



Spring Equinox Y.R. XLVI

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A temporary publication until A Druid Missal-Any magazine resumes.

For Submissions: Send to mikerdna@hotmail.com

Editor's Notes

Sorry this issue came out, and that it is so much smaller than the last one. I'm hoping that Beltane will be back to my standards (low as they usually are).



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News of the Groves

Submit your RDNA grove or protogrove news 2 weeks before the eight Druid festivals to mikerdna@hotmail.com
Check your grove listing data at <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/wheretroves.html>

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

Daniel is still on educational hiatus in New Hampshire for Spring Semester, and is terrible wrapped up in matters of state as he talks with various Druid factions. Carleton seems to be doing well enough with a temporary head of services. He encourages people to be kind about his efforts to share some ideas with you all. Like most past Archdruids from Carleton, he realizes that he's an ordinary guy, with a nice title and a great location, and really likes trees. He sends hugs and kisses and hopes you are going outside quite often.

Mango Mission: News from South-East Asia

Well, you haven't heard from me in awhile, and I am responsible for the negligence. Lots of excuses, baby, work, moving, new language, yada yada yada. But I miss you guys, and I miss being a Druid. I'm trying to get the awards mailed out for the DANAC contest that I mentioned last issue. I've located some lovely lapis lazuli stones (see Wikipedia for their fascinating properties and history), and I finally found my checkbook! ☺

I'm going back to DC May 2 and will be there until October 2, after that I'll be in Montreal for 2 years (hey, Sebastien!) and enjoying French Quebecker life in Canada. So if I start posting more articles in French, don't be surprised.

Desert Willow Protogrove: News from California

Our Constitution has been voted upon.

We've had a few meetings establishing our Proto Grove and have decided upon our Constitution.

I'm attaching a copy for you and have it posted on the Grove Website to share with some of our outlying folks.

The constitution is Digitally signed so I'm copying Daniel in his capacity of AD at Carleton.

The group responded to a request that the Constitution be dated 20 Jan 2009 to coincide with Inauguration Day.

Website: <http://saher.cwahi.net>

E-mail: saher@san.rr.com

Membership: 5

Local Woodland Druids Protogrove: News from Quebec, Canada

Lately, things are moving quickly for me and I'm very busy. If you have the chance, I invite you to see my art exhibit at the Art Gallery Impressions in Shawville called "Druiiii". It's a mixture of my pottery, my art and my druidry.

Gallery impressions website: <http://www.raymond.sanderregier.com/UIS/CurrentExh.html>

Article on the exhibit in local news paper : http://www.theequity.ca/te_page05.htm

Also, my transcript that will be published in Rev. Mark Townsend book this year have been posted on OBOD websites. It is my own testimony of what my druidry is all about!

http://druidry.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=PagEd&file=index&topic_id=1&page_id=160

You can also check out my blog. It is mostly in French but there is also some stuff in English and I have many links to other blogs and some cool stuff... if you like diversity in spirituality, you will probably like my blog. You will find many of my personal incite on how I see and perceive things as a druid. <http://druidedupontiac.blogspot.com>

My website is being refurbish and will be up on the net very soon.

Oh... Happy Valentine !

From under the same sky!

Sébastien /I\

Tuatha De Danaan Grove: News from California

Hi, Mike! We at Tuatha De Danaan Grove had a Oimelech ceremony in the Hayward hills, with a carefully tended fire under a great spreading magnolia. The date was admittedly two days late, but the weather was fine and the aspects seemed propitious. The chalice was an inscribed brass goblet from Killarney, the very same one we have used for years--red glass chalices being difficult to find nowadays! All went very well, and there was much rejoicing.

We are planning for the Spring Equinox, and hope that we will have a large ceremony come Beltane--stay tuned...

In the Mother,
Jeffrey

White Rabbit Grove: News from Wisconsin

White Rabbit Grove has some news.

The links to our Druid Network listing have been fixed, thanks to my new boss at LoveyouDivine Alterotica, Bryn Colvin, who is part of the administration and an AOD Druid.

Our page is <http://druidnetwork.org/node/1000871>

Helgaleena Healingline, the White Rabbit Archdruid, has decided to expand her Healing Line capacities to prison ministry, with help from referrals from Mike Scharding. We now take snail mail at

The Healing Line, Box 6121, Monona WI 53716

Here are some prison ministry resources from the fine folks at the Druid Network:

<http://druidnetwork.org/en/community/prisons>

Helgaleena is now a triple resource. There's advice by phone at the Healing Line, or by email at healingline@gmail.com or the new snail mail box. Then of course you can read the Healing Lines blog at <http://helgaleena.mylivepage.com/blog> or its mirror site <http://helgaleenas.livejournal.com> And if you are very ambitious, you can have me edit your own lines by submitting your erotic fiction to the two romance e-presses where I rule the commas. If it's not erotic fiction, we can work something out. Mwuhahaha.

I'm certain to have something to say about the Equinox when I start feeling it in my entrails, so do take a peek at the blog if you are curious.

helgaleena

Clan of the Triple Horse Grove: News from Oregon

Hello and blessings! I'm attaching a meditation you are welcome to include or not as you choose. The documents are IDENTICAL; I'm just sending it in two different formats so you should be able to open at least one.

Our Grove, Clan of the Triple Horses, will have a Lupercalia ritual Saturday. I'll follow up with you after.

Richest blessings!
Jackie Greer
Clan of the Triple Horses Grove, Medford OR

Sierra Madrone Grove: News from California

I wrote a review for Ellen Hopman's new DVD. You can use it if you are looking for articles to print.

Thanks,

AD Sean Harbaugh

Sierra Madrone Grove
Sacramento, CA

Rose Rock Grove: News from Arkansas

News flows slowly in winter. Stacey and Delila are still on the road. The electrician's company Jeff worked for had to lay people off, and he is job hunting. Chris is going to be a father this summer. The cat population at Jeff and Chris's place has boomed slightly, so I don't know all the fuzzy names there. I'm job hunting. Crystal is going to the Vo-Tech to work on her chosen career. Fred the jade plant has been putting out many new leaves, and there is great optimism in the family that he may even grow another branch. The daffodils and crocuses have bloomed in force in my folk's front lawn. The plans for Spring Equinox are to dye eggs, bake cookies, do yard work, and maybe even get some flowers planted here and there

News from Other Druid Groups

New publication: **Aontacht** Magazine at www.druidicdawn.org

New blog: <http://redwoodcoastviews.blogspot.com/> from OMS

New training course: www.Hibernianorderofdruids.com is offering a 2 year online training course.

Strange Stuff from the Web

Courtesy of Google Alerts

What's the internet saying about Reformed Druidism?

October 2008 to Feb 2009



“

http://www.zazzle.com/druid_sigil_on_large_stamp_postage-172375323796630242

http://www.zazzle.com/druid_wreath_and_staves_mousepad-

\$11



[144379350062089222](http://www.zazzle.com/druid_wreath_and_staves_mousepad-144379350062089222)

What is RDNA?

<http://acronyms.thefreedictionary.com/Reformed+Druids+of+North+America>

Acronym	Definition
RDNA	Reformed Druids of North America
RDNA	Recombinant Deoxyribonucleic Acid
rDNA	Ribosomal Deoxyribonucleic Acid

Dr. Druid

A column for medical questions, concerns and confusions
with answers from Dr. Druid.

Submit your questions to:
Doc.Druid (at) Gmail (dot) com.

Spring Equinox 2009

Given my inbox has been utterly flooded with a total of zero questions since Samhain, I must conclude that druids are the healthiest people alive! That or they have no concern for their bodies at all, being given over entirely to spiritual debauchery...



This January I traveled into the war-torn wastes of Africa to provide medical care to the Christians and Animists of Southern Sudan. These people have suffered decades of war from their largely Muslim neighbors to the North, but in 2005 a peace agreement was signed, which freed them to go back to fighting their traditional enemies: the Christians and Animists of the South. They have since killed more of each other in cattle raids and tribal struggles than the North ever did during twenty years of civil war.

I worked with a team of doctors in three different clinics, two deep in the bush, and one on the banks of the upper White Nile. Two of the clinics were new projects funded by Christian missionary groups from the US who did not seem to mind that they were tending Animists as well, nor that half of the doctors working for them were not Christian at all. (One Druid, two Hindu, a devout Pragmatist, and a Neo-Spinosan.) We worked with diseases that one never sees in the US, but that were common killers of our fathers of old, and which remain devastating for much of the world's population. Tuberculosis, malaria, parasite infestations, non-healing wounds, leprosy, and malnutrition, were just a few of the diseases we treated. People were dying by the thousands of measles, of all things, which is so rare in most developed countries that doctors often fail to recognize it.



It was a humbling experience to work with people so much tougher than we are. People who have been shot, raped, bombed, chased for six thousand miles, and who are now lying quietly on an improvised table while you fix their hernias with only local pain control. We finished hip surgery on one woman, began cleaning up, and turned to find her dressed, standing, and washing her own blood off the table, ready to walk home. It makes you appreciate the stories of the old Celts, and other peoples. The fantastic acts of Queen Medb or Cuchulainn which seem so improbable to our modern ears look suddenly plausible after seeing a woman carry her feverish child for twelve hours on foot, with her own leg oozing from a bone infection that runs from hip to ankle.



Some people are motivated by power, like those conniving to control the oil fields and trade along the upper Nile. Some are motivated by a desire to make a better life for their family, like the men we saw baking bricks from cow dung to build huts, even knowing how impermanent the creation will be in a country between civil wars. Some are motivated by faith, like the retired dental assistant from Michigan, who as he lay bed-bound after heart surgery wondered what the point of his life was, and heard his god telling him to build a hospital in the swampy wastes of Werkok. I, who went in curiosity, was forced to wonder what strength we Druids can draw from our own faith, and how it expresses itself in our lives.

Be well-

Dr. Druid

Disclaimer: Irony Sade or "Doctor Druid" is not a doctor- yet. He is a medical student at Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, NY. Previously he worked for five years as a nurse, and as a rural health worker before that. The medical and scientific information in this column is accurate to the best of his knowledge, and he will pester wiser minds than his if your question stumps him. Medicine is a highly individualized field. People may respond very differently to the same disease or treatment. For serious concerns, consult your own doctor.

The World DrumProject



By William Hartman
Linden/Elder Protogrove, France

The Project

A few years ago while happily surfing the web I stumbled upon an article on an object called the World Drum.

This particular drum is one of those sacred objects that travel around, from place to place and from person to person, all the while blessing the places and individuals it meets. Whenever a place or a people are in need of restoring harmony, peace and wellbeing, an object respected by most to be sacred and representing common shared values is sent out and will pass from hand to hand, tribe to tribe and region to region. This can be anything from a the statue of a God or Goddess, a Sacred Pipe, the Tooth of a Buddha or, as in this case, a Drum.

The World Drum Project started in 2006, out of the vision of Norwegian shaman White Cougar. A Saami shaman and drum maker called Berger Mikkelsen made the drum and soon after the first gathering was organised. While traveling sacred objects usually journey around a region, or a country, this object was meant to travel around the *whole planet*, (it's is an ambitious Drum). Every beat by every individual playing would contribute to the heart beat of the Earth Mother, as She calls out to humanity, giving us a wake up call.

The purpose of the World Drum Project is to bring attention to the critical situation our planet is in. We all know the story: war, pollution, ignorance, racism, inequality, etc. It seems humanity is going nowhere, if not downhill. The present economic 'crisis'¹ can be added to the list as well, a list that is much larger. Nowadays people and governments alike are slightly waking up, but lethargy and indifference are still our main targets.

We need real action from our Governments and politicians instead nice phrases - yet we also need to become active ourselves. There are many ways to take action, but one step is always taken before that: reaching a state of awareness. Awareness of the situation, awareness of Nature, awareness of how everything in Nature and on our planet is interdependent.



And so the thought behind the project is that the participant brings attention to the critical situation for Mother Earth. The people behind the project ask participants to make their ceremonies in public places, hand out flyers, inform the local press.

The Project started officially on September 21 2006 in front of the Norwegian Parliament. a small group of 120 people participated.

1

² It may be an economic crisis to some people, but it may be a blessing to others – since it may actually force us to look to other economic models, models not based on accumulation of goods, but of sharing, simplicity, quality, green production, etc.

After the first ceremony the Drum made a small Scandinavian tour to Sweden and Finland and then retruned to Norway for celebration of the Saami national day on the 6th of February. After that the Drum went to New Zealand, Hawaii and made a big tour on the US mainland. It came back to Europe (UK, Scandinavia again, France, Ireland) and is currently preparing its journey to Asia, where it may visit, the Philippines, Tuva, Nepal and other places.

To read on the travelroute of the Drum and it's adventures along the way, please visit:
<http://theworlddrum.com/travelroute.html>

And so when the Drum continues its journey, going from hand to hand, and the collective beating gets louder and louder, mingling the beating of our hearts with the Earth Mother's, we may one day reach a critical mass and help humanity wake up.

Of course this is one path to humanity's waking, one path among many.

Shamanism

The World Drum Project is based on a shamanic worldview.

In this worldview everything in the universe, and indeed the universe itself, is considered to be alive and has the ability and willingness to communicate with us. Everthing is animated, has soul. Everything has a form of consciousness, albeit often a different one than us humans.

The Earth Mother, or Nature, is alive and conscious. So are individual elements within nature, like mountains, rivers, whole ecosystems, rocks, oak trees and the smallest pebble on the shore of a sea. Ideas are alive as wel. Shamanic cosmology may differ from culture to culture, but there's nearly always (as far as I know) the division between an Ordinary Reality (OR) and a Non-Ordinary Reality (NOR). Harmony in the world comes from a healthy balance between OR and NOR.

Our ancestors are still with us, though not in a physical form, and so are, surprisingly enough, our descendants. They are mostly to be found in Non Ordinary Reality. We've inhereted our world from our ancestors and are meant to pass it on to future generations.

How do we deal with the legacy of our forebears? Do we squander it? And how do we deal with those 'mistakes' they have made? Are we capable of not reproducing them, and thus healing the illnesses of our ancestral lines?

What kind of world do we leave to our children and grandchildren and grand-grand-etc-children? Even if you have no physical children of your own, you still have descendants, funny enough, according to certain shamanic theories.

For some shamanism is an ideology, a religion or a path in itself. For others it is a set of practices, techniques of ecstasy and trance.

For some one this spiritual way is something they grew up with, while for others it is something new, perhaps a re-discovery of what long ago their ancestors were doing.

When I see the cave paintings in the south of France, I know that shamanism is my legacy as well. When I read about 'seidhr' and 'galdr²' and about European witchcraft I know it is also a legacy that has its historical roots within my cultural matrix. Some people consider that some of the Ancient Druids had a shamanic function - but that topic probably belongs to another article.

Tour de France

After I had first read the article on the World Drum in 2006, I decided to go and see this drum whenever I had the chance. Then life happened and I half forgot about it. Until the day I saw that the Drum would be present at the Conference for the Society of Shamanic Practitioners in the UK in 2008. *I didn't had the money to go and so asked the Gods if they could send me some. They must be pleased with me, because it arrived just after.* While I was on my way to the Conference an idea struck me: why not get the Drum to France?

The thought that when the Drum had finally come to France and had been welcomed by Finnish, Maori, Native Americans, English, Hawaiians, and so so many other people of different color, creed and nationality *before us*, gives courage and joy. And that after its "Tour de France" it would go to places like the Philippines,

2 forms of trance based sorcery and mediumship practiced in pagan Germanic cultures.

Nepal and Greenland, adds to the joy and courage and completes the feeling of being part of an ongoing project of hope, unification and growing awareness.

I contacted the Project people and they agreed, and so I started to make arrangements.

The Drum's journey to France was an odd one. Filled with contradictions, questionmarks and great surprises. It showed me that the Drum is not only an instrument of human awareness on a global scale but that it has lessons for individuals.

In short, we ended up doing our rituals in places we never expected to. Then the initial group of people I had in mind weren't interested in the Project at all, but this let us to another group who very much were. And then the Drum itself disappeared for a long period of time. It had been in Iceland and had vanished somewhere between that country and France. No trace of it. The French postal service could find it neither.

In the end we tracked it down - but missed our Yule celebration with the Drum.

(Which turned out to be a great ceremony whatever, even with out the Drum).



When it had finally been found, we stared working with it and could organise several ceremonies. We have had a few group rituals, as well as individuals approaching it with questions of their own.

Our main celebration was just before Imbolc. *Only a few had experience in shamanism, but this is not a necessity for rituals with this Drum.* The ceremony was worked on the land of one of the participants, in a natural setting. We had made a fire, I gave a small talk about shamanism and what was to be expected. Then we all drummed, rattled, and danced, in order to chance our state of mind, make us more receptive, while we called on the Spirits to be present. The first one I always

call on is the Spirit of the Fire. After that we hailed the Spirits of the Land, the Spirit of the Place, the Ancestors and our personal Deities. Then those individuals who wanted to beat the Drum, could (one by one), while others could accompany them, if so desired, with drum and rattle.

Everyone present played the Drum, working on both their personal questions as well as on more global ones. It was a strong and intense moment, since personal matters and world matters are so interrelated, and we cannot solve one without the other.

After the break, I had everyone around the fire again and we all drummed for Mother Earth and humanity's awakening. I had asked the participants to visualise, with the help of their guides and allies, the force of our determination for a better world to spread out from us, go into the sky and then spread out into the world around us. Asking the Drum to bless us, the land and humanity.

British Druid Order.

On youtube I had seen a video of the British Druid Order making a celebration on Dragon Hill with the World Drum. I have contacted them and asked if I could put some of the texts they have on their website in this article and they kindly agreed.

Dragon Hill, April 26th, 2008

Together with our friends of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, and others, we made a rite with the World Drum at Dragon Hill, below the Uffington White Horse. This magical site is linked, via the White Horse hill figure, to the Ridgeway, the prehistoric trackway that runs right across Southern England, connecting via other tracks with sacred sites all over Britain and beyond. The strong focus of Earth energies in the Hill made it an ideal place for our first rite. The ceremony was focused, strong and beautiful, the sound of the World Drum combining with many other drums and voices. The Drum was carried round the circle and played by everyone as we chanted: "Earth and stone, blood and bone, all are one, all are one," carrying the message that all creatures of Earth are of one substance, bound together in the great web of life. From Dragon Hill, by Dragon paths, the

message of reverence and respect for our Mother and all beings spread across the land. Days later, as I write these words, I still feel the heartbeat of the Drum and its message sounding through the Earth. May it be heard, clear and true, by all who need to hear.

Avebury, April 27th, 2008

The following day, we carried the World Drum to the ancient stone circles of Avebury in Wiltshire. The circles there are huge, wide and open, with giant entrances at the four quarters, suggesting that Avebury was intended for gatherings of whole communities. It has always seemed to me a welcoming place of powerful Earth Mother energy. It is linked with Dragon Hill by the Ridgeway. The Drum led a procession around the great banks of the henge to the southern entrance. There, the spirit guardian of the place was greeted with an ancient Greek hymn to Gaia, the Earth Mother. Three-quarters of those who joined our circle were local residents or tourist visitors to the site who had never taken part in such a ceremony before. As at Dragon Hill, everyone played the Drum as it was carried around the circle. Beautiful flute music wove the rite together. Again, the spirit was strong, the message sounded forth from the four gateways of the henge, spreading out across and through the land.

The Long Barrow

After the rite, two of us carried the Drum to the West Kennett Long Barrow, the 5,000-year-old stone-chambered tomb-shrine of our ancestors that stands on a ridge close to Silbury Hill. As Druids, we hold that such places represent the womb of Mother Earth, where the spirits of the blessed dead are held before rebirth. There, we played the Drum in the inner chamber. Shortly after the Drum began to sound, other drums sounded from the stones around us, and a hundred voices began to sing a high, keening song. The ancestors were with us. The Great Mother was with us.



Conclusion:

In my vision, humanity has to go further than economic change, than social reconstruction and introducing new innovative green technology.

A total and complete change of mind has to take place: we need to find back our place here on this planet. To restore our relationship with our Greater Parent: Mother Earth, and with our brothers and sisters, meaning all those that walk and swim and flies and grow and flow.³ We need to understand the interrelationship of everything with everything and cultivate awareness of the greater Web of Life of which we take part. If not none of the changes will have any long lasting effect and we will continue to glide from crisis to crisis.

The Drum is one of the ways to bring back this connection.

It can bring us awareness of ourselves, our situation and of the spiritual power of nature. Above all it unites us through the barriers of nationality, gender, race and the barriers of ideology and religion, since it is a project open to anyone and from whatever spiritual tradition.

the World Drum website: <http://www.theworlddrum.com/index.html>
my website: <http://willehartman.weebly.com/the-world-drum-project.html>
the BDO: <http://www.druidry.co.uk/theworlddrum.html>
Conscience Verte: <http://assoconscienceverte.blogspot.com/>

³ Think about it : once you concede to the concept of an Earth Mother, you may realize that She isn't just only your's, or only humanity's, but of everything. And so all animal, all plants, all rivers, hills, etc, are our siblings.

Bardic Corner: Presence, a Poem

I wondered why
The trees brush so closely
To my back door

They reach out
As though they have
A story to tell,
A dream to impart,
A life to give and live

Often times
I see the white tail
Flashing cognition
And escape
Rustle through the woods
Down to where the
Earth
Meets the
Stream

The stones that accent
The land,
Remnants of a time
When the Gods moved the boulders
Like checkers on a board
With rules so foreign,
So hard to grasp,
That the games are lost in time
And remembrance

The Moon,
From 1st quarter to full
From full into darkness,

I listen for the sounds,
Deep in the dark woods,
Teased by shadow and light,
Shadow and light,
Shadow and night,
The movements that come and go
Deep in the heart
That only the trees do know
Their arms and branches
Raised high against the sky

The winds that blow,
The thin branches
Form Oghams against the sky
And recount the tales of the Gods
From the beginning of time
To the next beginning of time
Scribed in nocturnal arboreal
Perfection against a sky

Dark and deep

And as the Moon darkens
And darkens
Until the least of light moves through
The sky
And the forest grows still and sullen
And the Oghams that are traced
Through the gentlest of breezes
I see,
Down by the river,
I see,
Down through the trees,
I see,

Shoulders and antlers,
Absorbing of light,
The river diverts and encircles his form
The earth whispers his name
And the Oghams repeat,
Repeat,
Repeat,
Dalon Ap Landu,
Dalon Ap Landu,
The trees do write,
Between the stars,
Between the quiet hours,
That begin after dark,
And last until the forests
Yield
For the last time

The largest of stones
Are moved to new places
Markers and memories
The God does assemble
The Earth is reformed
Into a language of stars,
And darkness,
And mystery,
That absorb into the Earth,
Like a memory that lives
In the back of the soul

A raccoon
Stands erect,
A God in the making,
And watches the river

Return to its course
He reads the terrain,
That says *Dalon Ap Landu,*
The trees whisper stories
And he steals away

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Koad Protogrove, Ohio

Bardic Corner: Imbolc

By Jackie Greer, Triple Horse Clan Grove

Imbolc. Awaken from a Winter of cold, gloom and aloneness. Journey in spirit beyond the clouds and fog. See the Bear, hidden all Winter in her cave-den, her heart barely beating and her breath slowed to a whisper.

Ever so slowly, her sluggish body feels the first stirrings of movement. Her heart beats a bit faster. Her eyes open. Her hideaway is still freezing cold, but the rhythms in her body respond to the Earth's first faint trembling. She gradually wakes, stirs and looks around her den, finding all still well after her long slumber. Soon, very soon, it will be time to look for nourishment for her Winter-starved body.

She rests a bit longer, stretching life into her weak, unused muscles. She slowly rises and lumbers to the entrance of her den.

With a start, you realize she is speaking, not with words but heartbeat to heartbeat and soul to soul.

"I wake, not in a rush, not to a jangling alarm clock, but to the gentle voice of the Earth, her perfect heart-rhythm, not a moment before She calls me to wake and not a moment after.

"I wasted away like your Spirit as the golden sunlight and rich bounty of Autumn gave way to the bleak cold winds of Winter. I hid in my cave, sleeping, resting, nursing my wounds.

"Have you nursed your wounds all Winter, locked inside with your hurts, angry at those who betrayed you? Has your soul withered to a shell, a façade that has lost its hope, desolate in the knowledge that it will never grow again? Never feel warmth or beauty again?"

"Yes," you manage to whisper despite your shock at Her insight. "What is left for me but a meaningless, endless procession of same-days, with nothing but grey, lifeless skies reflected in a grey, lifeless spirit?"

"The winter has been long and hard for you too, my Child," she answers gently. "Your soul aches for warmth, for light, for color. I have heard your heart-cry and I am here."

To your astonished eyes, the Bear's brown, shaggy body dissolves into emerald light. A beautiful maiden stands in her place, wrapped in a brilliant green kirtle pulsing with light from within. Her brow is tattooed with a waxing crescent moon and her young, unwrinkled face shines with the brilliance of sunlight. In her slender hands she holds a bearskin robe, tanned to pillow softness.

Your eyes fill with tears as she wraps the cloak around you and you feel warm and cherished as you thought you never would again.

"I am Bridhe, Lady of the Holy Well that refreshes the Earth anew each Spring until the trees cannot help but blossom forth in joy. I am the Light illuminating your soul even in times of darkness. I am the newborn lamb gamboling in tender new green grass, the bear cub ball of fluff rolling down the hillside in play, the crocus and daffodil that find their way from the Earth's cold depths to warmth and light and praise the Sun God with color and beauty.

"I have returned, my child, bringing heartfelt tears and spring rains to wash your soul. I bring light to warm your bones, color to refresh your eyes and inspiration to guide you to new insights and new ways of sharing them with your Clan. Your Clan needs you. Wake, dear heart, ask the Trees their names, feel the pulsing energy of the Stones. My Awen, my flame, brings your heart alive again to join the ancient drumbeat of the Earth. "

You bow your head in awe. "Thank you," you whisper. You look up, and she had dissolved into a million emerald stars that settle gently on the newly-green hillside.

News Articles



Green Burials at Sea

Carole Dunham, 69, had her remains memorialized on an offshore reef.

The concept of "going green" has taken new life in the death care industry as eco-minded companies tap into the needs of those like Dunham.

From biodegradable caskets to natural burial sites, death is becoming less of a dark matter than a green one.

Dunham, an avid scuba diver, chose an eco-friendly company that would combine her cremated remains to form an artificial memorial reef.

"She loved the idea of always being in the water as an alternative to being

cremated and scattered," said her daughter Nina Dunham.

Dying is arguably the most natural phenomenon in the world, but modern death rituals -- embalming with formaldehyde-based solutions and traditional burial in concrete vaults -- are not nature-friendly, according to environmentalists.

Along with its dead, the United States buries 1.6 million tons of reinforced concrete, 827,060 tons of toxic embalming fluid, 90,000 tons of steel (from caskets), and 30 million tons of hardwood board each year, according to the Green Burial Council, an independent nonprofit organization based in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

"We can rebuild the Golden Gate Bridge with that amount of metal," said Joe Sehee, the council's executive director. "The amount of concrete is enough to build a two-lane highway from New York to Detroit."

Sehee established a burgeoning network of death-care providers that have earned a green thumbs-up in the council's eco-certification program, the first of its kind in the industry.

"We want to reduce carbon emissions, waste and toxins in the death care industry and utilize burial to steward natural areas in the U.S.," said Sehee.

Among the certified eco-providers is Eternal Reefs, based in Decatur, Georgia.

"We're the surf and turf of natural burial," said George Frankel, CEO of Eternal Reefs.

The company takes the green movement to sea level by offering a living legacy in the form of underwater reefs used to create new marine habitats for fish and other sea life. The artificial reefs are cast from a mixture of environmentally safe cement and cremated remains.

Eternal Reefs was the logical choice for Dunham, who died on November 3. "She liked the idea of being a home for fish," said her daughter.

This month, Dunham will travel to Florida to see her mother's reef lowered off the coast of [North Miami Beach](#). Other families will join her, wearing shorts and T-shirts instead of dark suits and dresses. They will have a chance to decorate the reefs with flowers and other sea-friendly mementos.

A brass plaque will help Dunham identify her mother's reef. She intends to visit the underwater memorial by scuba diving there in the future.

"These reefs will be covered up with sea life in a very short period of time, so they make a significant contribution," Frankel said. The reefs last about 500 years, and so far about 300 have been dropped off the coasts of Florida, South Carolina, Maryland, New Jersey, Texas and Virginia.

Another eco-provider certified by the Green Burial Council is UK-based Eco Coffins Ltd., which allows its customers to design their own 100 percent biodegradable coffins, made from 90 percent recycled grid honeycomb cardboard. The company says the coffins release 72 percent less carbon monoxide in the cremation process compared to a traditional coffin.

"We are appealing to customers to make the responsible choice," said Sophie Dansie, founder and director of Eco Coffins. "The fact that standard chipboard is full of resins and formaldehyde, which is either released into the earth when buried or as emissions when burnt, is really unknown to the general public."

Buried yearly

- Reinforced concrete: 1.6 million tons
- Toxic embalming fluid: 827,060 tons
- Steel from caskets: 90,000 tons
- Hardwood from caskets: 30 million tons

Source: Green Burial Council

The vibrant coffins have even captured some attention in Hollywood. They have a cameo as props in the upcoming film "Powder Blue."

An eco-friendly funeral can also help conserve land and protect it from development. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is working with the Green Burial Council to become the first state-park agency to offer cremation-based green burials. The funds raised from the services will be used to acquire new state park lands.

"We want burials to be more sustainable for the planet, more meaningful for the planet and economically viable for the provider," said Sehee. "We don't want this to be a marketing gimmick that diminishes the social and ecological benefits of this concept," he emphasized.

The death care industry, like others, has its share of green hype. While it might be a bit macabre for some, CoffinCouches.com sells eclectic couches made out of used coffins. Founder Vidal Herrera buys unwanted or slightly damaged coffins from funeral homes that would otherwise go to a landfill.

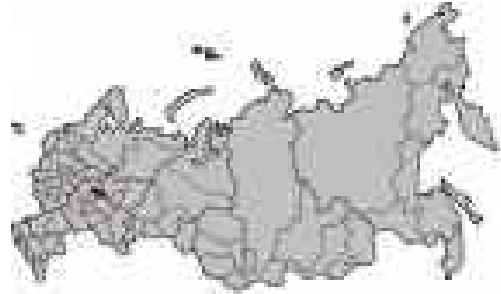
From these discarded materials, Herrera designs artsy Goth couches you might see in a music video or a tattoo parlor. Herrera's clientele includes musicians, actors and others who can afford \$3,500 for a couch.

Hype or no hype, the decision is a personal one that ultimately rests with an individual or family. Sehee emphasizes that the Green Burial Council is careful not to diminish anyone's choices or make recommendations about the greenest way to go.

"There are shades of green and people can distinguish one shade from another," he said.

Finno-Ugric Pagans in Russia, 2 Articles

From Ellen Hopman's internet sifting service
<http://www.allnewsweb.com/page8998996.php>



Europe's last pagans defend their faith on the net

Michael Cohen m.cohen@allnewsweb.com

When one thinks of pagans in modern day Europe one generally thinks of teenagers rebelling against Christian upbringings or older alternative type people referred to as Neo-Pagans. Many readers would be surprised that there remains one corner of Europe where at least in some areas Christianity never took root at all and the locals remain pagans just like their parents and their parent's parents before them. This corner of Europe is the Republic of Mari-El (Capital city: Yoshkar Ola) in the middle Volga region of the Russian Republic. The Mari people are classified as a Volga-Finnic people which means, as the name suggest, that they are related to the modern day Finnish and possibly the Hungarians. The Mari have their own language or set of dialects which are widely spoken throughout the republic. When Mari-el became part of the Russian Empire in the 16th century many Mari people adopted Christianity however many did not and remained loyal to the ancient faith. Some Mari fused the two religions to create the 'Marla' faith.

During the communist years the pagan faith was terribly repressed but is making a comeback now. In the more remote villages deep in the forests little has changed and old folk worship at holy groves as their ancestors always have. Needless to say many people who come families who were once devout pagans are now atheists or non-practicing, much like any religion. However all is not well with the Mari faith. In modern day Russia of Vladimir Putin the Russian Orthodox Church has made a spectacular return to power: and the church doesn't like its local pagans anymore than it did prior to 1917. The Mari faith struggles to get the protection and official recognition other religions enjoy. Recently ancient and holy groves venerated were vandalised and cut down and the authorities refused to help find the culprits.

Europe's last are now getting online and reaching out to the world to tell their story and explain their beliefs. Their website is an initiative of The Supreme Kart of the Mari Traditional Religion (MTR), and its energetic leader: Aleksandr Tanygin who represents at least 100 000 adherents. So what do the Mari believe in? According to their website they believe in nature the source of all that is good. They worship a multitude of gods, the most important of them being The Great White God, The God of Fire and The God of Wind. They also revere many Herculean style half-men half-gods, the most popular being 'Chumbulat' who is said to reside on a mountain in Mari-El. The MTR seems to be gaining ground and has recently received assurances by politicians that the needs of this faith will be respected. 'There is still a long way to go' comments one follower on an online forum. The Mari are worried that economic interests still pose a threat to their holy places. The Mari website assures readers than they have no desire at all to attract converts or impose their religion on anyone, nor do they regard their beliefs as superior to others, merely theirs. The website which has many fascinating photos can be viewed at:

<http://translate.google.com/translate?sourceid=navclient&hl=en-GB&u=http%3a%2f%2fwww%2emari%2del%2ename%2f2008%2f03%2f24%2fsobranie%5fdukhovnykh%5fliderov%2ehtml>

http://www.religioscope.com/notes/2002/030_mari_a.htm



MARI PAGANISM: TRADITIONAL RELIGION

OR DESTRUCTIVE CULT?

Keston News Service - 12 July 2002

Posted 12 July 2002 on RELIGIOSCOPE

In accordance with Russia's 1997 law on religion - for which it lobbied - the Moscow Patriarchate is obliged to respect historical paganism. In accordance with Orthodox belief, however, it would do the exact opposite.

The 1997 law's preamble states that religions "constituting an inseparable part of the historical heritage of Russia's peoples" are to be accorded respect. The law's official commentary specifies that such religions include "ancient pagan cults, which have been preserved or are being revived in the republics of Komi, Mari-El, Udmurtia, Chuvashia, Chukhotka and several other subjects of the Russian Federation."

This state of affairs does not appear to cause disquiet at the highest level of the Russian Orthodox Church, however. At the consecration of Ioan (Timofeyev) as bishop of the newly-created diocese of Ioshkar-Ola and Mari-El in 1993, Patriarch Aleksii II pointed out that Protestant missionaries pose a great danger to the republic but emphasized that local beliefs should be respected.

Unlike in western Europe, paganism among the Mari constitutes an unbroken tradition rather than a New Age construction. Mari anthropologist Nikandr Popov points out that pagan prayer meetings were permitted by decree during the Second World War - with collections being made for the front - and survived subsequent Soviet attempts to suppress them. Today Mari pagans gather together for approximately 20 festivals annually, at which they offer animal sacrifices in specially designated sacred groves. There are now 360 such groves in the republic and around 120 karts (pagan priests), according to one of the claimants to the title of head kart, Aleksei Yakimov.

Formerly chairman of Mari Ushem ("Union"), a Mari national organisation, Popov is assisting the pagan movement by deepening the karts' knowledge of pre-revolutionary pagan traditions since "they often didn't used to think about what was being done, or why it was being done." Popov stresses the benefits he believes the Mari draw from their faith: "There is a great richness in the ancient belief - it allows direct communion with the cosmos, which pagans call God, and emphasises the preservation of nature."

The benefits of paganism are disputed, however. According to local Baptist pastor Timothy Gerega, Mari-El has the highest suicide rate in the CIS - up to 17 a week - which he ascribes to the strength of local paganism. "There are usually two rival groupings, each with their own kart, in every village," he says. "The karts are constantly putting curses upon the other faction." In addition to prayer gatherings, Popov admits, traditional Mari pagan practices include magic healing and witchcraft (koldovstvo).

Locally, the Orthodox also have reservations about being obliged to respect a religion which, were it not for its claim to traditional status, they would surely rank as a destructive cult. In an interview with Keston News Service on 31 May, Bishop Ioan described pagan gatherings as "occult perversions of traditional paganism." Despite the fact that elements of Russia's 1997 law on religion kept the Orthodox "in a certain place," he said, they nevertheless related to paganism in Mari-El "as our consciences dictate - we regard individuals with respect, but view paganism negatively. There cannot be any question when we are talking about the truth - there cannot be multiple truths." Bishop Ioan is particularly concerned about support given to Mari-El "as a sort of pagan reservation" by scholars from fellow Finno-Ugric nations Finland and Hungary. "We cannot return to the Stone Age, but that is what they want. When people take up neopaganism in Europe they view it as an experiment, but for me it means the loss of people."

Asked whether he was able to express his views openly, Bishop Ioan pointed out that the 1997 law on religion outlawed incitement to religious hatred. "I can say what I like if I am asked in private," he said, "but I cannot criticise pagan representatives openly."

While Nikandr Popov confirmed that Bishop Ioan is not particularly outspoken about paganism, he maintained that there are some Orthodox priests "active in that line." Initially stating that "a certain threat" to the pagans' sacred groves came from representatives of the Orthodox Church, Popov admitted that he did not know for a fact who was responsible, but went on to describe serious damage carried out to one of the major pagan sites, Oak Grove, last year. "They sawed into a very important 100-year-old oak - a very deep cut - so that it would dry out. What blasphemy!"

The Mari republican authorities are unequivocal in their support for paganism - or, in the words of the local official dealing with religious affairs, Valentina Kutasova, "the ancient Mari religion". Paganism is officially one of the republic's traditional religions alongside Orthodoxy and Islam, and the leaders of all three are regularly invited to state events. (With some glee, Aleksei Yakimov related to Keston that the Orthodox had not wanted to see the pagans represented during Patriarch Aleksii's official visit to Mari-El in 1993, "but we got in all the same!") Leaders of the three traditional Mari religions are also, says Kutasova, members of a state body which meets every quarter in order to discuss implementation of the 1997 law on religion in the republic. It is in accordance with this law, she maintains, that the Mari authorities "work to prevent the traditional religions from opposing one another," and not due to some local policy.

Bishop Ioan, however, disagrees, seeing the revival of paganism to have taken place "purely on political grounds" - as a way of bolstering Mari nationhood and with it Mari-El's justification for relative autonomy from Moscow. To some extent Popov confirms this view. "Without the Mari religion our people might die," he says. "I don't see any other institution which would preserve them. The statehood which we were given does not protect our people." Here the 1997 law on religion is on the pagans' side. Asked if the Orthodox posed any threat to Mari paganism, Yakimov laughed. "They once threw us out of a building, five years ago," he said. "But they can't do anything against us as they don't have the right to."

Geraldine Fagan

Source: Keston Institute <<http://www.keston.org>>

This article by Keston News Service's Moscow correspondent was first published in Russian on 11 July 2002 on the religious affairs website of Russian Journal (<http://religion.russ.ru>).



English Village for Sale

LINKENHOLT, England (CNN) -- Hidden away in the hills of Hampshire lies the village of Linkenholt. This idyllic community, home to just 50 people comes complete with grand Edwardian manor house, cricket pavilion and grounds, blacksmith's forge, rectory, shooting grounds, 22 houses and grade 2 listed cottages.

It's all one could ever want from a quintessential English village, and now it is on sale for \$33 million.

Once owned by English cricketer Herbert Blgrave, the estate was left to his own charitable trust which has now put the entire village -- church not included -- up for sale. "That," joked local estate agent Tim Sherston, "is owned by God."

In times of financial downturn and falling house prices, the decision to sell up is curious. The trust says though it wants to free up the capital tied up in the estate so it can give more to charity on an annual basis.

Sherston maintains that Linkenholt is not only a rare opportunity; it is a sound buy. "Big time investors will look upon it as a safe haven to place their money because in five years you're going to see a great deal of appreciation here, so this is perfect." The new owner could also take away a significant income from the rent of the houses. [Watch as village goes on sale »](#)

Likely buyers are private individuals interested either in farming or the shoot, regarded as one of the finest in the south of England, according to Sherston. There has also been some foreign interest though he adds "the village is run very much as it has been for the last 200 to 300 years and it is the trustees' hope that the new owner will continue to run it in the same manner."

Provisions have been made by the trust to ensure the houses are not sold off in the near future. Only the manor house will be vacant for the new owner.

But locals do worry about their new landlord. The village thatcher Paul Raynsford told CNN: "I'd sooner not see a banker or someone who's going to asset strip it. I'd like to see a film star, pop star, footballer, someone who just wants to buy it so they can say 'I'm the lord of the manor.'"

Ray Smith, known locally as "the Sheriff," has worked as the estate's manager for 50 years. He says: "I'd like to see an Englishman live in the manor, run the farm and the shoot like it used to be."

Indeed, Linkenholt is idyllic; within the beautiful surroundings classified as an area of outstanding beauty, this is a village full of characters and local tales.

Ray's wife Elsie talks of how they met as teenagers cycling past each other everyday on the way to work along the same path. Stopping one day to help with her broken bike, they have been together ever since. He made the permanent move to Linkenholt when the keeper before him caused a local scandal when caught illegally shooting the ground's deer.

Two doors down lives Elsie's sister, who is married to Ray's brother. The sisters were born here, christened and later married in the church here, worked in the cricket club, and though their own children have moved further afield, they would never leave. Their father even died on Linkenholt's cricket ground during a game in the 1930s.

Having dedicated their lives to the village, the Smiths and childhood friend Alan Dewey, another original local, were given the houses in which they live by the trust. Ray adds: "I'm on holiday all the time. With a place like this to sit in the sun and look at all the views, I don't think you'd want to go anywhere else.

Though the media has shone a temporary light on Linkenholt, the hope after the arrival of the new owner is that the village will revert back to times of old, unspoilt and wonderfully English.

Reiterating the ideal of having a new lord of the manor, blacksmith Colin Boast adds: "We would like to see someone come in and take the village to their heart and to love it like the people here do."

MEDIA CORNER

I received an advance copy of *Celtic Cosmology* from Ellen Hopman to review, and here it is:



Celtic Cosmology

DVD Review by Rev. Sean W. Harbaugh Senior Druid – Sierra Madrone
Grove

Ellen Hopman is one of the leading voices of the Celtic Reconstructionist movement today. Her new video, *Celtic Cosmology*, is a lecture on the fundamental structure of the Celtic cosmos. *Celtic Cosmology* is intended for an audience just grasping the concept of Celtic Reconstructionism, and Hopman delivers a detailed description of the Celtic universe. To paraphrase Hopman, she states early in the video that Celtic Reconstructionism is about taking as much as possible from the Celtic past from scholarly sources, and recreating as much as possible in a modern ritual format. As someone who views himself a Celtic Reconstructionist, I was interested in this video and how Hopman would present Celtic cosmology.

According to Hopman, the Celtic cosmos consists of several divisions: two seasons (summer and winter), three cauldrons, four treasures, and five directions. The Celtic cosmology also consists of the world below the ground (the world of the dead and of water), the fire above, and the tree that connects them. The tree centered universe connecting the three worlds is similar to ADF's cosmology, and the two systems share the water below and the fire above. The concept of recognizing directions differs from ADF cosmology, although in some ADF hearth cultures, this is done in ritual. ADF recognizes hearth cultures throughout the ancient Indo-European world, whereas Hopman's cosmology centers on Celtic—most notably Irish.

Hopman's gives an easy to understand delivery of Celtic Reconstructionism, and she gives a great deal of detail of the Celtic cosmos. Her delivery is descriptive, and someone who has little or no knowledge of druidry will understand what she is talking about. Hopman also describes the druid order she belongs to, the Order of the White Oak, and how they are dedicated to Celtic Reconstructionism.

The video is informative and easy to follow, but there are a few negatives. The sound quality is poor. Although the opening music was at a normal volume, Hopman's dialog was very low; therefore, I needed to adjust my volume up dramatically to hear her speak. The video was poorly edited, and there are places where the viewer can see where it was paused and restarted.

Beside the audio issues, I was also troubled with several of the statements Hopman makes during her presentation. For example, Hopman states that the Celts invented the sausage, which is debatable. The first historical mention of sausage is in Homer's *Odyssey* in the 9th century BCE. Other troubling assertions include, "If you're going to do Celtic ritual, you must make offerings to water", "if you are going to be a druid, you must study Hinduism", and "Hinduism is the same religion (as druidry)". Also, Hopman's description of the Indo-European migrations is still hotly disputed in scholarly circles, and she delivers her theories of the Indo-European Black Sea migrations as fact. I also found that her negative description of her experiences of past involvement in the Neopagan druid movement as unnecessary in a video describing the Celtic Reconstructionist movement.

In conclusion, Hopman delivers a very good description of the Celtic Reconstructionist movement, and members of ADF will recognize the similarities in cosmology. The video is geared toward people with little knowledge of druidry. I would recommend this video to those newer ADF members who want a nice explanation of druidry and the three worlds, although at \$20 plus shipping, I believe the DVD could be priced a little more affordable. Hopman's *Celtic Cosmology* is nearly identical to ADF cosmology, and new members starting on the ADF Dedicant Program could find this video useful to help them understand the three realms that both cosmologies share.

Ellen's new DVD on Celtic Cosmology is now available for \$20.00 plus \$4.00 for s/h. (send to POB 219, Amherst, MA 01004). For the same price you can order a VHS (video) or DVD of Pagans – The Wheel of the Year (a look at rituals from many Pagan traditions including songs, chants, original music, and poetry) or a DVD of Gifts from the Healing Earth (hands on herbalism and kitchen medicines).

3 Soft and Gentle Computer Games

Editor: I'm including these three game that I heard about from an article in a magazine, and thought, "aren't they just the sweetest things?" Normally, as a mauve-blooded American, I enjoy blasting zombies or playing Tomb Raider, but IF I were to have time for games, I would buy these next, because they sound like they could bring a little peace into my life and sound lovely. Not sure how many hours your could play them, but then how many hours can you read Walt Whiman's "Blades of Grass"? They are all from www.thatgamecompany.com and I suspect it's a Japan-based company, but I can't prove it yet. Such a gentle, earth-is-good feeling from the reviews and pictures.



FLOWER

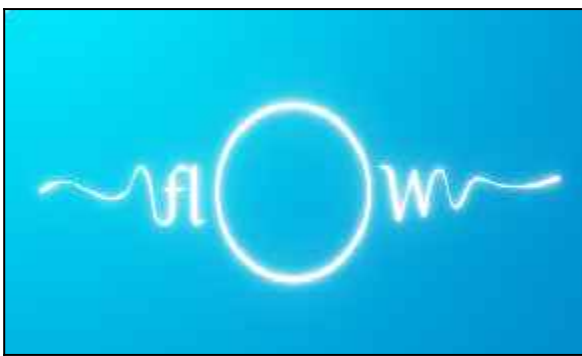
The developer that brought you the award-winning PLAYSTATION Network title fIOW is back with another concept that challenges traditional gaming conventions. Flower expands the team's tradition of delivering simple gameplay, accessible controls and a medium to explore emotional chords uncommon in video games. In Flower, the surrounding environment, most often pushed to the

background in games, is pulled to the forefront and becomes the primary "character." The player will journey through a beautifully vivid and changing landscape in this fresh and genuine game only on PS3.

The game exploits the tension between urban bustle and natural serenity. Players accumulate flower petals as the onscreen world swings between the pastoral and the chaotic. Like in the real world, everything you pick up causes the environment to change. And hopefully by the end of the journey, you change a little as well.



The goals and journey in each level vary, but all involve flight, exploration and interaction with the worlds presented to you. Using simple SIXAXIS wireless controls and by pressing any button, the player controls the lead petal and accumulates a swarm of flower petals as he moves at his own pace within the environment, causing the on-screen world to change. Flower's gameplay offers different experiences, pacing and rhythm to all players. Along the way, the environment will pose challenges to the player's progress.



Both pastoral and at times chaotic, Flower is a visual, audio and interactive escape on PS3.

FLOW

fLOW PS3 is the natural extension of the original fLOW web browser game on the Playstation3, distributed through the Playstation Network. It is the debut game of thatgamecompany.

Initially an MFA thesis, fLOW is a game about piloting an aquatic organism through a surreal biosphere where players and dive into the DDA (dynamic differing skills levels experience and

In fLOW for the one of 5 creatures, yourself in the crisp 5.1 Surround Sound.

for an organic experience that will allow you to glide, flit, and fLOW though the universe.



consume other organisms, evolve, abyss. With an embedded design of difficulty adjustment), players with can intuitively customize their game enjoy the game at their own pace.

PLAYSTATION3 you can play as each in a unique environment. Lose "deep blue" in full HD at 1080p and Use the SIXAXIS wireless controller

How do I purchase fLOW PS3? To buy fLOW, you need a PlayStation3 that is connected to the Internet. You can purchase the game through PlayStation Store within the PS3 cross media bar and download the game through the internet. It's similar to how you would buy a music through iTunes to an iPod. fLOW PS3 is sold at \$7.99 Also available for PC.



Cloud

Cloud is an acclaimed action flight game that allows players to realize their life long dreams of imaginative flight, manipulating clouds and creating weather. "A childhood dream simulator" is how many of its fans describe it.

It is about a

kid kept in the hospital daydreaming himself fly in the sky, making shapes out of clouds and eventually use rain to clean the world. The game was designed to evoke everyone's fantasy about clouds and flight, and their best wishes towards the nature.

The game is completed as a USC game innovation lab research project. It had over 500,000 downloads over the internet to your PC. And triggered a heated debate of whether video game is art.



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Submissions Policy: Give it to me! If you have news about your grove, written a little essay, like to write up a book or move, have a poem, saw an interesting news article in the paper, or have a cartoon, send it in to mikerdna@hotmail.com

I'll try to give credit to whoever the original author is, and they retain the copyright to their works, and we'll reprint it one day in a future binding also. Nasty works will not be published. Although my standards are not sky-high, incomplete works will be nurtured towards a publish-able form. Submissions are accepted from other publications and organizations, so you need not be a formal member of the RDNA to have your items published.