

C.Φ.R.D. Biquarterly

Connexus Of Reformed Druids

An RDNA Publication
Leaf: Black Oak – *Quercus velutina*

August 1, 2021
1 Foghamhar, 59 Y.R.
Volume 1
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John the Verbose, editor
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Lughnasadh



Photo: Druid's Circle, Carleton College Cowling Arboretum, Northfield, MN

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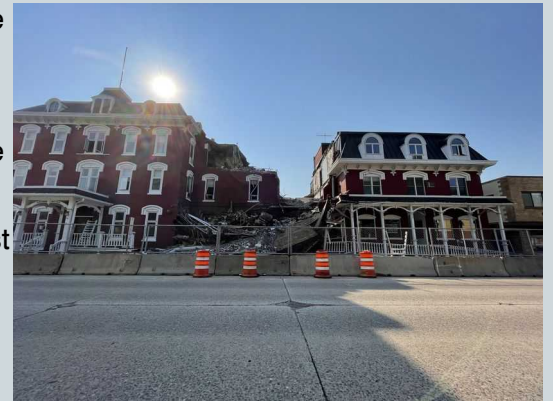
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Note: Click-navigation only works if you download the PDF.

News of the Groves

News from Carleton College Grove (Minnesota)

Being the middle of summer break for the students of Carleton College Grove, updates are relatively rare from this fellowship. The biggest news for their area is that the druidic *Archer House Inn* – which suffered a small fire but extensive smoke damage last November – has been declared a total loss. Aside from being a Victorian Era hotel, the Archer House Inn was beloved by the druids as a popular haunt, and was also a home to several restaurants which served as popular hangouts just a few minutes walk from the college campus. All building restoration was on hold while it was tied up in delays from fire insurance and inspections.



With a section of the roof having burned away (with not so much as a single tarp to cover the voids), over winter and spring snow and rain contributed to significant water damage which rapidly reduced the structural stability. In May there was a partial collapse of the damaged portion of the building which sealed the building's fate. No decisions have been made for the building, but the Archer House Inn has already declared permanent closure. Restoration is still a potential consideration, but at this point it sounds like the remains will be torn down, maybe to be rebuilt, or redeveloped entirely.

News from Oakdale Grove (Minnesota)

Oakdale Grove held its Lughnasadh ritual a day early this year at Roseville Central Park in Roseville, Minnesota. We had six in attendance. The weather was a few degrees cooler than most of our summer has been. It could have been a bit nicer, but any break from our heat wave is welcome. Still, there

was a smoke advisory issued today and it really dried out our throats. After our ritual, we held a barbecue and painted rocks, most of which were donated to the Anoka Kindness Rock Garden.



Untiled Haiku

Ever shining sun,
Earth casts her shadow on us,
our nightly eclipse.

—*John the Verbose*



April 15, 2014 Lunar Eclipse with Spica
by John the Verbose

Overview

This section is an open forum for opinion pieces, letters to the editor, druidic gossip, philosophical exposition, news of solo druids, relevant product reviews, tutorials, and other discourse.

Contribution from John the Verbose – *Meditations on the Second Tenet*

Nature is good: such a simple and straightforward expression of our persuasions as Reformed Druids. Though that's not entirely what either tenet really says. The first tenet can be paraphrased as *Our unending search for spiritual truth, among any number of ways, may be found in Nature – the Earth-Mother*. The various long-forms of the first tenet don't actually speak to the Earth-Mother's innate goodness, but since we are already predisposed to loving Nature, the inference of said goodness comes at no surprise and is oft embraced with mirth.

The second tenet – paraphrased – has a more somber tone. *We hold Nature to be significant in our spirituality, despite being confronted by Nature even when we are struggling to get through our lives*. Again, we have no direct implication of innate goodness, though that probably comes to us through the reinterpretation of *significant* or *important* or whichever adjective is used in the various long forms of the tenet. The second tenet to me seems much darker in the way it addresses the reality of our existence. It does more to acknowledge the ambivalence of Nature amidst our appreciation for it.

Someone once asked why in the RDNA – if we revere Nature so much – that we kill some of it as a plant-based sacrifice and then offer it right back to Nature in ritual? It's as if saying "Oh Earth-Mother, here's a piece of you we killed on purpose that we're now giving back because of your beauty." In practice it is not that black and white. Nothing in the RDNA is Black & White, with the exception being the popular brand of scotch once used at Carleton Grove, but I digress. The RDNA is about shades of gray and religious liminality.

Regarding the matter of sacrificing Nature right back to her, I actually wrote an explanation of the sacrifice into Oakdale Grove's liturgy: *We sacrifice a part of the Earth-Mother to remind us of how truly we value her; for through the pain of the taking of a life may we deepen our respect and our empathy*. Every single time I take the blade of my sickle to a plant, I'm not just going through the motions of tradition. I am bringing the entirety of my conscience to the forefront of my Awareness, living present in the moment, becoming mindful of my actions. I am acknowledging that I am severing the life of something, reminding me of my own mortality.

The mindfulness and Awareness helps increase my empathy for nature. It's not that different from when we lose a loved one. We're not taking their life, but when someone else loses a loved one too, we are then able to empathize with what that person is going through. Empathy strengthens our

bonds. Loss has a way of revealing just how much something means to us, in case we had taken it for granted. As druids we're probably much better about *not* taking Nature for granted, but humanity as a whole still has a long way to go in that regard.

This summer has already been a rollercoaster of the effects of climate change. My part of Minnesota has been experiencing drought conditions all summer. I think we've had three storms that gave us any considerable amount of water, but our lawns are still turning brown, suburbs are imposing water restrictions, cornfields, sugar maples, and poplars are showing signs of significant stress. The leaves are already changing on the sugar maples two months early. California and the Pacific Northwest are on fire, again.

The smoke plumes from the fires out west have discolored the skies across the continent. A blue sky has become a rarity on sunny days. Now the skies are yellowish gray and white and the sun is noticeably dim. If anything it makes for dramatic sunsets, but that does not alleviate the feeling that something is very wrong. And the smoke plume doesn't stay in the sky. During my evening walks I started to notice the neighborhood smells like a bonfire. I kept thinking *who is having a bonfire?* I didn't see anything burning in people's back yards, but during my walk the smell of pine smoke was omnipresent.



That's when it occurred to me that I wasn't smelling local bonfires. It was the smoke plume from across the country. I realized I was inhaling the corpses of trees a thousand miles away, and that they were alive just days before. It bothered me and saddened me that I was breathing in smoke from wildfires that are becoming all too common, and I wondered why that smoke came all the way here, and has gotten all the way to New York.

Then it hit me deeper when I realized that air is *supposed* to come here, and it is *supposed* to go to New York, and all over the world. Normally that would be the oxygen that I breathe – that we all breathe – given to us by the trees. I realized I had taken that oxygen for granted, not knowing until now that I had been benefiting my whole life directly from those trees which were alive until a few days ago, and now they're gone. Trees that are alive now are giving us their last particles of oxygen and tomorrow they will be ash. Yes these things *can* happen naturally, but humanity has been making it worse.

Overall there hasn't been a significant increase in the number of wildfires annually, but the big difference is in the increase of acres burned year over year. I wouldn't say my minor difficulty breathing in the smoke plumes from these distant fires is necessarily a *struggle*, but like the second tenet says, even as I struggle through life, do I come face to face with Nature, and she has certainly reminded me of her spiritual importance to me. Please plant some trees, for the sake of us all.

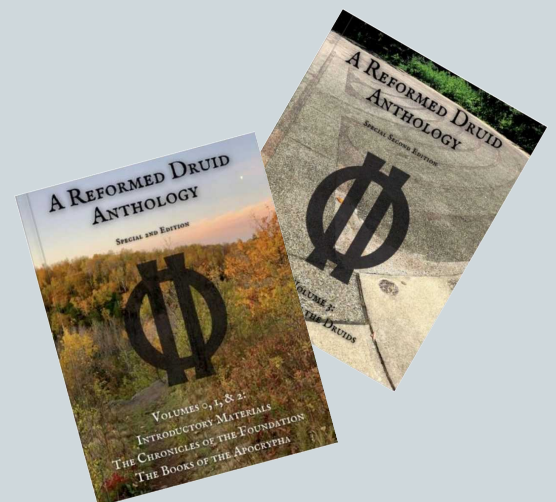
Update on the ARDA Special 2nd Edition Hardcover Reprint Project

In the Midsummer issue of *C.O.R.D. Biquarterly* it was announced that Volumes 0 through 4 are now available in print-on-demand through Lulu. Right now I think we can squeeze in Volumes 5 through 10 into a single third installment. After the Midsummer article went live, I resumed work on editing Volumes 5 and 6. Those early 2000s Word documents are so old, and I'm editing them in LibreOffice. This has meant that there are formatting glitches between the compatibility of the current and outdated programs from the moment I open the doc files. Images were getting kicked around being anchored to different areas. I tried fixing the text flow in the columns, but suddenly seven new blank columns appeared on the pages with text only filling the first one on each page.

Each time a glitch like that happened, all the images would cascade to the bottom and overlap each other. The only fix was to undo my edits and find an alternative way to fix things. I was originally thinking the spell checking would be the hardest part, but that's easy compared to the paragraph style glitches, or those of the page and column layouts. I wanted to have this last installment done by Labor Day, but now that's only a lofty stretch goal. Realistically I think Thanksgiving is a more rational goal. The books are still available and priced at cost of printing, and nobody in the RDNA profits from sales. However, a couple weeks ago Lulu mentioned they will be imposing an 8% hike in production costs within the next few months, so if I've quoted prices in the past, those amounts will have changed soon, and not by me.

You can click the book images to view or order them on Lulu.

—John the Verbose



The Seeker's Corkboard

Overview

This is the place where you can state that you are seeking other druids to form a protogrove. Long has it been said, something to the tune of *in the proper way, at the proper time, at the proper place, may another druid cross your path*. Well, here is a little nudge to help this happen sooner! These bulletins will be cumulative on each issue of C.O.R.D. until you send a stop request. They will be arranged alphabetically by country, then by state/province/region, then by town name.

To submit a Seeker's Corkboard request, email the editor and **provide your preferred name, location, and an email address** that you check consistently at least once per month. Just remember that any contact information you submit to this section does become public. Your email address in the newsletter will be split apart and will use different characters (& and /) instead of @ and '.' to prevent or mitigate random harvester bots from scanning them for spam.

Example Bulletin

USA: **Kansas**: Hutchinson: Dorian seeking others for starting RDNA protogrove. Email dorian_the_druid (at) gmail (dot) com.

Standard Disclaimer

I advise Googling *safety tips for meeting people from the Internet* or something to that effect. Furthermore, this is not intended as a section for personals ads or soliciting hookups.

Bulletins

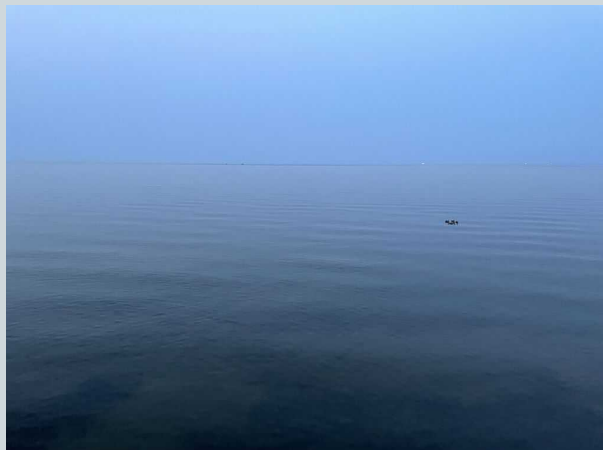
USA: District of Columbia: Tyler Vanice seeking others for starting RDNA protogrove in D.C.. Monument Grove that previously met in the capital has been inactive and I would like to meet others in the area and start something back up. Also looking to be ordained if anyone is traveling to the capital region this year or next! If interested, please reach out. Email tyler.vanice&gmail/com.

Vivid Visions Gallery

Overview

It's a druidic photo gallery. Enjoy!

Contributions from John the Verbose



Lake Mille Lacs at dusk, Garrison, MN



White Sagebrush (pale stalks), Champlin, MN



Cannon River, Lower Arb, Carleton College



Restored Prairie, Lower Arb, Carleton College



Carleton Wind Turbine #2, Carleton College



Milford Mine Memorial Park, Crosby, MN

Contributions from I Talk To The Trees



Rock painting, acrylic on stone



Rock painting, acrylic on stone



Rock painting, acrylic on stone



Rock painting, acrylic on stone

Contributions from Johayan Sycamore Bear



Donating to Anoka Kindness Rock Garden



Donating to Anoka Kindness Rock Garden



Donating to Anoka Kindness Rock Garden



Donating to Anoka Kindness Rock Garden

Videos of Interest

Overview

This section is reserved for videos relevant to druidry. Enjoy!

World Druidry with Dr. Larisa A White

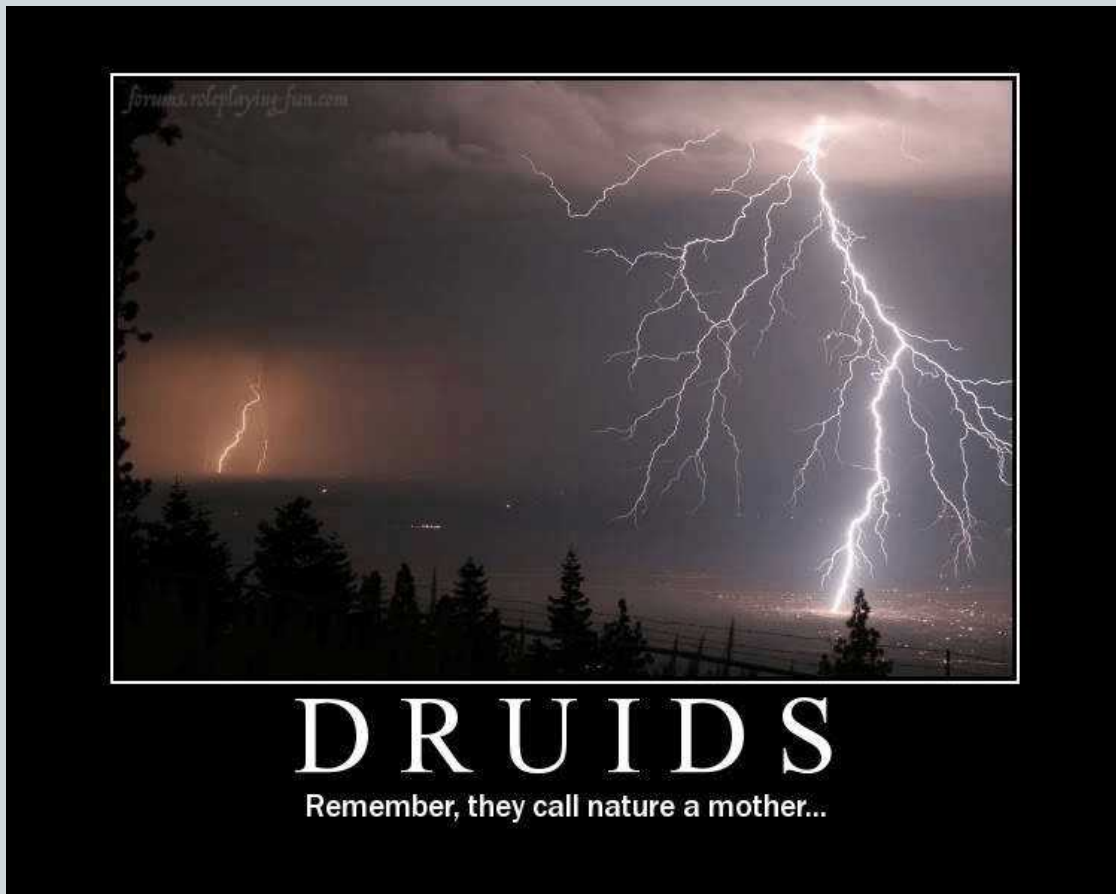


An interview with Dr. White who conducted a monumental survey on contemporary druidry a couple years ago. Several of us in the RDNA participated in this survey, and our responses contributed to the big picture of what druidism looks like in our era.

Memes of the Month

Overview

This section is reserved for memes or fun creations that were meant to be shared *ad nauseam*. These days it seems so many druid groups and social media just share memes 90% of the time, but I think that takes away from deeper conversations that end up buried. Here is a place designated to the celebration of all those catchy kitschy memes. However, I'm limiting those to two per article.



The Right Rites For Rampant Ritualists

Overview

This section is for sharing rituals, devotionals, or other liturgical contributions.

Lughnasadh Chant, attributed to NRDNA seasonal ritual, ca. 1979

ADS: Thy trees do grow and give us shade.

ALL: O DALON AP LANDU, WE THANK THEE.

AD: Thy waters stream forth and ease our pain,

ALL: O GRANNOS, WE THANK THEE.

ADS: Thy waters pour forth and bring us joy,

ALL: O BRACIACA, WE THANK THEE.

AD: Thy rivers flow and give us drink,

ALL: O SIRONA, WE THANK THEE.

ADS: Thy thunder cracks and heralds rain,

ALL: O TARANIS, WE THANK THEE.

AD: Thy seas are deep and full of fish,

ALL: O LLYR, WE THANK THEE.

ADS: Thy earth is fertile and full of life.

ALL: O DANU, WE THANK THEE.

ADS: Though the Sun is bright, the Shade is dark.

ALL: IN THE MIDST OF LIGHT IS DARK.

AD: Dark though the night, the stars burn bright.

ALL: IN THE MIDST OF DARK IS LIGHT.

ADS: Thy light shines on us today.

ALL: O BELENOS, WE THANK THEE.

AD: The plants give fruits which then do die.

ALL: IN THE MIDST OF LIFE IS DEATH.

ADS: We eat the fruits and they give us life.

ALL: IN THE MIDST OF DEATH IS LIFE.

AD: Thy life is here in us today.

ALL: O EARTH-MOTHER, WE THANK THEE!

ADS: O Be'al, O Lugh, O our Mother, O all ye Gods and Goddesses, we thank You for the bounty which you have given us during this year. We thank you for the external growth of the plants and animals, and for the internal growth of our spirits. Accept our praise, O Most High, and smile on us always, that we may praise You the more.

ALL: WE THANK YOU, HIGH ONES. KEEP US IN YOUR MINDS, WE PRAY YOU, AS WE KEEP YOUR WAYS.

Augur's Intuition

Overview

This section is reserved for reader-submitted divinations, premonitions, soothsaying, prophecies, omens, maybe a Celtic horoscope for the range of a month.

Submission by John the Verbose

Methodology

Ogham Bead Strand

The length of beads are wound and tangled in the hands while meditating on the divination. When you feel it has been tangled sufficiently, carefully open your hands and search for the ogham beads directly between the green start bead and black end bead.

Meanings

Oir (Spindle): Completing something that brings you joy

Coll (Hazel): Follow your creative intuition

Interpretation

How long has it been since you took on or completed a project tied closely to your passions? If it gives you a sense of fulfillment and happiness, now is the time to work on it and give it everything you've got. Your sense of creativity will guide you if you do your best and not view your tasks as a chore. This is your time to shine!



Calendar of Events

Overview

This section is for contributors to add their events, gatherings, any applicable online meetings, etc that they wish to announce publicly. It will also have an almanac of full and new moon dates for the time between issues of this biquarterly publication, as well as the next Wheel of the Year high day. This section will also feature any applicable minor holidays according to the Schismatic Druids of North America (SDNA), one of the early direct offshoots tied to the RDNA.

High Days and Moon Phases

- 1 Foghamhar (August 1) **Lughnasadh**
- 8 Foghamhar (August 8) **New Moon**
- 22 Foghamhar (August 22) **Full Moon**
- 38 Foghamhar (September 7) **New Moon**
- 51 Foghamhar (September 20) **Full Moon**
- 53 Foghamhar (September 22) **Autumnal Equinox**

Shared Open-to-Public events

Oakdale Grove's Autumnal Equinox ritual and annual Officer elections for Bard, Server, Preceptor, and Arch-Druid – Saturday September 18, 2021, 1:00 PM, Oakdale Nature Preserve (4444 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, MN). Grove members who have attended at least 2 functions since 2019 are eligible to vote. Usually it's one calendar year but the past year is an exception.

Upcoming minor holidays of the SDNA (non-canonical) calendar

- 6 Foghamhar (August 6) **Feast of Lugh** – for some reason, Lugh gets two festivals in the SDNA.
- 15 Foghamhar (August 15) **Feast of Our Lady Queen of the Heavens** – Celebrate the star, moon, or mother goddesses. Take your Grove's high priestess to dinner.
- 23-25 Foghamhar (August 23-25) **Festival of the Heroes** – a memorial for historically pagan warriors. Meditate on their values and interpretation of honor.
- 39 Foghamhar (September 8) **Feast of the Birth of the Mother** – Celebration of the birthdays of the physical incarnations of the goddess. Celebrate every mother in your Grove.

Long-term notice for the 60th anniversary of the RDNA

6 Samradh, 61 Y.R. (Saturday, May 6, 2023) is the day of the 60th anniversary reunion of the foundation of the Reformed Druids of North America at Carleton College! More details to follow as the event approaches.

Blogs & Social Media Links

Blogs Curated By Druids (accumulative each issue)

- Courtney's blog [Corey Adventures](#)
- Ellen Evert Hopman's blog [A Druid's Blog](#)
- John the Verbose's [Tumblr](#)
- TheMageiboLine's [Tumblr](#)

Social Media

- C.O.R.D. Biweekly's [Facebook page](#)
- "Official" Reformed Druids of North America (RDNA) [Facebook group](#)
- [*Editor's note: if you request to join there are four vetting questions. Please answer all four; they're really easy.*]
- New Reformed Druids of North America (NRDNA) [Facebook group](#)
- Ron Stonemage's [Instagram](#)
- Oakdale Grove's [Twitter](#)
- Oakdale Grove's [Facebook page](#)
- Oakdale Grove's RDNA Druid Training Program Development [Facebook page](#)
- Tribe of the Oak Celtic Reconstructionist (non-RDNA) Druid Grove [website](#)

Artisan Promo Page

Overview

Each article of *C.O.R.D.* will contain up to two pages of featured artists, craftspersons, or small online storefronts that may be of interest to the druid community in some way. There is no cost involved; anyone can request that their content be promoted here on a first-come-first-served basis.

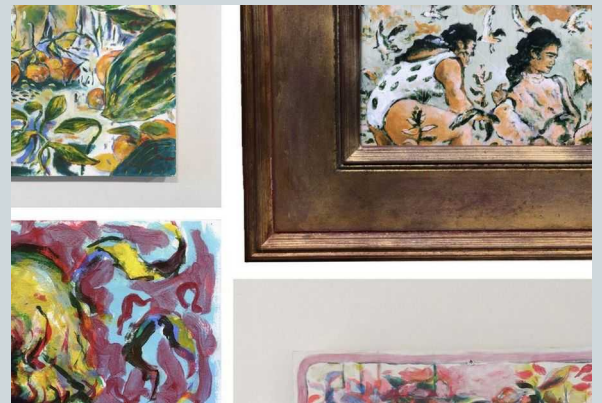
Reannag Teine Pottery

Historically Inspired Pottery: Islamic, Greek, or Italian Renaissance... skulls, squashed fairies, or Viking kitties, we are devoted to creating unique pieces of historically inspired ceramic art--a touch of the unique you can use all the time. Hand-thrown and hand-painted yet safe for food, dishwasher, microwave, and oven. Reannag Teine, Gaelic for "star fire," is a mother-daughter team with six degrees and a myriad of art awards between them... and a healthy amount of humor to bring it all together. Find us on Facebook, YouTube, Twitch, Instagram—and of course at www.ReannagTeine.com!



Jeremiah Soup's [art gallery](#)

All he wanted to do was subscribe to the newsletter but I was stunned by the art gallery when I clicked through the link in his email signature out of curiosity. I actually asked if I could share this here on his behalf, and I'm glad he agreed to it.



Ron Stonemage's [wire art and wrapped stones](#)

I think we originally discovered each other's Tumblr blogs about a year and a half ago. Not only is the wearable artwork intricate and beautiful, but Ron often has a lot of thought provoking



Reformed Druid Resources

Overview

The Reformed Druids of North America is probably one of the few major druid orders that provides all resources for learning about our style of druidism at no cost. We might not have all the answers, and unfortunately we don't have a mentorship or official training program, however there is something major in the works on an unofficial capacity. For now, here is a list of resources we *do* have.

A Reformed Druid Anthology – ARDA (2nd edition)

[ARDA II](#) is an 848 page PDF of RDNA history, customs, meditations, debates, rituals, advice, and other information. If the massive PDF file is too big, it is also broken down into its individual sections which makes for easier scrolling [here](#). There you will also find part of an ARDA study course and other documents. The books in hardcover version are rare and out of print, but the PDFs are free.

Grove Finder

Everyone wants to know: is there an RDNA or NRDNA Grove in _____? Well, the most current source of truth is the [Grove Finder spreadsheet](#). It's been updated *en masse* the last two Januaries during the Grove censuses, and if there are any interim changes I usually get to them within two days. It tracks Reformed Druid, New Reformed Druid, and Reformed Druidic Wicca (MOCC) Groves & Protogroves.

RDNA Year Conversion Chart & Calendar

The RDNA Calendar was technically at year 0 during the pre-planning stages of the Reform, and year 1 began on Beltane (May 1) of 1963. It's unapologetically half a year off from the Celtic New Year. As of Beltane 2020, the 58th Year of the Reform (Y.R.) began. I often forget what Y.R. it is, so I refer to the [RDNA Year Conversion spreadsheet](#). There is also a [four-year RDNA calendar](#) to help you learn what day of the four seasons it is, because you'll see the RDNA calendar system is all over this publication.

Black Book of Liturgy

The original 1960s copies of Black Book of Liturgy (which were in three-ring binders) were only to be kept by ordained Third Order Druids, but mimeographed copies leaked out decades ago, and we think that's a good thing. Oakdale Grove has a new adaptation of [Black Book of Liturgy \(PDF\)](#) with a ton of rituals as well as minimum recommended readings from ARDA. Black Book of Liturgy is also available in [hardcover for \\$12.41](#) via Lulu print-on-demand, which is strictly *at cost* of having it printed and bound. Oakdale Grove uses these books in rituals.

Oakdale Grove's RDNA Druid Training Program

This is a work in progress. So far the draft is 114 pages long, and I'm only half way into adding the *basic* content I want to put in it. I am not an educator, so I'm concerned about its flow and efficacy. If anyone wants to help develop it with me, I would greatly appreciate the assistance.

Newsletter Info

About *C.O.R.D.*

Connexus of Reformed Druids – C.O.R.D. Biquarterly is a free and publicly available newsletter for the Reformed Druids of North America as well as for anyone else who might be interested. It follows in the footsteps of prior publications such as *A Druid Missal-Any* and *Druid Inquirer*. *Connexus* is an homage to the late Emmon Bodfish, who petitioned the Council of Dalon Ap Landu to update RDNA liturgical nomenclature to make it less churchlike and more unique. *Connexus* is Latin for *connection* (not exactly druidic, but I'm not complaining). Emmon's petition never gained traction (plus the Council had lost it's ability to gain a voting quorum and it had no chairperson at the time) but it seemed fitting to adopt this word for a publication that connects druids around the world.

Past Articles

[Click here](#) to access all prior *C.O.R.D. Biquarterly* articles and the content contribution forms.

Meet the Editor

Greetings! I'm John "The Verbose." I've practiced generic forms of druidry since I spent a semester in Ireland in 2004. I began interacting with the RDNA in 2011, and in 2013 I was ordained as a priest of Dalon Ap Landu and formed Oakdale Grove in Minnesota with 5 other grovemates. In 2015 I had the rare opportunity to become a priest of Belenos and in 2017 the even rarer honor of becoming a priest of Sirona, as well as the new curator of her Order. In January 2020 I began work on developing an RDNA style druid training program, and as of now that is still a work in progress.



I am absolutely committed to my oath of Service and wish to help others explore Reformed Druidry by a diverse array of means. That includes assembling and issuing these newsletters. Anything in this publication that doesn't have an attribution and is written in the first person is pretty much me sharing my opinions and experiences. That's where your help with contributions is so helpful; we have a newsletter with crowd-sourced content to appeal to a broader druidic audience. I sincerely hope you find this periodical to be a worthwhile investment of your time. I always welcome constructive criticism and suggestions or other feedback.

Peace, peace, peace! ☸

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Contribute Content to the Next Issue!

Submission Process

Issues will be released within a day or two of the RDNA Wheel of the Year high days. That's more or less the deadline if you wanted to submit any content for the forthcoming article. Anything received a bit late might end up on the draft of the next article thereafter. **Please ensure content is PG-13 or tamer.**

Gmail Users Can Use Our Full-Feature Google Form to Contribute!

Do you plan on contributing content from a Gmail account? We have a [convenient form](#) that allows you to enter text-based contribs as well as attach files or photos! A Google account is only required to send attachments through the form.

Non-Gmail Users Have Two Ways to Contribute

1. There is a [lite version of the same form](#) for those who don't have a Gmail account, which allows anyone to submit text-based contributions only.
2. Or simply copy and fill the form below when emailing contributions to my Gmail: **MNdruids**

Hello,
I would like to share the following/attached content for the next C.O.R.D. article.
I hereby consent and attest that I (the sender) hold the rights or permission to share it.
[Exception for memes, public YouTube video links, certain other content types.]

- I wish to be credited under the name: ____
 - Subscribe me to the newsletter mailing list? ____
 - Other comments/suggestions if applicable: ____
 - [Input your content you wish to share below the line, and/or attach files]
-

What Content Does C.O.R.D. Look For?

- News of the RDNA & NRDNA Groves & Protogroves
- News of the Solo Druids
- Poetry
- Short Stories
- Tutorials
- Druidic projects, arts, crafts you are making
- Personal milestones, editorials, druidic book or product reviews, critiques
- Seeker Bulletins like "Solo druid looking for other druids in _____"
- Your own photography
- Links to videos of druidic interest
- Links to your druid blogs or social media
- Divinations and their summaries
- Events you're willing to announce publicly

- Maybe a druidry-related meme (article will limit two)
- Healing Thoughts Requests
- Do you have a druid-oriented Etsy shop or similar online store? One page of the newsletter will be reserved for artisan promo space
- Propose a topic; you can help make this newsletter be a success