open your ears that you might hear."
7. And again he said "Behold;" and I looked where he had pointed and I saw there a small fire. And he said: "Take from the fire a brand."
8. Now I went to the fire, and took a burning brand from it, and returned to where the man had stood; but behold, he had disappeared.
9. So I took the brand and lit with it the sticks. And I sat down to listen and to meditate.
10. And I did not sleep.
11. And behold, I did hear my name called, and I answered. And a voice came out of the darkness and bade me not sleep but rather to examine my soul. And behold, this did happen twice.
12. And I was alone, but I did not any longer feel alone.
13. And as I watched my fire and contemplated the warmth and the light of it, behold, the sun did come up in the east, and I was bathed in the light and the warmth of it.
14. And I had not slept.
15. But I had seen things that I had not seen, and I had heard things that I had not heard and I had felt things that I had not felt.
16. And I arose, and left that place, glorifying Be'al and all the works of his hand, for I had seen the Earth-mother.^{xxx}

Chapter the SECOND

1. How wonderful are the works of Be'al!
2. How beautiful are all the things which are in the earth, which are on the face of the earth, and which are above the earth in the sky.
3. How beautiful are the flowers of the earth and the birds of the air. How beautiful are the stars and the moon, and the reflection of them upon the waters.
4. For these things are of Be'al, and not of man.
5. For thus saith the Earth-mother: "The Groves of the forest are my temples, and the trees of the Groves are my icons,
6. "and the branches of the trees are my sacred scepters, and the

green leaves of the branches are my sacrifice, which is a living sacrifice up unto beauty."^{yyy}

7. Yea, how excellent are all these things, for they are created of Be'al, and they are not of man, Wherefore, they are sacred before us.

Chapter the THIRD

1. Behold the rocks of the mountains, and the trees above the grass waving; this is the Earth-mother.
2. Behold the ocean on the right, and the sea on the left, and mighty river which is but a trickle; this is the Earth-mother.
3. Behold the blue which is day and the black which is the night, salted with the stars, all above; even this is the Earth-mother.
4. The Earth-mother is one.
5. The sun is her right eye, the moon her left; and the clouds are her silver hair. The rivers are her fingers, the oceans are cradled in her hands, as a child.
6. For the Earth-mother is all which is revealed unto our sight, and which our ears do perceive, and which we do touch as we reach out with our hands.
7. For the Earth-mother is all things which do make themselves apparent unto our sense.
8. She is Disorder—Ordered;
9. she is Power—Impotent;
10. she is Ugliness—Beautiful.
11. And Be'al, he is cradled in the bosom of the Earth-mother;
12. and the eye of Be'al has entirely encompassed her.

Chapter the FOURTH

1. He is that which we have seen—not with the eyes; and we have called his name Be'al.
2. And we have heard that which he is—not with our ears; for his name we have called Be'al.
3. The taste which he leaves is not in the mouth; the odor of his presence is not sensed in the nose.
4. We have reached out, and touched, feeling his essence, though never with our fingers.
5. We have cried out in our anguish, our sublime anguish, and have called his name, yea, one name among many; we have called him Be'al.
6. For our knowledge of him is as that of the form in the fog, which has no form; we see it, and there is the more of it which we do not see; but it is.
7. Be'al is!
8. Yea, Be'al is one; even as he is many.
9. He has gathered the worlds in his net, even as they also have drawn him to them.
10. For all things are delivered unto him.

^{xxx} See Cus 6:6; Med. 10:7

^{yyy} See E.C. 5:14

11. His glories they are many, yea, as are many the names we have given him according as his glories are manifested unto us.
12. We have seen him on the bosom of the Earth-mother; huge woody arms raised to the sky in adoration, strong and alive; and we have called his name Dalon Ap Landu.^{zzz}
13. Of his goodness we have tasted, yea, have we drunk of the fruits of the Earth-mother which he hath poured out before us; and his name we have called Braciaca.
14. We have seen him in the surf, beating his fists against the shore, and his vast body stretching to the horizon; and we have called his name Llyr.
15. His voice we have heard thundering in the heavens, his power we have seen flash across the sky; and his name we have called Taranis.
16. Out of the bowels of the earth has he poured forth the water of his life, healing, soothing; his name is Grannos.
17. We have seen his smile, bright, radiant, raining glory and warmth down upon the bosom of the earth from his seat on high in the midst of the blue heaven; and we have called his name Belenos.
18. And the other faces of Be'al also have been turned kindly toward us.
19. Merrily merrily, bubbling, gurgling, we have seen her dancing over the rocks down to her marriage with Llyr; and her we have called Sirona.
20. We have seen her laugh with the young baby, fly with the bird, burst forth her abundance with the corn; in all that hath breath and life have we seen her good face; and her name is Danu—the bountiful.^{aaaa}

Chapter the FIFTH

1. Ye have seen the glory which is day in the rising of the sun, and also the wonder which is night; and what greater thing is there?
2. Ye have seen the power of the floods and the tides; and what greater thing is there?
3. Yea, even have ye seen the bosom of the earth rent in twain, and fire and brimstone poured forth out of the bowels thereof; and what things is there which is greater?
4. Verily I say unto you: consider the small creatures of the forest which scamper gaily from bush to bush; are not they more wonderful than these other things?
5. Consider even the dainty flower, how exalted is the glory of it.
6. For these are possessed of the greatest and most wonderful of all of the gifts of the Earth-mother: which gift is that of life.
7. Wherefore, consider this tree, which ye have selected for the great size thereof; for this tree is possessed of great age.
8. Great is the abundance of life which is in it, and which has passed through it; wherefore ye have raised up your praises unto it.
9. For ye have offered up your worship unto this in which life is great, that your worship of the greatness thereof might be multiplied in the tree.
10. This tree is your Bile.

^{zzz} See Cus 6:7

^{aaaa} See Cus. 8:4-10

11. For without life is there nothing which is anything.
12. The sun is as darkness without that it shines down on the living things; and the earth is as empty space without that it is a pedestal upon which have been placed the living things.
13. Thus, even the least leaf of this tree is greater than on the earth and the sun.
14. For life is not of the Earth-mother, and life is not of Be'al, rather life is of them both.^{bbbb} And great is the power thereof.

Chapter the SIXTH

1. Verily I say unto you: is it not written: “and each took this to be a sign, each in his own way?”^{cccc}
2. Which of you, having risen up saying: “this is truth, for I have seen it,” will be followed? For even as ye have seen it, have not the others also seen it not; and where therein is the proof?
3. Rather, that which is as the bright light unto one man is as but the thick cloud unto the other.
4. For no man shall have truth save that he shall also have awareness.
5. Truth is as a bubble which dances in the air. Truly, it can be seen and the eye is aware of it; but it cannot be grasped by the hand, nor possessed. Neither can it be given to you by anyone.
6. Beware those men who say: “Follow my way, for mine is the way unto Be'al, and there is no other way.”
7. Their numbers are great and their voices are loud. They shall present much authority before you, and say: “We know our way to be the only way, for it is the way of our fathers.”
8. But take heed, lest you should fall into the trap.
9. For awareness shall come unto no man save it shall be in his own way; and it shall come unto no man save he shall come unto it.
10. Go ye, therefore, and seek after Be'al. And make your way not after the way of other men, but after your own way,^{dddd}
11. and go too to the fountain of Awareness, which is in Nature.^{cccc}

Chapter the SEVENTH

1. For what reasons is that ye sit here under the oak? Why is it that ye have come out together under the stars?
2. Have ye come that ye might not be alone? If so, it is good.
3. But verily I say unto you: many there are who have come together, yet remain alone.
4. Do ye sit in the open that ye might come to know Nature? If so, it is good.
5. But verily I say unto you: many there are who have sat for hours and have risen up knowing less than when they sat down.
6. Rather, in your coming together, seek to know in what way ye may help him who is next to you, and strive to act justly

^{bbbb} See Med. 8:6

^{cccc} See E.C. 4:4

^{dddd} See Med. 4:4

^{cccc} See Law 4-6

toward.

7. And in your sitting down in the fields of the Earth-mother, open your minds as well as your eyes. Let your meditation grow and branch out as the oak which is over your head.
8. Except that ye have done these things, your sitting is in vain and coming is futility.
9. And why is it that ye do stand up before others and speak unto them?
10. Do ye teach unto them the ways of the Ancient Druids? If so, it is good.^{fffr}
11. For they had their wisdom, and that is oft forgot. But verily I say unto you: in their day, even they also were young in their traditions.^{eggg}
12. The wise man is not constrained to learn only that which he is taught. Yea, even as there is a time for talking, is there also a time for no talking.
13. In the silence of your being shall ye find that which is not of your being; and in the Earth-mother shall ye find that which is not of the Earth-mother; in Be'al shall ye be made aware, and your awareness shall fill you.
14. Ye shall be like the morning sun which has risen and whose brightness is already full, but whose path is yet ever upward;
15. and the light of your awareness shall sweep before it all the shadows of your uncertainty.
16. Then shall ye need wait no more; for this is the great end and all else is but beginning.

Chapter the EIGHTH

1. When they come to you and then ask you "After what do ye seek?" then ye shall answer them saying: "Awareness;" for this is the first lesson.
2. For without awareness is there nothing which is.
3. But in your seeking of awareness, seek not it alone, as separate from all else;
4. for in seeking awareness ye shall find it not, and ye shall find it only in that ye seek it not.
5. Seek ye, therefore, after Be'al, for your awareness shall be in unity with Be'al.^{hhhh}
6. And make first your search in the dominion of the Earth-mother, for the Earth-mother and Be'al are not to be separated.

Chapter the NINTH

1. Behold, they shall come unto you, scoffing, and mocking the words that ye have spoken, and saying: "There is no thing at all which is this awareness; what proof do ye give of it?"
2. And ye shall answer them in a parable, for this is the second lesson:
3. There was a small village in which was produced the finest cheese in all the world. There was none other anywhere that was like unto it.
4. And it came to pass that a traveler, who was a merchant, came to the village; for it was his desire that the finest of all

foods should be served upon his table.

5. Wherefore, he did seek out the makers of the cheese.
6. But behold, when he was given a piece of the cheese, he did thrust it away from him, for he was offended by the foul smell thereof; for it was an exceeding foul smell indeed.
7. And he said unto them: "I do not believe that the taste of this cheese can be good, for it doth have an odor which is foul like unto no other!"
8. And he was answered: "Thou needst only to taste once of the cheese, and thou wilt see for thyself that it be good."
9. But it came to pass that the merchant did go away again, having not partaken of the fine cheese.
10. And he never did have served on his table the finest of all cheeses, for he would not taste it, any of it.
11. Verily I say unto you: in all the books of Man is there not one word which can give you proof even of the taste of a cheese.

Chapter the TENTH

1. And when they come unto you and say: "And what, then, is the nature of this thing which ye do call awareness?" then shall ye give answer unto them in silence, for this is the third lesson.
2. For there be not one man who doth have awareness, save also that he is aware thereof.
3. And he is like unto him whose eyes are filled with the glory of all things upon which the light of the sun has cast itself.
4. But there are many, yea, it is the greater number, who, in their unawareness, are aware not even of their unawareness;
5. and they are like unto them who are blind from the day of their birth, and see not, nor know what it is to see.
6. But some there are who are aware only that they are also unaware; hallowed are they for they are the children of Be'al.
7. One of these is like unto him who keeps the vigil;ⁱⁱⁱⁱ
8. for his gaze cannot pierce the mantle of darkness which is thrown over all the world about them, but they rest secure in the knowledge of the return of day.
9. In your awareness shall ye be as at the moment of the rising sun;^{iiij}
10. and your spirit shall rise up even as the bird flies up to meet the light which is above, but which, hidden by the mountain, has fallen not yet upon the earth below.

Peace!

^{fffr} See E.C. 5:10

^{eggg} See E.C. 6:4

^{hhhh} See Med. 7:13

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ See Cus. 6:6; Med. 1:1-16

^{iiij} See E.C. 7:10

Between-the-Lines

(End notes to the Druid Chronicles)

A “founder’s-eye view” Of the Druid Chronicles (Reformed) by Norm Nelson, Second Arch-Druid of Carleton and Patriarch of the Fifth Order to explain some of the more mysterious references in the Chronicles. With some additions by Richard Shelton

[NOTE: except as noted, the Chronicles are the work of David Frangquist, Patriarch Sixth. References are to the 5th (1970) printing.]

EARLY CHRONICLES

I:2 The Reformed Druids of North America [henceforward, RDNA or Druids] were founded in the spring of 1963; John Nason was at that time President of Carleton College, a private Liberal Arts college in Northfield, Minnesota.

The precise wording of the requirement mentioned is to be found on p. 138 of the Carleton College Bulletin (Catalog Number) for March, 1963: “ATTENDANCE is required at the College Service of Worship or at the Sunday Evening Program or at any regularly organized service of public worship. Each [10-week] term every student must attend seven of the services or religious meetings.”

I:3 As I recall it, the sole motive was to protest the requirement, not to try for alternatives for worship. If a “regularly organized service” was required, we decided to organize one! Chief among those involved were David Fisher and David Frangquist (then sophomores), Howard Cherniack, Jan Johnson and me (then all juniors).

It is important to note that, while some were areligious, other were churchgoers who felt that compulsory religion was a disservice to religion. There was never any intention to mock any religion; it was not intended that RDNA should compete with or supplant any other faith. We tried to write a service which could be attended “in good faith” by anyone; it require no renunciation of any faith to profess Druidism. If our protest was to work, the last thing we needed was antagonism from anyone.

I:4 Lyman Lakes extend across the north side of the campus proper, lying in a valley. Most of us lived in a new dorm just north of the lakes, at the base of a hill. Immediately at the top of the hill was the soccer practice field and, just to the east of that, an area called Monument Hill (bearing a stele commemorating several pioneer events). Further north, across the soccer field, is a slight rise with a large rock sticking out of the ground, and with three trees; this became known as The Hill of the Three Oaks.

RMS: By the late sixties, the name had become shortened to the Hill of Three Oaks. The name was used by everyone, not just Druids.

I:5 Monument Hill.

I:6 So far as I know, Fisher actually created the whole first ritual at this time; his story was that he had been made a Druid in high school, since it made it more acceptable if it was an on-going thing.

I:8 *RMS: In a letter to me dated 5 May 1976, Norm wrote: “I’ve been looking back thru old calendars to see what I can find—the first mention of a Druid service is Saturday, April. 20, 1963, with subsequent entries each Saturday until (thru) June 1, when I noted that Bard Smith (then a prof. in the religion dept., later Dean) attended. Also noted a service on May 1st. Since I kept my calendars as a sort of diary, I assume that April. 20 was the true birthday of RDNA. If there had been an earlier service, I would have listed it.”*

II:2 The “altar” was Fisher’s phonograph stand/record rack, draped with a cloth.

II:3 The stones came from a place in the Arboretum, just north of Monument Hill I don’t remember how many worked—it was something like 3, increasing to 5.

II:7-10 The original Constitution had an amusing error: Article VI set the quorum for amendment at “one-third of those known to be officers”!

II:8 *IB: Mrs. Penick, the Carleton College Archivist, has asked Br. Shelton to convey the data to your Editor that the RDNA never did attain full legal status as an official student organization. The Editor has in his possession copies, sent by Mrs. Penick, of “Student Organization Reports” for ‘64 and ‘65 for the RDNA, and it was these which led him to assume that the RDNA became official. It seems that the college’s Executive Committee needed to approve the group, and they never did.*

III A little hyperbole aside, this is essentially a factual account.

IV:3 Really spooky—a ray of sunlight broke through the cloud-cover and hit the altar.

- IV:7 No liquor was allowed at Carleton. This rule was not enforced in “the Arb,” and quite a many students wandered home on Saturday Night/Sunday Morning under the influence. In the case of the repeated destruction of the altar, there was a specific (small) group which didn’t like us as individuals, and took it out on our altars. I don’t remember if we thought they were anti-Druid or just anti-us.
- V The dispute is reflected in the changes made in the Ceremony of Consecration.
RMS: In the ceremony preserved in the Black Book (which contained all the early liturgy), the following changes were written by hand on May 18th 1963:
“Attend us now o Spirits, as we offer this sacrifice of consecration” became
“Attend us now O Spirits, as we light this fire of consecration.”
(Here the blood of the sacrifice shall be spilled upon the altar) became
(Here the fire shall be lit upon the altar)
“Accept this, our sacrifice” became
“Accept this, consecrate it.”
- VI:1-3 After six of seven “regularly organized services of public worship,” we filled out “chapel slips” listing the Druid services as our church for the week. These slips were handed out at campus services, and were available in the dorms for those who had attended services in town.
- VI:4 The Chapel Slips were rejected by the Dean of Men’s office, which had charge of such matters for men students.
- VI:5-8 Cherniack went to the Dean with a list of various peculiar religious organizations gleaned from the Minneapolis and St. Paul yellow pages. After it was admitted that most of them would be acceptable, he asked why the RDNA wasn’t. The answer boiled down, amounted to “You don’t have a faculty advisor.”
- VI:9 The Dean of Women’s office accepted the Chapel Slips from the two girls who submitted them: apparently her office didn’t consult with the Dean of Men’s Office!
- VII:2-4 Or words to that effect.

THE BOOK OF THE LAW

- I is a paraphrase of the Constitution of the Carleton Grove.
- 12 My original copy of the Constitution sets the quorum (after corrections: see note on EC II:7-10 above) at one-eighth, not one-third.
RMS One version of the Constitution in the Grove Archives was signed and certified by David Fisher as “the original copy of the Constitution of the Reformed Druids of North America at Carleton College, drawn and prepared by Hillel Howard David Cherniack, Preceptor. And read and approved at two consecutive meetings by all members present.” This version reads: “A quorum...shall be one eight[h] of those members known to the officers....”
A much commoner mimeographed version reads “one-third” and “to be officers”, as in Norman’s note to EC II:7-10 above. This one has at the end: “I certify this to be a true and accurate copy of the Constitution of the Reformed Druids of North America at Carleton College, read and approved at two consecutive meeting by all members present” and Fisher’s mimeographed name but no signature. Norman’s copy evidently was one of these, to which corrections had been applied. Frangquist must have been working from an uncorrected copy.
A much later note by Fisher in the College Archives observes that “several errors in printing were noticed after copies had been sent out”, and on an attached copy of the mimeographed version he gives the explicit corrections. Also in the College Archives in the copy originally sent to the Dean of the College (Dean Gilman); it is stamped “Received May 24, 1963.”

THE CUSTOMS OF THE DRUIDS

- I cf. Law
- II The words of the Chant were written by Kathie Courtice, and set to music by Peter Basquin. It was regularly sung as part of the Service of Worship.
- III cf. Second Order Service of Ordination
- V Based, so far as I know, on Frangquist’s research. He spent quite a bit of time on research as writing the Chronicles turned from the frivolity obvious in the first few chapters of Early Chronicles to the serious undertaking recognizable later on.

VI:6 An all-night vigil is (was?) one of the requirements before Third Order ordination. The service was then held just after sunrise, the other Third Order priests coming out to join the ‘postulant’ and conduct him to the service.

RMS alters: ...is (was?) [is! – RMS]

VII I don’t know who wrote this chant; I would guess it’s by Frangquist

RMS: This was attributed in the Order of Worship (which was compiled by Frangquist) to David Fisher.

VIII:1-12 The Council of any particular Order elects the Patriarch of the next higher Order; he then ordains who he wishes to honor to that Order, forming its Council, which in turn elects... A nice self-perpetuating sequence, no?

The Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Orders came into being on the same day. Fisher, Frangquist, and Nelson were the entire Council of Dalon Ap Landu: we chose Fisher as Patriarch of the Fourth Order, and he ordained us to the Fourth Order. As the Council of the 4th Order, we elected me as Patriarch of the Fifth, and I ordained them. As the Council of the 5th Order, we elected Frangquist Patriarch of the Sixth Order, and he ordained us to the 6th Order (cf. L.C. IX:7-18).

It should be noted that this was prearranged to the extent that we had our services of ordination written ahead of time.

At least one more higher Patriarch has been chosen, I believe, but I don’t have any names.

RMS adds: There has been exactly one more Patriarch: Gary Zempel of the 7th Order.

VIII:13-16 This provision has been up for proposed revision by the Council of Dalon Ap Landu, but since mail ballots are required, I don’t think a quorum has ever been reached.

RMS: The revision passed: cf. Record of Council 29 March 1966 and 1 May 1971.

RMS: To some extent, the restrictions on women in the priesthood stemmed from the curfew imposed on women students by the College at this time, which made it difficult for women to vigil overnight. The institution of priestess “unto” an order was meant partly as a way of allowing women to enter the priesthood without vigiling, while reserving full priestly authority to men who had vigiled. The necessity of this was challenged by Deborah Gavrin in the fall of 1965, when one night she calmly signed out of her dormitory to “Hill of Three Oaks, Northfield, Minn.” And there held her vigil and was consecrated the following morning as a priestess of the Third Order and a priestess of the Sixth Order (in separate ceremonies) by David Frangquist. Since then, the Council has moved somewhat fitfully to grant full equality to women, until finally with the resolution of 1 May 1971 all restrictions were abolished.

IX, X, XI These are translations of genuine Old Irish poems, which were provided by Dr. John Messenger (cf. L.C. VI:13-14 and attached notes below). Notice the unusual “chain” rhyme-scheme of these chants: the last word in each line and the first of the next; this is found in many pre-Christian poems in Britain.

LATTER CHRONICLES

I:2 School started again on Sept. 23, 1963; the first service of the Fall was therefore Saturday, Sept. 28, 1963.

I:9 Jan Johnson lived in Seattle, Washington and did not return for his senior year. (He had been my roommate in ‘61-‘62)

II:2 He was wroth because he intended to go “to the Arb” with his girlfriend that night, and it was raining.

II:8 It was actually a greater distance (I gather about 300 yards) but close enough to be very startling, he said.

II:9 To the best of my knowledge, the “Druid Curse” was used three times: twice against those who tore down the altar and once as detailed here. Net total was one broken leg, one sprained ankle, and one bolt of lightning. It was decided that “the Curse” would never be used again, and that we would not teach it to anyone who did not then know it.

III:1 Two humorous incidents occurred, which somehow didn’t get into the Chronicles. At one service, the Waters of Life had more life than we really wanted—a grasshopper jumped into the cup as it sat on the altar! (It was flicked out again and most of the ‘congregation’ did not know it had happened.)

Another time, Howard Cherniack was solemnly intoning the Preceptor’s responses just before the consecration until “Has the Earth-Mother given forth of Her bounty?” “YUP”. It was weeks before we could get through a service with straight faces!

RMS: Believe it or not, this is one of traditions that did survive the Great Interim. Very occasionally, the Preceptor would give what was known as the “Cherniack Response” and we couldn’t keep straight faces

either!

- III:4 As noted above, we weren't getting "chapel credit." Dr. Messenger became our faculty advisor that fall, before the events of Chapter V.
- V:6 The customs repeated in this chapter were based on ancient customs detailed by Dr. Messenger.
- V:12 This really happened. We sat around the fire, passing a bottle or two of wine (we were in the Arb), then joined hands and sat in silence for some time. It was a girl whose name I forget who first 'spoke in tongues,' then began to repeat, over and over again, words such as those given here. It must have lasted for 4-5 minutes. She later told us that she did not remember speaking at all.
- VI:1 Dallas, Texas; 22 November 1963.
- VI:13 Dr. John Messenger, (now at Ohio State) came to Carleton that fall as professor of anthropology. At one of the first [weekly, mandatory] convocations he spoke about his research in the Aran Isles (mouth of Galway Bay) and mentioned various Druid customs still extant there under a thin veil of Christianity. Before he left the room that night, we had our faculty advisor!
- RMS: An article by Messenger on the Aran Islands appears in the November 1974 issue of Natural History.*
- RMS: Many years later, Professor David Sipfle in the Philosophy Department told me how Messenger had recounted to him the bizarre activities transpiring on the Hill of Three Oaks. Messenger concluded in disbelief: "And you know, they really seem to believe that stuff!"*
- VII:14 David Frangquist
- VIII:11 We knew the hill was there, with the rock and the three trees; we moved over there, intending to "dub" the trees as honorary oaks. When we got there, all three were found to be oaks, "and this was taken to be a sign."
- X:1-2 On the day of my graduation (June 12, 1964) the Board of Trustees abolished the religious attendance requirement.
- Interestingly enough, we had invited the College administrators to the last full service of the year (before finals week) and none attended. During Finals Week, we planned an abbreviated service. As I approached the Hill of the Three Oaks (a few minutes late) carrying the Waters in the chalice, I could see the regular group gathered around a couple resting on a blanket. My first thought was that someone was "arb-ing" and that we were going to have to dispute them for possession of the Hill. As I reached the Hill, I saw that they were Pres. and Mrs. Nason! He apologized for not having been able to attend the week before and they stayed for the service and partook of the Waters.
- I served the Waters with my fingers crossed! At a school where possession of liquor could result in a ten-day suspension, he literally could have prevented me from graduating; nothing was ever said about it. I still wonder if I was the only student (until the rule was changed a few years ago) to ever have served liquor to the college President on campus!
- X:5-23 Written by Norman Nelson (the previous summer); verse 23 sums up the entire chant, and reflects what I consider to be the basic idea of Reformed Druidism.

MEDITATIONS

- I David Frangquist's description of his Third order vigil [cf. note, CUS VI:6 above]
- I:16 Be'al: The Druid name of old; it is apparently related to the Semitic word BAAL, meaning Lord.
- All the "god names" in this book are authentic, I believe, coming from Frangquist's research or from Dr. Messenger.
- II:5-6 This is the Scriptural sanction for the sacrificing of plants rather than animals in the Reformed Druid rituals.

Letters of the apocrypha

A tiny sampling of five essays from the 120+ eccentric entries in the apocrypha of ARDA 2, which might shed light on Reformed Druidism and may help a founder of a Proto-Grove.

The Book of Faith

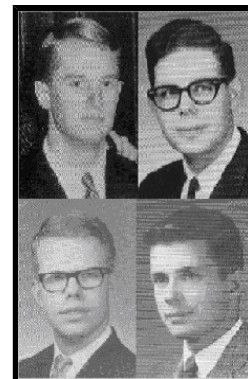
(by David Fisher, 1964)

1. I, David, Arch Druid of the Grove at Carleton, write these words so that those who come after me may know and understand some of the feelings which moved me to found the Druid movement. The tone of these writings will differ from the rest of the Books, but I write as I do for clarity, and, in accordance with Druid practice, make no request that my words become a dogma.
2. In the beginning, Druidism was formed as a protest against a religious requirement at Carleton College, not in affirmation of anything, except to affirm a mutual protest against coerced religion. The History of the Druids will be found elsewhere in the various books of this canon.¹
3. The founders varied considerably in their degree of religious commitment. Some believed in no God, others in their own uncertainty, and others in the Christian religion. I am a believer in Christianity, and still hold myself as such.
4. Attacks have shifted in time from charges of insincerity to charges of emptiness and lack of real value. I write to reaffirm a new purpose, set forth elsewhere in the canon.
5. Druidism boasts no ethos. Since Druidism has never claimed to be a religion, dogmatism has always seemed incompatible with the organization. This does not mean that, as an individual Druid, I have no ethic, nor that any others who call themselves Druid are without beliefs as to what is right and wrong. As Druids, however, we can only affirm a mutual desire to ask ourselves questions about the meaning of life, and about the degree to which religious truth can be truth for us.
6. If I were to pass on any advice to my followers, it would be to never consider that they have found, as Druids, the ultimate answer to any of their questions. Druidism is a faith, if a faith, in questioning, not in answering. Awareness, to a Druid, is an individual thing, to be shared, perhaps, but never codified.
7. It has been asked, and with good reason: what is awareness. I can only answer that for me, awareness has meant a strengthening of my own faith, through communing with myself and with the world of Nature around me. I have come to a closer vision of the greater Reality that lies beyond this world, precisely because I have come to appreciate this world.
8. It has been asked, and again with good reason: if your purpose is to ask and to inquire, then why your use of ritual? Can not men seek for answers without the crutch of a ritual which has no real religious purpose? I can only answer that the Druid ritual has a value because it can be used by different men in different ways.
9. For one man, the sacrifice of life is the offering up of himself to a god or gods. To another, it is an offering up of his mind to a search for truth. As a priest, I repeat the great Answer to

calm men's hearts and minds, not as a magical formula of absolution; but for some, the Answer is an absolution, washing away the distractions of a week of worry, and reaffirming confidence in the idea of a purpose in life.

10. For one man, the partaking of the Waters of Life is a mystical sacrament of communion with a god or gods. For another, it is an act of common fellowship with other seekers of the truth. As a priest, I do not seek to consecrate the Water to any use with my words, but rather think of my words as a common means for others, who watch and listen, to consecrate the Water within themselves.
11. Whether what has been founded at Carleton remains or passes away is now unclear. I will always have a concern for the Druids. My own feeling is that if the experience has helped any men to better see themselves, and to become aware of the problems of life in a new way, then it will have served its purpose.
12. I have called this book the Book of Faith. It is my faith in what I have done and in what I have seen grow. In accordance with a basic principle of Druidism, I do not presume to speak for anyone else except for myself. Yet I would add one word to the skeptical, to the vain, and to the self-satisfied.
13. Before you, O reader, pass a judgment on the Reformed Druids, look first into your own heart and be very sure that all is right and at peace. Then without false pride, ask those who call themselves Druids what they have learned from being Druids. Then, when you have weighed the amused against the serious, the scoffers against the men who call themselves aware, then only will you be able to judge.
14. In the name of the Earth Mother, the great personification of all that moves and walks and lives and is upon the Earth, and in the name of Be'al, the source of all truth without whom no Druid is aware, but whose nature remains to each man his own mystery, I ask upon you peace. May you, in your own way, find the truth, as I have found it.

So be it.
David Fisher
April. 12th, 1964



**Figure 6 The Founders of the RDNA:
Top (L to R) David Fisher & Howard Cherniack,
Bottom (L to R) Norman Nelson & David Frangquist.
Taken c. 1961-1962.**

Outline of the Foundation of Fundamentals

(By David Frangquist, 1966)

(Carleton and Berkeley apocryphas)

BEING: a brief catalog of the major quasi-metaphysical theological conclusions which may be abstracted from and by the application of the Reformed Druid point of view to questions of ultimate relevance (in outline form).

THE THREE PILLARS (or treasures, or paths, or baskets, or roots, or branches, or wondrous illuminations)

I. The Relentless Rebellion (threefold)

A. The categorical If

No Intellectually honest mind can long remain so termed unless it is willing to submit all things to rigorous examination, even the most sacred provinces. Blind faith is no faith; it is blindness.

B. The Principle of Non-Confirmation

Applying rigorous scrutiny to the world's religions, we find, especially in western form, universal claims to exclusiveness; yet none submits any more proof of its claim than an appeal to faith. Logically, therefore, all are equal.

C. The Principle of Non-Conformation

In the face of the insoluble problem of selecting the "one true faith" most people conform to one of two patterns:

1. The True Believer embraces the faith of his fathers wholeheartedly and unquestioningly, fearing to face the logical possibility (probability?) that he is wrong.

2. The Non-Believer rejects all faiths out of hand, fearing that he might prove himself a fool by choosing the wrong one.

Reformed Druids reject the necessity of conforming to either of these patterns based on fear. True spiritual growth exists only in the *Relentless Rebellion* against petrified norms.

II. The Paths of Paradox (also threefold)

A. The Ceremonial Syndrome

Man is incurably finite. He cannot conceive of spiritual activity except in terms of ritualistic hocus-pocus. But ritual must be carefully selected or it will independently acquire magical properties of its own. Ritual properly constitutes a springboard for the spirit only. Oak worship is ideal for this purpose (see also III).

B. The Primacy of Ambiguity

True spiritual growth consisting of personal effort and rebellion, Reformed Druidism must remain devoid of orthodoxy. All writings must be ambiguous and non-final (present dissertation included).

C. The Principle of Non-Confirmation (rears its ugly head again)

You'll get no pat answers here. There being no logical basis for the acceptance or denial of any faith, Reformed Druidism confirms nothing (including Reformed Druidism). You're welcome to, but you're on your own.

III. The Last Refuge (whadaya know?...threefold!)

A. The Noble Fivefold Formulation

1. The Nature of Life

Life is defined as the unity of the spiritual (Be'al) and the material (the Earth-Mother). Without the material the spiritual has no form; without the spiritual the material is dead.

2. And Man?

Man, as a living animal, ideally consists of both material and spiritual.

3. And Man?

Man is unique. This is because he has self-awareness. He passes from self-awareness through self-centeredness to self-importance, thence to self-isolation, resulting in self-misery.

4. Unity for All and All for Unity

Man's self-importance cuts him off from the life-giving benefits of unity with the spirit and Nature (the material). Druids sometimes call unity *Awareness*. It is the object of religion to restore unity; most concentrate on the direct attainment of spiritual unity, ignoring (or rejecting) the material.

5. Back to Nature

Druids (at least some of them) believe that a good approach is to first restore material unity. Having broken down part of the barrier around the self, the rest should then be easier. Hence, Druid Nature worship: the ideality of going to worship oaks.

B. The Basic Tenets

The Basic Tenets of Reformed Druidism, which form the basis (believe it or not) for the preceding discussion, are found in the Constitution of the Reformed Druids, and in another form in the Book of the Law in *The Druid Chronicles (Reformed)*. They are the quintessences of Druidism, such that a person need accept nothing else and still become a Reformed Druid. They are here presented in their most concentrated form:

1. Nature is good!

And the second is like unto the first:

2. Nature is good!

C. The Last Refuge

It is simple to grind out these systems. It is the expected thing to do. Perhaps it is useful. It is meaningless!

It is simple to sit on the Hill of the Three Oaks and look at the pretty blue sky. That, too, can be meaningless!

It is not so simple to stand alone under the pretty blue sky and watch all your preconceived systems come tumbling down.

But when they come tumbling down, there is a refuge: in Nature. There one may find a clearing of the head, a freedom from stagnant forms, a beginning. (The End)

David Frangquist

6/6/66

The Discourse of Thomas the Fool

(By Thomas McCausland, 1970)

I Invocation

O Grannos, hallow this thy essence by thy renewing power and by thy way of many-yet-one paths. Cleanse us. Purify us. Remind us that this thy essence is also ours and that as thou art many-yet-one, so too are we. Show us thy All-penetrating wisdom, and prepare us to receive thee as fully as thou hast received us.

II Text

I am the wind which breathes upon the sea,
I am the wave of the ocean,
I am the murmur of the willows,
I am the ox of the seven combats,
I am the vulture upon the rocks,
I am a beam of the sun,
I am the fairest of plants,
I am a wild boar in valor,
I am a salmon in the water,
I am a lake in the plain,
I am a word of knowledge,
I am the point of the lance of battle,
I am the God who created in the head the fire:

Who is it who throws light into the meeting on the mountain?
Who announces the ages of the moon?
Who teaches the place where couches the sun?

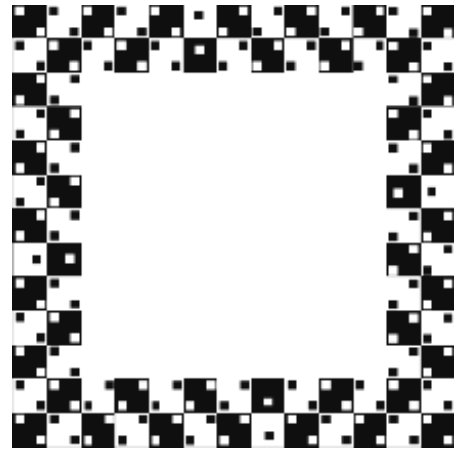
If not I-

III Discourse

1. Often it is that the Arch Druids do read this ancient mystery. It is indeed one of the greatest treasures we know for it came verily from the ancient Sage-Druids who pleased the earth in younger times. But who among you have verily heard this ancient mystery?
2. Oft it seems that these lines refer to the All-Mother, for she is truly all of these and more. But what is the mystery there? Not mystery but shining fact. No, the mystery is not the Mother. Nor is it Be'al. For this mystery is even more secret than He, though He knows and speaks it.
3. Verily, *I* am that mystery. Not the Mother, not Be'al, but I. How is it that I came to be all these things? I am the God who created in the head the fire! It is there. Look and understand! Who else could it be, if not I?
4. Now there may be some among you who would agree and would say that this was so, for ultimately Be'al and I are one. How deceived they are! While I am, Be'al is not, and there is no touching of these two. No, not oneness. For Be'al is not to have oneness with. Be'al is not! Understand this. It is only delusion which lends you to believe in Him and the Mother. Verily, a poor hoax it is!
5. Now listen carefully so you can understand. Be'al is not, for he is invented by man. He was invented to give man the freedom to relax in Man's creation. If Be'al is great, how much greater is man, the creator of Be'al. Nothing more than the Highest spirit of man is Be'al. And though that seems

most wondrous, it is but a poor hoax. Be'al is not great for He needs Existence and Non-Existence. He is All and Nothing. Can One be great and still be so dependent upon such limited realms? No. Be'al, though He is more than you or I can comprehend, is very powerless.

6. He who created the Universe cares not for All and Nothing. They are nothing to Him. He is so beyond that even all the Words of Knowledge said at one time would change Him not a drop. Be'al is merely the half-drop that almost changed.
7. Great it is to be one with Be'al, but to be one with Him is not great at all. *If not I*. Is the water great because it flows and trickles and dances, in other words, because it is water? No, water is not great: it is merely water. He is not great. I am not great. He and I are one. But hear the greatest mystery.
8. He is all of me, but I am not all of Him. And yet, by being merely a drop of Him, I am all of Him. Understand this!
9. Now you understand the Words of Power. Be the lake in the plain; be the ox and the boar; throw light upon the mountain. *If not I*.



The Wisdom of Thomas the Fool

(By Thomas McCausland, 1970)

Chapter the First

1. Listen, my brethren, and I will tell you the great secret of Druidism. This I tell in order to assure the pure transmission of Druidism for all time. Many of you are there who have the spirit of the Mother burning brightly inside of you and yet, lacking a priest, must let this fire die. Hear and understand. Here is the great Wisdom known to all the Druids of old. Here is the one wisdom you must grasp if you would stay in the bosom of the Mother forever!

Chapter the Second

1. The great secret of Druidism is this: All the powers of the Mother are yours if you but learn your True Name. Even if you are but of the First Order, no secret shall be hidden once you learn this great secret.
2. The way is hard. The Three Ways of Day and One of Night must be traveled. The Wisdom of the Waters of Life must be heard.
3. What are the Three Ways of Day? The Way of the rising sun; the Way of the setting sun; the Way of the sun at Zenith.
4. What is the wisdom of the Waters of Life? The Wisdom of ice; the Wisdom of steam; the Wisdom of water.
5. Yet it is not in the Three Ways of Day that your True Name dwells; nor in the Wisdom of the Waters of Life. Neither is your Name of the Mother or of Be'al. It is of them both and of them not at all. Your True Name is in the Way of Darkness. Yet it is not of darkness nor was it of darkness born nor shall it die of darkness. Though Be'al is born of darkness and dies in darkness, your True Name knows darkness not at all.
6. Your True Name will be heard upon the bosom of the Mother; yet She hears it not, for it is not Her Name. Your Name, when it is truly heard, will rock Be'al from his slumber and cause rain to fall in the center of a stone.
7. To hear your Name, hear the Mother. To hear your Name, hear Her not. To hear your Name, hear the Mother!
8. This is the most powerful secret of Be'al! It is the most powerful secret in all of the Realm of the Four Ways and the Seven Powers and the Thirteenfold Mystery.
9. It is the Word which makes of all ends a beginning.
10. Only this is necessary. Know your True Name! All else is but the dreams of sand.

Chapter the Third

1. But how do we know that True Names exist? Listen and understand!
2. When we consecrate the waters, we do not say, "O great and glorious Grove, thou of power deep rooted in the Mother; thou of power deep rooted in the Mother; thou of power sky rending; thou of power to block the sun and rain; consecrate these waters." Nor do we say, "O Healing waters, consecrate this thyself by thy powers of All-pervading Wisdom." nor yet, "O power of the most secret essence of the vine, hallow

this." nor even, "Mighty swirling Ocean, pounding the Mother, as mighty and as vast as even She is, hallow this drop of thee." We do not say, "O great light which rends the sky in storm, hallow this as thou dost hallow the rain by the great leveling fire." nor, "O greatest of the powers we see, Mighty Sun, hallow this which thou didst bring into being!" Nor do we say, "O gentle stream, by thy joyous power hallow this thy essence." nor even, "O great mysterious Life, hallow this, the essence of all life."⁴

3. Verily, all this is great Wisdom. And yet I tell you that this Wisdom consecrates not even the water of man's dreams.
4. If one but says "Dalon Ap Landu" with the knowledge of the power of it, truly the whole Universe will be forever consecrated!
5. Understand the Thirteen-fold Mystery⁵ and then understand how much more powerful is the knowledge of your True Name than the knowledge of the Names of the Mother. Your Name will consecrate even Be'al!
6. Brethren, hear your Name! Listen every moment, for the wind and the waters and all that dwell upon the Mother speak all the Names that are. Only by continual vigilance will ye hear your Name when it is spoken.
7. Be'al knows your Name. The Mother knows your Name. The Patriarchs know your Name. And ye, with every breath speak your Name. Listen and understand. Your every breath speaks your Name. Great is this secret. I pay for the carrying of it with my very life. Hear and understand. Listen always, for the Mother will speak your Name a moment before it is expected. Only by constant vigilance will ye be prepared.

Chapter the Fourth

1. I pray that the Mother will act kindly towards one such as I, who must tell these lies to those who would truly seek her. The Wise will hear me not. The Dull will hear me not. Only those who vigil will hear me, and maybe even they will not hear. For the sake of purity I tell these lies. May the Mother forgive such a fool as I who would have men chasing the bile of trees.

This is my folly.

Thomas the Fool

August 25th, 1970

Peace to those who dwell in the Mother!



The Arch Epistle

(By Mike of D.C. Grove, 2004)

Chapter the First

1. Dear Brother Ian,
2. Thank you for your welcome e-mail on Friday the 13th, alleviating an otherwise thankfully uneventful day.....
8. Now that I'm done with my letters, I will continue with your letter.

Chapter the Second

1. I noted the question at the end of your missive, "How can I be a good Arch Druid?" I thought you already knew.
2. But, I feel like the Japanese monk who exhorted his disciple, "Strike me hard like a bell, that I may peal even louder in my reply."
3. You will indeed have more of a challenge organizing humans, as opposed to your ministrations to penguins and monkeys in your last few Grove attempts.
4. I caution you to be careful as the former are less forgiving and far more unruly, for they resemble cats when herded.
5. I feel a word to the wise on the matter of Arch Druids is enough, but in your case, a single letter should suffice.
6. As you mentioned, locked into every word of our language are associations and roots which give a hint as to what a word means and what we should do.
7. The word Arch Druid (or its alternative Arch Druid), doesn't appear in the dictionary, so I will instead concentrate on "arch."
8. As I attempt to define "arch", I must paraphrase Brother Irony that "Like a moth before a flame, the Druid is doggedly drawn towards their doom in definitions."
9. I also hesitated to write this as every bit of advice I will give here is often a painful reminder of a lesson learned by failure or missed opportunity.
10. Hopefully, you will avoid my mistakes and surpass my successes and find the path to greatness more well-lit and cleared of obstacles that trip or slow you.
11. Yet, so I must try to define the indefinable.

Chapter the Third

1. Literally, the prefix "arch" in Arch Druid is derived from Latin "archus" or Greek "Arkhi," meaning "chief, highest or most important." And much is hidden in that meaning.
2. In the Roman Church, there are Archdeacons, Archpriests, Archbishops who are the head of the deacons, priests or bishops in their domain. In this way, you are the chief of the Druids in your Grove.
3. You are high, in that you are raised by the election to hold much responsibility. No matter how high you go, do not forget those who support you.

4. You are most important, in that without an Arch Druid, the Grove cannot function well as we know it. However, beware of pride, for although the role is often necessary, you are not irreplaceable; and it were far better for a Grove to have no Arch Druid than a bad Arch Druid.

Chapter the Fourth

1. The most obvious origin of the arch is a bow, the tool from which the archer derives his occupation [L. Arcus], and you are indeed a tool of the Grove.
2. The bow directs immense power to the task of flinging objects; whose speed, distance and trajectory are uniquely determined by many combined factors: the degree to which the bow is flexed, the direction & strength of the winds, the skill of the archer, the angle fired, the whims of Gods, the laws of Physics, and most importantly; the strength, shape and material of the bow and arrows.
3. Take these elements into consideration when assisting fledgling [fletching?] Druids on their way, and do not quiver before the task, and so be of good aim and choose your targets well.

Chapter the Fifth

1. Some history about buildings and its relation to Druidism.
2. The ancient Greeks, although they used bows, did not significantly use the arch in their largest buildings, which relied on columns to support the dead weight of roofs vertically.
3. As a result, the space between columns had to be kept short, resulting in large building being filled with a forests of columns, choking out the interior space; but the columns could be shifted a little without endangering the building, which is important in an earth-quake zone.
4. The ancient Romans lacked the immense marble slabs of the Greeks, and used smaller materials like bricks and molded-concrete, so they adopted the arch and oval as their standard.
5. Roman architecture abounds with arches, bridges spanning unthinkable rivers, and domes providing more spacious and taller buildings at lower cost with less materials and difficulty.
6. But the graceful arch has many weaknesses in addition to its strengths; for if one stone in the arch should be removed the whole structure will collapse, and an arch requires a solid, immovable foundation, pulling the bases of support towards each other.
7. Using this analogy, an Arch Druid's authority rests on two foundations; first their wisdom and Awareness of Nature, and secondly the trust and goals of the membership which elected them. Without that, there is rubble and grumble.
8. But remember, of course, that we Druids are an outdoor people, for even the grandeur of the cathedral pales before the majestic canopy of an oak forest.
9. Indeed, our churches are without walls, roofs or boundaries, ever present in the world around and within us.

Chapter the Sixth

1. Arch also implies an attitude that is “mischievous or roguish,” as in an “arch glance.”
2. For though an Arch Druidry is a serious undertaking, it need not be a dull or stuffy one.
3. Since our beginning, the RDNA has been a thorn in the side of many pretentious civil and secular authorities; and the Arch Druid has often been the wry mouthpiece of the Grove.
4. Verily, in those ventures, we are a bit like foxy outlaws, bound together by circumstances and camaraderie, on the fringes of the respectable mainstream of religions; without the laws or the easily recognizable traits that most large traditions have embraced. Mobile, clever and stinging in our forays of Guerrilla Druidism.
5. Without our humor, impishness and joviality we would become dour and disapproving.
6. Without our rebellious nature, we would congeal into an ossified religion of superstitions and dogma.
7. It is a delicate balance, like riding a tiger, too much disorder and the group loses its focus or becomes frenetic; too much order and it is unable to adapt or adopt new practices or goals.
8. It is your job to steer the Grove towards its goals in this manner.

Chapter the Eighth

1. The term arch is also used to mean “principal or strongest,” as in archfoe, archenemy, archfiend, archangel, archrival, archconservative or archliberal.
2. This term implies a bit of extremism that discomforts me, for Druidism is about the moderate third way between the unlivable environment of the extremes.
3. Like it not, you are the role model for new Druids, and your virtues and vices will be noted and scrutinized; so act and speak with care in times of trouble and historic moments.

Chapter the Ninth

1. Finally, there is the term archetype, archive and archaic which have implications for Druidism, derived from Greek “Arkhi,” meaning “beginning” or “primordial.”
2. The Arch Druid is often the first Druid in an area, and the one who bears the seeds of wisdom, Awareness and traditions for founding a Grove, always in a unique blend.
3. Choose carefully, for the Grove will undoubtedly in the beginning mistakenly believe that all Druidism is in your mold; but you should always make them aware of alternatives, for one day they may have to steer a new course in uncharted waters without your assistance.
4. The Arch Druid must archive the actions and words of her Grove, either on paper or in her heart, so that they can be brought up again for review and amendment. To know a Grove’s future, you must know and understand its past.
5. The Arch Druid must also avoid the deadening hand of archaic tradition, for if the origin of customs becomes too difficult to recognize or justify, then they must be dropped to better utilize the time and effort of the Grove’s members.
6. Thus, by carefully selecting, creating, collecting and

explaining the terms and practices of Druidry to incoming members, instead of relying on blind faith, you will soon realize how many and which customs and traditions can be best borne and applied by the Grove.

Chapter the Ninth

1. And so Brother Ian, these are my rambling thoughts on running a Grove as an Arch Druid.
2. I may have more advice on the topic later, but this should be enough to get started.
3. You need not do it all, for you will often rely on the other Druids in your Grove, nor need you be the only Arch Druid.
4. I hopefully can live up to my own advice, which I’m far better at giving than following.
5. Finally, I must add that it is in service to others that we best serve ourselves, for that is why we are called to Arch Druidry, and we will often have to choose the more difficult course if we are to succeed.
6. I wish you the best of luck in your endeavors.
7. Write more often, even if things go well.

Yours in the Mother,
Mike the Fool
Day 20 of Foghamhar, Year XLII of the Reform
August 20th, 2004 c.e.



Section Six:

Selections from the Green Books

During services, Reformed Druids often introduce a few readings they've come across in recent weeks that are thought provoking and have a simple message. They then meditate for a few moments on what they think about it.

I'm a lover of parables and stories. Here's a tiny selection of some ten such past collections of offered materials, that we call, "the Green Books". I feel every Druid should discover new sources for themselves and build their own set over time and share with their friends.

The Original 1966 Introduction of Green Book #1

Those who join the Reformed Druids are, in one sense or another, religious rebels. They are usually fed up with the hypocrisies and inadequacies of the institutionalized churches. They seek a satyric outlet, and they find it in Druidism. But they are seldom anti-religious. On the contrary, they often feel that there is in fact some truth to be found in religion, and this belief is affirmed in the Basic Tenets. A common complaint among Druids is that the truth has been obscured because they have been forced, more or less against their will, into various particular religious molds. They seek to be freed in order to freely seek, and to make independent judgments on what passes for religious truth.

Druidism, as an institution, must remain independent. It can never hope to profess absolute truth; for when it does, it then will become no better than the fossilized institutions from which its members have fled. But even while it systematically shuns dogmatism, it can, and must still lead. It must provide the opportunity for discovery, which many of its members have never had. It must, in short, provide in its written meditations a taste of the writings of the world's great religions, in the hope that this taste will stimulate a wider search for knowledge and wisdom in the quest for religious truth.

As Arch-Druid, you are charged with preparing meditations, which will prove meaningful to the congregation. In order to do this, you must choose selections from the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Taoists, the Muslims, and many others, as well as from the Bible. You must provide a wide variety in order to give truth a chance. The best method is to study widely yourself. But this can be too time-consuming. I therefore strongly urge you to purchase, for your own edification, an excellent and useful collection: Viking Portable #5, Henry Ballou's World Bible. It is available in paper for less than \$2.00, or in hardcover for slightly more. The selections are short and illuminating, and the editor exhibits a bias, which can almost be called Druidic. It makes a good beginning.

For those Arch-Druids who are lazier still, or who suddenly find themselves in desperate need of a meditation at the last minute, I offer the following collection. It is hoped that the collection, although short, is representative and especially useful for Reformed Druids.

-David Frangquist 1966

Midwinter

When the wind blows cold
on the Hill of Three Oaks
the hearth fire is warm.

-Richard Smiley, 1964

The Drynemetum Press



Green Book One Excerpts:

Sayings of the Hindus:

(From the works of Sri Ramakrishna)

People partition off their lands by means of boundaries, but no one can partition off the all-embracing sky overhead. The indivisible sky surrounds all and includes all. So common man in ignorance says, "My religion is the only one, my religion is the best." But when his heart is illumined by true knowledge, he knows that above all these wars of sects and sectarians presides the one indivisible, eternal, all-knowing bliss.

As a mother, in nursing her sick children, gives rice and curry to one, and sago arrowroot to another, and bread and butter to a third, so the Lord has laid out different paths for different men suitable to their natures.

Dispute not. As you rest firmly on your own faith and opinion, allow others also the equal liberty to stand by their own faiths and opinions. By mere disputation you will never succeed in convincing another of his error. When the grace of God descends on him, each one will understand his own mistakes.

So long as the bee is outside the petals of the lily, and has not tasted the sweetness of its honey, it hovers round the flower emitting its buzzing sound; but when it is inside the flower, it noiselessly drink its nectar. So long as a man quarrels and disputes about doctrines and dogmas, he has not tasted the nectar of true faith; when he has tasted it, he becomes quiet and full of peace.

A man after fourteen year's penance in a solitary forest obtained at last the power of walking on water. Overjoyed at this, he went to his Guru and said, "Master, master, I have acquired the power of walking on water." The master rebukingly replied, "Fie, O child! Is this the result of thy fourteen years' labours? Verily thou has obtained only that which is worth a penny; for what thou hast accomplished after fourteen years' arduous labour ordinary men do by paying a penny to the boatman."

Selections from:

Robert O. Ballou. *World Bible*. New York, The Viking Press, 1944. p. 83, 88.

Sayings of the Zen Masters:

(Trading Dialogue for Lodging)

Providing he make and wins an argument about Buddhism with those who live there, any wandering monk can remain in a Zen temple. If he is defeated, he has to move on.

In a temple in the northern part of Japan two brother monks were dwelling together. The elder one was learned, but the younger one was stupid and had but one eye.

A wandering monk came and asked for lodging, properly challenging them to a debate about the sublime teaching. The elder brother, tired that day from much studying, told the younger one to take his place. "Go and request the dialogue in silence," he cautioned.

So the young monk and the stranger went to the shrine and sat down.

Shortly afterward the traveler rose and went in to the elder

brother and said: "Your young brother is a wonderful fellow. He defeated me."

"Relate the dialogue to me," said the elder one.

"Well," explained the traveler, "first I held up one finger, representing Buddha, the enlightened one. So he held up two fingers, signifying Buddha and his teaching. I held up three fingers, representing Buddha, his teaching, and his followers, living the harmonious life. Then he shook his clenched fist in my face, indicating that all three come from one realization. Thus he won and so I have no right to remain here." With this, the traveler left.

"Where is that fellow?" asked the younger one, running in to his elder brother.

"I understand you won the debate."

"Won nothing. I'm going to beat him up."

"Tell me the subject of the debate," asked the elder one.

"Why, the minute he saw me he held up one finger, insulting me by insinuating that I have only one eye. Since he was a stranger I thought I would be polite to him, so I held up two fingers, congratulating him that he has two eyes. Then the impolite wretch held up three fingers, suggesting that between us we have only three eyes. So I got mad and started to punch him, but he ran out and that ended it!"

Selections from:

Paul Reps, ed. *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*. Garden City, Doubleday Anchor (A233), 1961. pp. 92, 28.

(I Corinthians 13)

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love.

Sayings of the Psychologists:

Cathedrals & Robes

In the traditional psychologies, one group may find that a certain technique works well in a given situation. Its members may tend to apply it in situations where it is inappropriate, or with people for whom it is inappropriate. Because the technique works for them, they come to believe that it ought to work for everyone at all times. The technique becomes the end, and may become an obsession. Those who are involved in using such a technique, be it a particular meditation technique or a certain breathing exercise, can become fixated and restricted to what the technique has to offer. The adherents may set up schools to teach the "sacred" ritual, forgetting that any technique has its relevance only for a certain community at a certain time. Just as can happen with any scientific technique which is overextended or which persists for too long, the original application and intent of the esoteric technique may become lost, although the surface appearance of the enterprise is well-maintained. Religions construct cathedrals and design robes, just as scientist develop elaborate equipment and professional journals, but all too often the enterprise may become limited to a propagation of the means, with the original end, the desired objective, forgotten.

Selection from:

Robert E. Ornstein. *The Psychology of Consciousness*. New York, The Viking Press, 1972. pp. 97-98.

Green Book Two Excerpts

King Cormac's Advice on Leadership

Be not too wise, not too foolish,
be not too conceited, nor too diffident,
be not too haughty, nor too humble,
be not too talkative, nor too silent
be not too hard, nor too feeble.

for:

If you be too wise, one will expect too much of you;
if you be too foolish, you will be deceived;
if you be too conceited, you will be thought vexatious;
if you be too humble, you will be without honor;
if you be too talkative, you will not be heeded;
if you be too silent, you will not be regarded;
if you be too hard, you will be broken;
if you be too feeble, you will be crushed.

"It is through these habits," adds Cormac,
"That the young become old and kingly warriors."

Native Americans: Silent Vigils

In my opinion, it was chiefly owing to their deep contemplation in their silent retreats in the days of youth that the old Indian orators acquired the habit of carefully arranging their thoughts.

They listened to the warbling of birds and noted the grandeur and the beauties of the forest. The majestic clouds, which appear like mountains of granite floating in the air, the golden tints of a summer evening sky, and all the changes of nature, possessed a mysterious significance.

All this combined to furnish ample matter for reflection to the contemplating youth.

-Francis Assikinack (Blackbird) Ottawa

African Proverbs: On Leadership

People count what they are refused, not what they are given.

The ears of the leader are like a strainer; there are more than a thousand openings to them.

Power must be handled in the manner of holding an egg in the hand: if you hold it too firmly it breaks; if you hold it too loosely it drops.

The hen knows when it is dawn but she leaves the crowing to the cock.

Aesop's Proverbs: Frogs and a King

The Frogs were living as happy as could be in a marshy swamp that just suited them; they went splashing about caring for nobody and nobody troubling with them. But some of them thought that this was not right, that they should have a king and a proper constitution, so they determined to send up a petition to Jove to give them what they wanted. "Mighty Jove," they cried, "send unto us a king that will rule over us and keep us in order." Jove laughed at their croaking, and threw down into the swamp a huge Log, which came down -kerplash!- into the swamp.

The Frogs were frightened out of their lives by the commotion made in their midst, and all rushed to the bank to look at the horrible monster; but after a time, seeing that it did not move, one or two of the boldest of them ventured out towards the Log, and even dared to touch it; still it did no move. Then the greatest hero of the Frogs jumped upon the Log and commenced dancing up and down upon it, thereupon all the Frogs came and did the same; and for some time the Frogs went about their business every day without taking the slightest notice of their new King Log lying in their midst. But this did not suit them, so they sent another petition to Jove, and said to him: "We want a real king; one that will really rule over us." Now this made Jove angry, so he sent among them a big Stork that soon set to work gobbling them all up. Then the Frogs repented when too late.

Better no rule than cruel rule.

Green Book Three Excerpts

Thoughts from Confucius

The Master said, "Yu, have you heard about the six qualities and the six attendant faults?" "No." "Be seated and I shall tell you. To love benevolence without loving learning is liable to lead to foolishness. To love cleverness without loving learning is liable to lead to deviation from the right path. To love trustworthiness in word without loving learning is liable to lead to harmful behaviour. To love forthrightness without loving learning is liable to lead to intolerance. To love courage without loving learning is liable to lead to insubordination. To love unbending strength without loving learning is liable to lead to indiscipline." (XVII:8)

The Master said, "What the gentleman seeks, he seeks within himself; what the small man seeks, he seeks in others." (XV:21)

Japanese Haiku Translated

Walk on deliberately
And you'll surely see the world
Beyond the thousand miles,
Even if you walk
As slow as a cow. 114.

Everyone admires
Beautiful flowers in bloom,
But the ones who know
Visit them
After they've fallen. 284

What shall I leave as
A keepsake after I die?
In spring, flowers;
Summer, cuckoos;
Fall, red maple leaves;
Winter, snow. 169.

The Cork, The Tao of Pooh pg. 88

The Wu Wei principle underlying Tai Chi Ch'uan can be understood by striking at a piece of cork floating in water. The harder you hit it, the more it yields; the more it yields, the harder it bounces back. Without expending energy, the cork can easily wear you out. So, Wu Wei overcomes force by neutralizing its power, rather than by adding to the conflict. With other approaches, you may fight fire with fire, but with Wu Wei you fight fire with water.

Chinese Thoughts: The Sacred Tortoise

Once, when Chuang Tzu was fishing in the P'u River, the kind of Ch'u sent two officials to go and announce to him: "I would like to trouble you with the administration of my realm."

Chuang Tzu held on to the fishing pole and, without turning his head, said, "I have heard that there is a sacred tortoise in Ch'u that has been dead for three thousand years. The king keeps it wrapped in cloth and boxed, and stores it in the ancestral temple. Now would you this tortoise rather be dead and have its bone left behind and honored? Or would it rather be alive and dragging its tail in the mud?"

It would rather be alive and dragging its tail in the mud," said the two officials.

Chuang Tzu said, "Go away! I'll drag my tail in the mud!"

The Island with Two Churches

Collected by Sam Adams, o.d.a.l., gr., be.

A Welshman was shipwrecked upon a deserted island for twenty years before a rescue party finally discovered him. The Welshman was delighted at his rescue, but wished to show his rescuers all the work that he had done. He had missed civilization greatly, so he had cut down several trees in order to build a village. There was a bank, a theatre, a pub, a hotel, a jail and two churches. When the rescuers saw the two churches they asked him why he had built two churches.

He smugly replied, "You see the one on the left? That's the one I don't go to!"

Sufi Thoughts: The Mirror

A Fool was walking down a road when he saw a valuable silver mirror lying in the road. He picked up the mirror and saw his reflection. Immediately he placed the mirror back on the road and apologized, "I'm sorry, I didn't know that the mirror belonged to you!"

Sufi Thoughts: Is It Me?

Nasrudin went into a bank with a cheque to cash.
"Can you identify yourself?" asked the clerk.
Nasrudin took out a mirror and peered into it.
"Yes, that's me all right," he said.

Sufi Thoughts: Not a Good pupil

One day Mulla Nasrudin found a tortoise. He tied it to his belt and continued his work in the fields. The tortoise started to struggle. The Mulla held it up and asked:

"What's the matter, don't you want to learn how to plough?"

Sufi Thoughts: Looking for Keys

Someone saw Nasrudin searching for something on the sidewalk.

"What have you lost, Mulla?" he asked. "My key," said the Mulla. So they both went down on their knees and looked for it.

After a time the other man asked: "Where exactly did you drop it?"

"In my house."

"Then why are you looking here?"

"There is more light out here than inside my own house."

Ethnic Quotations: On Leadership

Even a fool can govern if nothing happens. -German

If you want to know a man, give him authority. -Montenegrin

The tyrant is only a slave turned inside out. - Egyptian

The five fingers are not equal. -Turkish

To alter and to make better are two different things; much has been altered but little has been made better in the world. -German

The ditch is the master of the field. -Finnish

Honors change manners. -Latin

Shadows follow those who walk in the sun. -German

Do not blame what you permit. -Latin

Heroism consists in hanging on one minute longer. -Norwegian

Never part from the Chief's path, no matter how short or beautiful the byway may be. -Seneca

A good chief gives, he does not take. -Mohawk

Before you choose a counselor, watch him with his neighbor's children. -Sioux

He who would do great things should not attempt them all alone. -Seneca

You already possess everything necessary to become great. -Crow

Green Book Four Excerpts

Earth Teach me to Remember

(Ute tribe, North America)

Earth teach me stillness
as the grasses are stilled at morning light.

Earth teach me suffering
as old stones suffer with memory.

Earth teach me humility
as blossoms are humble with beginning.

Earth teach me caring
as the mother who secures her young.

Earth teach me courage
as the tree which stands all alone.

Earth teach me limitation
as the ant which crawls on the ground.

Earth teach me freedom
as the eagle which soars in the sky.

Earth teach me resignation
as the leaves which die in the fall.

Earth teach me regeneration
as the seed which rises in the spring.

Earth teach me to forget myself
as melted snow forgets its life.

Earth teach me to remember kindness
as dry fields weep with rain.

Native American Quotes on Leadership

I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy-myself. -Unknown

Who serves his fellows is greatest of all. -Dakota.

Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Walk beside me that we may be as one. -Ute

The greatest strength is gentleness. -Iroquois

Show respect for all men, but Grovel to none. -Shawnee

Do not only point out the way, but lead the way. -Sioux

In twenty-four hours, a louse can become a patriarch. -Seneca

Everyone who is successful must have dreamed of something. -Maricopa

The one who tells the stories rules the world. -Hopi

Force, no matter how concealed, begets resistance. -Lakota

When you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, strike first. -Navaho

More Aesop: Springtime & Wintertime

Winter scoffed tauntingly at Spring. 'When you appear,' he said, 'no one stays still a moment longer. Some are off to meadows or woods: they must needs be picking lilies and other flowers, twiddling rose round their fingers to examine them, or sticking them in their hair. Other go on board ship and cross the wide ocean, maybe, to visit men of other lands; and not a man troubles himself anymore about gales or downpours of rain. Now I am like a rule or dictator. I bid men look not up to the sky but down to the earth with fear and trembling, and sometime they have to resign themselves to staying indoors all day.' 'Yes,' replied Spring, 'and therefore men would gladly be rid of you. But with me it is different. they think my name very lovely - yes, by Zeus, the loveliest name of all names. When I am absent they cherish my memory, and when I reappear they are full of rejoicing.'

Women's Quotes: On Leadership

None who have always been free can understand the terrible fascinating power of the hope of freedom to those who are not free. -Pearl S. Buck

The real menace in dealing with a five-year old is that in no time at all you begin to sound like a five-year old. -Jean Kerr

The feeble tremble before opinion, the foolish defy it, the wise judge it, the skillful direct it. -Jeanne de la Platiere

There is no king who has not a slave among his ancestors, and no slave who has not had a king among his. -Helen Keller

If I had to name one quality as the genius of patriarchy, it would be compartmentalization, the capacity for institutionalizing disconnection. Intellect severed from emotion. Thought separated from action. Science split from art. The earth itself divided; national borders. Human beings categorized: by sex, age, race, ethnicity, sexual preference, height, weight, class, religion, physical ability, ad nauseam. The person isolated from the political. Sex divorced from love. The material ruptured from the spiritual. Law detached from justice. Vision disassociated from reality. -Robin Morgan

There is nothing in the universe that I fear, but that I shall not know all my duty, or shall fail to do it. -Mary Lyon

The first duty of a human being is to assume the right relationship to society, more briefly, to find your real job, and do it. -Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Don't identify too strongly with your work. Stay fluid behind those black and white words. They are not you. They were a great moment going through you. A moment you were awake enough to write down and capture. -Natalie Goldberg

Failing to plan is a plan to fail. -Effie Jones

I fell strongly that I have a responsibility to all the sources that I

am: to all past and future ancestors, to my home country, to all places that I touch down on, and that are myself, to all voices, all women, all of my tribe, all people, all earth, and beyond that to all beginnings and endings. -Joy Harjo

Way of Sufi Muslims: The Three Candidates

Three men made their way to the circle of a Sufi, seeking admission to his teachings.

One of them almost at once detached himself, angered by the erratic behavior of the master.

The second was told by another disciple (on the master's instructions) that the sage was a fraud. He withdrew very soon afterward.

The Third was allowed to talk, but was offered no teaching for so long that he lost interest and left the circle.

When they had all gone away, the teacher instructed his circle thus:

"The first man was an illustration of the principle: "Do not judge fundamental things by sight." The second was an illustration of the injunction: "Do not judge things of deep importance by hearing." The third was an example of the dictum: "Never judge by speech, or the lack of it."

Asked by a disciple why the applicants could not have been instructed in this matter, the sage retorted: 'I am here to give higher knowledge; not to teach what people pretend that they already know at their mothers' knees.'

Way of Sufi: Cherished Notions

Sadik Hamzawi was asked:

'How do you come to succeed, by his own wish, the sage of Samarkand, when you were only a servant in his house?'

He said: 'He taught me what he wanted to teach me, and I learned it. He said once: "I cannot teach the others, the disciples, to the same degree, because they want to ask the questions, they demand the meetings, they impose the framework, they therefore only teach themselves what they already know."

'I said to him: "Teach me what you can and tell me how to learn." This is how I became his successor. People have cherished notions about how teaching and learning should take place. They cannot have the notions and also the learning.'

Way of Sufi: Eat No Stones

A hunter, walking through some woods, came upon a notice. He read the words: "Stone Eating is Forbidden."

His curiosity was stimulated, and he followed a track which led past the sign until he came to a cave at the entrance to which a Sufi was sitting.

The Sufi said to him: 'The answer to your question is that you have never seen a notice prohibiting the eating of stones because there is no need for one. Not to eat stones may be called a common habit. Only when the human being is able similarly to avoid other habits, even more destructive than eating stones, will he be able to get beyond his present pitiful state.'

Koranic Advice to the Vigiler

O you wrapped up in your raiment!

Keep vigil the night long, save a little-
A half thereof, or abate a little thereof
Or add thereto and chant the Qur'an in measure,
For We shall charge you with a word of weight.
Lo! The vigil of the night is when impression is more keen and
speech more certain.
Lo! You have by day a chain of business.
So remember the name of your Lord and devote yourself with
complete devotion.
-Qur'an 73.1-8

Two Jewish Stories

A group of rabbis were gathered at a celebration. They began to discuss their well-known rabbinical ancestors. Rabbi Yechiel had to say, "I'm the first eminent ancestor in my family." The collected rabbis were very surprised to hear this comment.

The conversation naturally turned to the Torah. Each rabbi began to explain a text by using the teachings and sayings of one of his rabbinical ancestors. Finally it was time for Rabbi Yechiel to speak. He got up and said, "My father was a simple baker. His teaching was that only fresh bread tastes good, and so I should avoid stale bread. This is also true of learning."

-Yechiel of Ostrowce 1851-1928, Rabbi & Scholar

King David went to the court jeweler. He told the jeweler to make him a ring and to inscribe on it some statement that would temper excessive delight in an hour of triumph, but also lift him from despair in an hour of loss. The jeweler thought long and hard about what kind of statement should be inscribed. But he was perplexed; he could not find suitable words.

Solomon finally offered a suggestion: "Inscribe on the ring the words Gam Zeh Ya-avor - This, too, shall pass."

-David reigned 1010-970 B.C.E., Second king of Israel

Jewish Thoughts: On One Foot

A stranger came to the house of Shammai. Shammai greeted the stranger and asked what he wanted. The stranger said that he wanted to learn the whole of the Torah while he stood on one foot. Shammai immediately saw that the stranger wished to make fun of him. He became angry and told the stranger to go away.

The stranger then went to the house of Hillel. Hillel greeted him and asked what he wanted. The stranger repeated his jeering request to be taught the whole of the Torah while standing on one foot. Hillel also saw that the stranger was mocking him, but Hillel did not become angry. Instead, Hillel said that he would teach the stranger as was wished.

Hillel began the lesson. "What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbor."

The stranger waited for more. Finally he asked, "Is that all the Torah?"

"Yes," said Hillel. "That is the foundation. All the rest is commentary. Go and study."

The stranger said, "Thank you Hillel. If that is the foundation, I will study all the Torah."

-Hillel first cent B.C.E. - first cent C.E., Famous scholar

Christian Thoughts: Serenity Prayer

God grant me
the serenity to accept the things I cannot change

the courage to change the things I can and
the wisdom to know the difference.
-Reinhold Niebuhr 1892-1971, Protestant theologian

Jainist Thoughts:

What is Ritual and Religion?

Many people put great emphasis on rites and rituals. Because of this, some people think the religion is the thing of past. It is waste of time. Religion is rigid and orthodox. Religion represents narrow-mindedness. Science has progressed beyond religion. Some people are worshipping. Some are reciting mantra. Some are moving beads on a mala (rosary.) Some are singing religious songs. Some are visiting religious places like Palitana. Some are asking for rewards from god. Some want to improve their fate. Some are praying to go to heaven. Many activities like these are practiced on the name of religion. Is this really the religion? Answer is no if this is nothing more to it. Answer is yes if there is more to it.

Jainist Thoughts: Truth & Knowledge?

Do not live to know, know to live. Knowledge is not the religion, practice is the religion. Good conduct is the religion. In our conduct we should look at happiness and unhappiness with equanimity. We should believe in possibilities. Even opposing views can be parts of one truth. Accept co-existence with others. Look at the good side of others. The religion is for self-improvement not for improving others. If each individual improves, the society, nation and world will automatically improve.

Japanese Buddhism: Parable of the Raft

"O monks, a man is on a journey. He comes to a vast stretch of water. On this side the shore is dangerous, but on the other it is safe and without danger. No boat goes to the other shore which is safe and without danger, nor is there any bridge for crossing over. Then that man gathers grass, wood, branches, and leaves and makes a raft, and with the help of that raft crosses over safely to the other side, exerting himself with his hands and feet. Having safely crossed over and gotten to the other side, he thinks, 'This raft was of great help to me. With its aid I have crossed safely over to this side, exerting myself with my hands and feet. It would be good if I carry this raft on my head or on my back whenever I go.'

"What do you think, O monks, if he acted in this way would that man be acting properly with regard to the raft?"

"No, sir."

"In which way, then, would he be acting properly with regard to the raft? Having crossed and gone over to the other side, suppose that man should think, 'It would be good if I beached this raft on the shore, or moored it and left it afloat, and then went on my way wherever it may be.' Acting in this way would that man act properly with regard to the raft.

"In the same manner, O monks, I have taught a doctrine similar to a raft- it is for crossing over, and not for carrying. You who understand that the teaching is similar to a raft, should give up attachment to even the good Dharma; how much more then should you give up evil things."

-Majjhima Nikaya i.134-135

Green Book Five Excerpts

Monkey Business: The Flute Player

Whenever King Xuan of Qi had musicians playing the yu, a wind instrument with reed, he will have three hundred of them playing together. Knowing this, a student from Nanguo applied for a job. The king accepted and paid him the same salary as the others.

After the death of King Xuan, King Min became the ruler of Qi. He liked to have the musicians playing solo. The student from Nanguo fled.

-Han Fei Zi

What is the moral of this story? One way to weed out the incompetent is to measure each individually.

Monkey Business: The Garden Keeper

A priest was in charge of the [garden](#) within a famous Zen temple. He had been given the job because he loved the flowers, shrubs, and trees. Next to the temple there was another, smaller temple where there lived a very old Zen master. One day, when the priest was expecting some special guests, he took extra care in tending to the garden. He pulled the weeds, trimmed the shrubs, combed the moss, and spent a long time meticulously raking up and carefully arranging all the dry autumn leaves. As he worked, the old master watched him with interest from across the wall that separated the temples.

When he had finished, the priest stood back to admire his work. "Isn't it beautiful," he called out to the old master. "Yes," replied the old man, "but there is something missing. Help me over this wall and I'll put it right for you."

After hesitating, the priest lifted the old fellow over and set him down. Slowly, the master walked to the tree near the center of the garden, grabbed it by the trunk, and shook it. Leaves showered down all over the garden.

"There," said the old man, "you can put me back now."

Sufi Jokes: Watering the Plants

Nasrudin used to water his plants daily. He would bring the container near the plants and pour from it. But no water would come out. But he kept pouring one by one lost in his own world. His close neighbor who was watching this for quite some days came to him and asked, "Excuse me, Nasrudin, may I ask you something?"

Nasrudin smiled, "Sure"

Neighbor, "You are pouring water to these plants everyday but I don't see water coming out from the container. What is the matter?"

Nasrudin again smiled, "No need of water. What do you think these plants are? They are all plastic."

The neighbor (even more confused): "For god's sake, tell me then why is there any need of pretending to put water in these plastic plants?"

Nasrudin laughed: "So that the neighbors would not think these are plastic plants. It is just between you and me. If I don't pretend to water them regularly, they might find out these are not real, after all."

Sufi Jokes: 100 Silver Coins

Nasruddin opened a booth at the fair with a sign above it: "Two Questions On Any Subject Answered For Only 100 Silver Coins."

A man who had two very urgent questions handed over his money, saying: "A hundred silver coins is rather expensive for two questions, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Nasruddin, "and the next question, please?"

Wisdom of the Internet: The Talking Clock

While proudly showing off his new apartment to friends, a college student led the way into the den.

"What is the big brass gong and hammer for?" one of his friends asked.

"That is the talking clock," the student replied.

"How's it work?" the friend asked.

"Watch," the kid says, then proceeds to give the gong an ear shattering pound with the hammer.

Suddenly someone screams from the other side of the wall, "*Knock it off, you ass! It's two am!*"

Internet: The Pit

A man fell into a pit and couldn't get himself out.

A subjective person came along and said, "I feel for you down there."

An objective person came along and said, "It's logical that someone would fall down there."

A Christian Scientist came along and said, "You only think you're in the pit."

Confucius said, "If you would have listened to me you wouldn't be in that pit."

Buddha said, "Your pit is only a state of mind."

A realist said, "That's a pit."

A scientist calculated the pressure necessary, pounds and square inches, to get him out of the pit.

A geologist told him to appreciate and study the rock strata.

An evolutionist said, "You are a rejected mutant destined to be removed from the evolutionary cycle, in other words he is going to die in the pit so he can't produce any more pit falling offspring."

The game warden said, "Did you have a permit to dig that pit?"

A professor lectured him on elementary principles of the pit.

A self-pitying person said, "You haven't seen anything until you've seen my pit."

An optimist said, "Things could get worse."

A pessimist said, "Things are going to get worse."

A friend saw the man in the pit, took him by the hand and lifted him out.

Falling Hazelnuts: Cats in the Corner

From Alyx in CO

There was a master in a monastery that had about thirty disciples. They used to conduct meditation, prayer, and other spiritual exercises. The master loved cats, and therefore had a cat in his monastery. During meditation, the cat would run

around disturbing the meditation. The disciples complained to the master, so the master tied the cat in the corner of the meditation hall during meditation time, in order that it would not cause a disturbance.

Thus, things went on. During meditation, the cat would be tied in the corner, while at other times it was free to roam. Several years later the master died, but the cat remained, and the disciples continued to tie the cat in the corner during meditation.

Eventually, the disciples changed; the new disciples did not know why there was a cat inside the hall during meditation, but they nevertheless continued to tie it in the corner at the appropriate time. And when in time the cat died, they went and bought a new one, and tied that one in the corner during meditation time, too.

As time went by the group grew and founded new monasteries. The new master, though he did not know the origin of the cat in the corner, said that it helped the meditation and therefore declared, "Let us have a cat tied in the corner during meditation time in all our monasteries." So in all of their monasteries, there was a cat tied in the corner during meditation time.

Soon many learned treatises were being written about the spiritual importance of tying a cat in the corner during meditation. Some disciples even wrote that it was impossible to meditate properly without the cat.

And this is how Theology and the Philosophy of Religion are created.

Falling Hazelnuts: Druids & the Stars

An old Druid and his student are camping on a mountain, set up their tent, and are asleep. Some hours later, The Druid wakes this faithful friend. "Look up at the sky and tell me what you see."

The student replies, "I see millions of stars."

"What does that tell you?" asks the Druid.

The student ponders for a minute. "Astronomically speaking, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, it tells me that Saturn is in Leo. Time wise, it appears to be approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, it's evident the Gods are all powerful and we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it seems we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you, teacher?"

The Druid is silent for a moment, then speaks. "You idiot, it means someone has stolen our tent!"

Internet: The Whole World Stinks

Wise men and philosophers throughout the ages have disagreed on many things, but many are in unanimous agreement on one point: "We become what we think about." Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "A man is what he thinks about all day long." The Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius put it this way: "A man's life is what his thoughts make of it." In the Bible we find: "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."

One Sunday afternoon, a cranky grandfather was visiting his family. As he lay down to take a nap, his grandson decided to have a little fun by putting Limburger cheese on Grandfather's mustache. Soon, grandpa awoke with a snort and charged out of the bedroom saying, "This room stinks." Through the house he went, finding every room smelling the same. Desperately he made his way outside only to find that "the whole world stinks!"

So it is when we fill our minds with negativism. Everything we experience and everybody we encounter will carry the scent we

hold in our mind.

Sufi Thoughts: Vigiling

by Jalal ad-Din ar-Rumi 1207-1273

Some nights, stay up till dawn.
As the moon sometimes does for the sun.
Be a full bucket pulled up the dark way
of a well, then lifted out into light.
Something opens our wings.
Something makes boredom and hurt disappear.
Someone fills the cup in front of us.
We taste only sacredness.

Book of Self Motivation Books:

How High Can You Jump?

Flea trainers have observed a predictable and strange habit of fleas while training them. Fleas are trained by putting them in a cardboard box with a top on it. The fleas will jump up and hit the top of the cardboard box over and over and over again. As you watch them jump and hit the lid, something very interesting becomes obvious. The fleas continue to jump, but they are no longer jumping high enough to hit the top. apparently, Excedrin headache 1738 forces them to limit the height of their jump.

When you take off the lid, the fleas continue to jump, but they will not jump out of the box. They won't jump out because they can't jump out. Why? The reason is simple. They have conditioned themselves to jump just so high. Once they have conditioned themselves to jump just so high, that's all they can do!

Many times, people do the same thing. They restrict themselves and never reach their potential. Just like the fleas, they fail to jump higher, thinking they are doing all they can do.

cried a hunter.

The second orangutan called out, "It's red from eating so many raspberries."

Hearing the second orangutan, the hunters discovered its hiding place and began to beat it with sticks. As they were killing it, the second orangutan mourned out loud, "Now I know the wisdom of silence. If I had held my tongue, I wouldn't have gotten killed."

Hearing his companion's dying words, the third orangutan said, "Thank God I was wise enough to keep silent."

He was killed.

Self-Motivation: Anyone Up There?

A man was walking in the mountains just enjoying the scenery when he stepped too close to the edge of the mountain and started to fall. In desperation he reached out and grabbed a limb of a gnarly old tree hanging onto the side of the cliff. Full of fear he assessed his situation. He was about 100 feet down a sheer cliff and about 900 feet from the floor of the canyon below. If he should slip again he'd plummet to his death.

Full of fear, he cries out, "Help me!" But there was no answer. Again and again he cried out but to no avail.

Finally he yelled, "Is anybody up there?"

A deep voice replied, "Yes, I'm up here."

"Who is it?"

"It's the L-rd"

"Help me!"

"Let go."

Looking around the man became full of panic. "What?!?!"

"Let go. I will catch you."

"Uh... Is there anybody else up there?"

Song of the Earth-mother, which is the RDNA's common song.

O - Earth - Moth - er! We praise Thee that seed springeth, that flower
openeth, that grass waveth. We praise Thee for winds that whisper thru
the graceful elm, thru the shapely maple, thru the live-ly pine,
thru the shin-ing birch, thru the mighty oak. We praise Thee for
all things, O - Earth - Mother, Who givest Life.

Internet: The Wisdom of Silence

Some hunters were in the woods looking for game. They discovered a group of three orangutans and managed to catch one of them. The other two orangutans escaped and hid behind some nearby bushes and trees.

As the hunters were dressing the corpse of the first orangutan, a steam of blood issued forth. "How red the blood is!"