



[Return to Missal-Any News Desk](#) or [Return to RDNA homepage](#)



An Un-Official Publication  of the Reformed Druids

Beltane, Year 43 (May 1, 2005)

Volume 21, Number 3

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE:



- Beltane Essay: Bannocks
- News of the Groves
- We Get Letters!
- Announcement: Carleton Druid Collection
- Announcement: ARDA 2 Update
- Announcement: New Bard of the Reform
- Varieties of Druidic Experience, Pt 2
- Mystery of the Dragon: A Ritual Meditation, Pt 2
- Serial Story: Druidical Treasure, Pt 1
- News: Report Expects Druidism Growth
- Events: Interfaith Pagan Pride Parade
- Events: ACGA Gaelic Immersion Weekend
- Events: Saline Celtic Festival
- Calendar

eltaine, May Day, marks the beginning of the Summer and the Season of Life in the Celtic calendar. Tradition in the Scottish Highlands has it that there was a type of bannock of oatcake baked for each of the four major High Days: the bonnach Bride at Oimelc, the bonnach Bealltain at Beltaine, the bonnach Lunastain at Lughnasadh, and the bonnach Samhthain at Samhain. The Beltaine bannock appears to be the last survivor of the four, and we can still find accounts of it in modern times as late as the end of the 19th century.



F. Marian McNeil (of Silver Bough fame) includes in her book of Scottish recipes and their tradition and lore *The Scots Kitchen* this description of the Beltaine bannock that hints of its use going back to Druidic times:

"Oatcakes, prepared in a special way, were used from time immemorial in the rites of Beltane (May 1st O.S.). Thomas Pennant (*A Tour in Scotland*, 1769) writes: 'Everyone takes a cake of oatmeal, upon which are raised nine square knobs, each dedicated to some particular being, the supposed preserver of their flocks and herds, or to some particular animal, the real destroyer of them. Each person turns his face to the fire, breaks off a nob, and flinging it over his shoulder, says: "This I give to thee, preserve thou my horses; this to thee, preserve thou my sheep," and so on. After that, they use the same ceremony to the noxious animals: "This I give to thee, O Fox, spare my lambs; this to thee O Hooded Crow, this to thee, O Eagle!"

The pattern of this incantation follows the Indo-European structure of incantations I have read in Old High German *Zaubersprüche* (magical charms) and survive in *Gövidhlig* in the healing charms Alexander Carmichael recorded in his *Carmina Gadelica*. It also demonstrates the ancient Celtic concept of reciprocatation: I offer you this piece of bannock in exchange for protecting my flocks. A sacrifice or offering is made to a deity or animal in exchange for something in return.



James Frazer in *The Golden Bough* describes a Beltaine bannock tradition that may have its origins in Druidic sacrifice (there has been much discussion on whether the Druids did practice human sacrifice. It has become "politically correct" in some circles to say that they didn't, that Caesar's recording of human sacrifice was a way to drum up support in the Roman senate to launch military assault upon the Celts. While this is probably true, it is also true most ancient cultures did practice some form of it, the Romans included. It is even in the bible in the story of Abraham and Isaac. Look it up.) After the Beltaine fires were lit, the company prepared a custard of eggs and milk. After eating the custard and dancing and singing, as many bannocks were made of similar size and shape as there were members of the company. These were roasted on a stone in the embers of the fire. One of the bannocks was daubed all over with the charcoal from the fire. All the bannocks were put into a bonnet and each person is blind-folded he takes one of the bannock. Whoever gets the blackened one is to be "sacrificed" to Bel, "whose favour they mean to implore, in rendering the year productive of the sustenance of man and beast." In other words, a sacrifice or offering is made to insure the fertility and continuation of the flocks and crops and company. "The victim thus selected 'was called the *cailleach bealtine*' i.e. the Beltane carline, a term of great reproach." Once the victim was known, motions were made to through him into the fire, but he or she was rescued in the end. In some places he or she was spoken about as if the *cailleach bealtine* were dead. The victim had to leap three times through the flames and this concluded the ceremony.

Scholars such as Anne Ross find these traditions to be remnants of the ancient celebrations of Beltaine where human sacrifices and offerings were made. "Young animals were sacrificed at this fraught season, and there is some evidence for human sacrifice in the traditions. (Ed. note: see too Frazer's description of the mock sacrifice.)."*

*Miranda Green, *The Celtic World*, Routledge, 1995.

Indo-European structure of an incantation and ancient Celtic concept of reciprocatation: I offer you this piece of bannock in exchange for protecting my flocks. Sacrifices or offerings in exchange for something in return.



News of the Groves



For the [Full Grove Directory](#)

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota



Erp! Sorry I'm disorganized; I've been working on comps.

Nothing much to report, really. Allison has been ordained 2nd order; Will and Ian have left us, Ian for Russia. Our weather has been unseasonably warm, and I'm doing everything I can not to overheat.

-Hazel

Mike Scharding's Addendum to Carleton News:

Stephen Crimmins (AD '02-'04) has been accepted to the University of Washington's Department of History next fall to further study medieval history with a focus on Celtic Countries, and to further his study of Latin, Old Irish and possibly Anglo-Saxon and Welsh. Corwin (AD 03-05) is the throes of Comps exercise, and reports that after an odd winter, and warm spring, the trees are beginning to bloom.

Obituary in Carleton Voice: Robert G. Larson '65, Oakland CA, died August 6, 2004. He worked in Oakland as a longshoreman, and then for over 25 years as a printer. He played guitar, mandolin, and banjo, and participated in the Renaissance Fair for several years. He collected books and Celtic and Irish items. He is survived by two brothers and several nieces and nephews.

In a recent poll at Carleton, the top 5 favorite outdoor spots came up with 1: Japanese Garden, Bolio Fountain, Bald Spot by the Chapel, Mai-Fete Island and Hill of Three Oaks. "Once a distant spot in the Upper Arb, the Hill of Three Oaks has lost some of its prominence since the nearby Rec Center was built in 1999. Historically, however, it has been a popular location for picnics, Frisbee games, and concerts as well as representing a sacred spot to Carleton's Druids (an on-again, off-again student group formed in 1963 in reaction to religious service attendance rules)."



Sylvagaia/Elder Grove: News from France

Blessing to our Sisters and Brothers in the Mother,

Though we celebrated Imbolc with lots of friends, eating pancakes and all (as is usual in France on "Candlemass"-Imbolc), we totally missed out on any festivities or grandiose celebrations/ceremonies on Osatara/Alban Eiler. Then again we celebrated it by simply burning some candles and thanking Nature for all the Good She brings us.

We have a permanent altar that is changed every new feast. At Beltain we shall adapt it to the season, adorning it with what we will find in our gardens and forests. Moreover we intent to light a fire to symbolize the burning of all what we wish to lose from the Season of Sleep. Perhaps someone will jump over it... Whiskey might be drunk but at very moderate quantities.

May the Mother Bless You All

Sylvagaia Grove



Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

Due to my imminent departure in late May, I am calling for the dissolution of the DC Grove as of Summer Solstice 2005. There is currently no known successor. I released three books in April; the third volume of ARDA 2 (910p): Magazine Volume, Druid Chronicles (Evolved) 200pg, and Carleton Druid Compendium 100pg, so I'm quite exhausted by all this.

Cherry Blossom Festival was intensely beautiful in Washington, along with the Boys of Summer returning to DC after 34 years to ritualistically perform their 80 home-games to massive crowds. Throngs of pilgrims choke the temples of the Nation's founders and make life rough for the rest of us.



Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross - Muskogee/Mother Grove

The MOCC Muskogee/Mother Grove has entered into Conclave to consider the rewriting of the Rule, or at least greatly expounding on what is in it. The Conclave started out more or less seeking input from outside sources, but there was a bad experience, and so we decided to go with the Mediavel concept of a Conclave (to be locked with a key), and so there isn't much information going in and out of the discussion, with the exception of seeking the input of the other current and past

Archdruids of the MOCC.

From what was written prior to the enforcement of the Conclave, this is what can be spilled of the can of beans:

- 1) The Statement of Purpose, at least is being given the once over, as are requirements for membership (especially voting membership); the duties of Officers; the Colleges of Bards, Ovates and Druids (and other guilds, such as a Death Guild for those contemplating their eventual demise); and curriculum.
- 2) Not sure why, but the Curriculum is getting lots of attention. There was a vision some while back of a Seven Pillared Temple, and while playing with a search engine, I discovered a connection between a random search dealing with Seven Pillars and the Seven Liberal Arts, so the MOCC's curriculum might be getting a more all-inclusive focus with the Seven Liberal Arts as one of it's foundations and--still trying to get a handle on this one, but it's being agreed upon by everyone--The Museum & Library of Alexandria as the other foundation.
- 3) Those who were waiting on the Annotated Liturgy Manual may have to continue waiting. The disk was damaged, and it's turning out that the next version may no longer be a Liturgy Manual but a MOCC Sourcebook that covers a lot more than just ritual outlines.
- 4) Cross-ordinations and the acceptance of outside clergy into the MOCC will be brought up.
- 5) Ecstatic visions will be discussed. The topics under this heading will most likely include 'How do we determine what visions the MOCC will endorse officially?', 'Past visions that have come true', 'Past visions

that have NOT come true', and 'Current visions'. Discussions of Elven Tongues are also sort of expected, but in connection with the acceptance of outside Clergy into the MOCC. Snake handling will not be discussed, but symbolism of the Dragon will be.

6) Devotional prayer will be discussed, especially concerning the MOCC's custom of having a Prayer Tree on Saturdays and the experience that several of us have had with the Pater Noster prayer cords we worked with over the past few years.

Now, for a quick personal bit of journalling. About three days ago (I'm working a 20 day stretch of days without a day off, so timing is a bit surreal for me at the moment, as is grammar)a Past Archdruid of the MOCC-Muskogee/Mother Grove more or less remembered that I'm her erstwhile 'mentor' and brought someone to me who was seeking to have her as his 'mentor'. This gentleman, it seems, was delving into dark emotions, becoming overtly destructive, and worst, threatening to commit suicide. I gave this some consideration, and then pulled out my bag-o-crystals and gave him 2 small rose quartz crystals and a couple of amethyst. Then I looked him dead in the eyes and locked his gaze as I uttered the following geas:

"You ain't allowed to."

"What?" he said.

"You ain't allowed to," I said, "'cuz if I happen to hear that you went off and committed suicide, I WILL go into the Underworld looking for you, tan your scrawny little hide, and pull you outta there by your little 10 year old ear."

That's right. 10 years old. Guys, I realize that a bunch of us prefer to deal only with adults when it comes to our religious beliefs, not wanting to unduly push our point of view on children, but pay attention to the kids, because they have spiritual needs, too. Did the geas work? Well, Shannon tells me since our itty bitty conversation, he runs over to her house directly after school and it's like he's attached to her at the hip. No more references to suicide either.

Well, I guess I gotta run. This declare above all: Healing and Light and Peace.

Br. Myrddin A Maeglin,
Interim Archdruid,
MOCC-Muskogee/Mother Grove



Rogue River Grove: News from Oregon

Don't forget the Rogue River Protogrove's (Medford, Oregon) Special Event:

Friday, May 13

Afternoon:

Ogham, Rune and tarot workshops and readings available privately by RDNA's ArchDruid Stephen Abbott.

Evening:

7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Beltane Ritual/RDNA Ordinations/ History of American Druidry slide show Fund Raiser for RDNA's ArchDruid Stephen Abbott

Open to the public.

Unity Church, 540 Holly, Medford, Oregon Requested donation \$5.00 with all proceeds to go directly to Mr. Abbott

For details please email: [aigeann at earthlink.net](mailto:aigeann@earthlink.net)



Sierra Madrone Protogrove: News from California

The Sierra Madrone Grove has been busy. We had a wonderful Spring Equinox Ritual between several majestic oaks. It was attended by around 10 people, and we included an egg hunt for the kids.

We will be heading to Oregon to celebrate Beltaine with the Rogue River Grove. Archdruid Stephen Abbott will be holding ordinations for several members during the Ritual.

May your Summer be Blessed!

Sean mac Dhomhnuill



Poison Oak Grove, News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

After what has seemed like a long arduous year, Poison Oak Grove feels like it is coming back to life. The Arch Druid visited her mentor's grave up at Mount Shasta the second weekend in April. She brought a stone from the old altar and one from the new land to add to the rocks that encircle (it's actually in the shape of a rectangle) the grave itself

The new grove site is done! Our retired fireman finished it in time for Beltaine so we will be able to have a service. A little more excavating might need to be done along the back wall to round out the shape a bit, but we'll have to see how the wall fared after some short but steady rain over the past couple of days. The next phases consist of determining where the altar and toll should go, finishing up the deconstruction of the old altar, using the stones from the old altar to build the new one, and planting the grove's eight sacred trees.

Some of you may remember my laments at not being able to write the lead article for nearly the past two years and instead republishing ones from the first publication cycle of A Druid Missal-Any, and that the Missal-Any has been coming out later and later. A large part was due to the energy drain after my mother died. Another part has been due to the enormous and daunting shoes I've had to fill by assuming the role of editor for this rag. I've spent more time agonizing over writing than actually doing it, thinking I can't do this, I'm not good enough, I don't know enough to do this, etc. A few weeks ago one of the members of the monthly shamanic journey circle suggested a book titled *Psychic Power and Soul Consciousness* by Korra Deaver, Ph.D., when I told her of my interest in psychic development. The book described the First Occult Law: Energy follows thought, in other words if you think something, you'll send out the energy and manifest it. I was creating my own not-able-to-write demons instead of overcoming them! If I could do this negative thought process then I could do a positive one as well! As a result here you have the first original lead article in a year. May there be many more where that came from, and a Missal-Any on time!



We Get Letters!

A Little Speech from the High Druid Priest.

Concerning Druidism and Traditionalism from the Spring equinox issue.

I followed the link in the issue and read most of the threads going on there and I am a bit puzzled by it all.

Let me explain.

For the past 2 years I have been studying druidism on the Internet and reading books about it . Checking into the history of the druids and the Celts, and also following the Reformed druids closely.

This is mainly due to my Irish heritage and the will to learn more.

Some facts that I have found to repeat over and over again.

1.The Ancient druids were basically the priests, Scientists, philosophers, Healers and wisemen of the day, the Celts were basically regular - uneducated farmer type people..

2:The Celts had over 350 known gods and goddesses in their pantheon, many of them localized to a particular town and even to a particular clan.

3: The Druids kept no written records of what they did, how they learned , and their over all knowledge. Most of what we know of them came from outside observers from Rome and Greece.

4: The Druids were heavily into Star Gazing, Observations of Nature , and Scientific Discovery.

5: The Celts were not localized to one country but were scattered across many countries, each having their own Pantheon of Gods, languages and Traditions.

6:The Ancient Pantheon of Gods Were Families of Gods and deities. IE children of children of gods, etc.

This is just a sampling- the basics.

So keeping these points in mind I put forth the following for you to mull over.

1. If the Gods are children of Gods, Many of which replace their Parental gods in the pantheon, Who would our Gods be today?

2: If the ancient clans and towns could have their own Gods, Why can't we? By now many of the gods would be the great great great great great great ..20 times+... grand children of the original Gods

3: If the Original Druids were scientist Who used what was readily available to them, Imagine what they would be using today. Would they have stopped progress and kept with the old ways ? Or would they have evolved and embraced the newer technology and ideas as they came about with each new age.

4: If the Druids kept no written records and all we know is from outside observers, then we probably didn't get an accurate telling of them, and we are left to decide for our selves what they did and how they did it.

5: Traditions are made by people, for people and if each Celtic country had their own traditions, than it would stand the the Celtic clans and druid organizations of America would evolve their own traditions.

6: According to the books of the RDNA, the rites and rituals are loosely formed from the Episcopalian Faith. How does that fit in with traditional druidism?

7: And the last note to mull over:

If you research the ancient belief systems, they all revolve around nature, and gods of nature, and magic, life and death. From the Chinese to the Hawaiian islands. they had different names and slightly different duties and faces. But all were basically interchangeable

If one keeps with the basic belief system of nature is good, nature is the mother of us all, then what gods or goddesses that you decide to worship, or how you decide to worship them is up to you.

TO ME

True Druidism is where Science, Philosophy, Mysticism, and Healing converge to a central Point.

The True Druid is the leader, he/she is adept at Leading spiritual / Religious Ceremonies, Learned in the arts of science, both old and new, as well as metaphysics. Has learned the ways of healing and natural remedies. and is learned in the philosophies of the ancients as well as modern.

As for the magic, it comes in many forms and ways of working it and each may work it in their own way.

A druid must be in tune with Nature and always respect the spirit that dwells within. Should be ready to help a fellow man in need. And teach the true ways.

In the Palm*Grove, the Druids are the Leaders, We do not Require our following to consider themselves druids, as the Ancient Celts were not druids, but regular folks. We have People from many different Belief systems from the Pagan to the witch to the Christians and even one Egyptian follower. They come because they feel it is right, they follow their own house Gods and Deities and have very different perspectives. Ours is a meeting place where all solitaires of all Paths may come, learn and be a part of the whole. As it was in the beginning let it be again.

A Final Note. The RDNA is the ultimate Universalist Group.

Our Basic Belief is that all Paths that lead to spirituality are cool and one should try different ways to see which works for the individual person.

IE: as to how it started - from RDNA FAQ:

1. How did the RDNA start?

Answer Back in 1963 at Carleton College in Northfield, MN USA, some students objected to a mandatory attendance of religious services, so they protested by making a bizarre group and attending it regularly. The requirement was thus mocked and was withdrawn. Members found it groovy and continued to participate in the group in order to explore world faiths and personal paths in an open and honest way. As they graduated,



they started groups in other states. By the 1980s there were about 10 groves scattered across the country. Then Isaac Bonewits left to form Ar nDraiocht Fein (ADF) Druidism, which later splintered and soon Henge of Keltria Druidism appeared. Nowadays, there are lots of sophisticated groups in America that can trace their roots to our simple little group, which still putters about.

I have been Mulling over the idea of differentiating the leaders with the masses.or the faith. IE: The Spiritual leader: Druid, The Faith: Drudaic. the masses: drudaicans. OR something to that effect.

The 3 main tenets of the Palm*Grove are as follows and I quote:

1: Nature is Nature, but Technology is cool too,

2: Do only that which is right (for you),

3: Regardless of the Gods,The problems of the world can be solved using logic.

Think about it and use your head. Or just enjoy it, which ever fits you.

Blessed BE

Rev. (High Druid) James
Palm Grove Florida



ANNOUNCEMENTS



Carleton Druid Collection

When Isaac published *Druid Chronicles (Evolved)* back in 1976, some of the Reformed Druids disapproved of the emphasis he gave to Neo-Pagan aspects of Druidism. As a result, some at Carleton made plans to put together a simpler collection of materials, but the project eventually fell by the wayside and was forgotten. Almost 30 years later, it was revived, and in a retro-active republishing effort, a hypothetical reconstruction was made by Richard Shelton and will be released in May on the RDNA site. It contains the *Druid Chronicles*, letters from the early Apocrypha from Carleton writers, a few of the Early liturgies, a Calendar and Records of the Council of DAL, and the first Volume of the *Green Books*. As such, at less than 100 pages, it is a nostalgic and quite portable collection that the old-timers will appreciate.

ARDA 2 Update



After a great amount of work, and many broken deadlines, the Magazine Volume has been printed and has been sent to the bindery for its hardcover. The largest volume yet, at 912 pages, it has 19 issues of Druid Chronicler and Pentalpha Journal from 1977-1981, 69 issues of A Druid Missal-Any from 1982-1991 and 34 issues of A Druid Missal-Any from 2000-2004, plus a few issues of smaller newsletters through the years. All of them richly illustrated, constituting the most complete collection of modern Druidic magazines available to the public.

Unfortunately, few people sent more money after I mailed out the Main Volume at Samhain, at which time the Drynemetum Press had already gone deeply into the red. As a result only a handful of copies were printed, and most of the people who reserved a copy will only receive a printed copy of the introduction and contents and a CD-ROM with instructions to print out and bind their own copies and their own expense.

The MS Word (.doc) and Adobe (.pdf) files for the Magazine volume and a special Carleton Druid Collection anniversary issue will be available on-line by May 6th to 10th at <http://www.rdna.info/arda.html> and the mailed letters and disks should arrive at homes by May 23rd.



New Bard of the Reform

Greetings,

The winner was El, Druid of Texas, who submitted "Quiet Awakening" which won the prize after five rounds of fierce balloting by the Bardic Conclave of the RDNAtalk conference from a pool of 52 submissions. As prize, everyone should call El, the "Bard of the Reform", XLIII, until May 2006, and we expect a few more good poems from you in the meantime.

Quiet Awakening

the dreary days
come to a quiet end
as spring awakes
short sunless days
are replaced
by long golden ones
silent snow covered fields
melt away and bring
bird song and green leaves
the cold long Winter
yields its hold
to Spring in her glory

Varieties of Druidic Experience, Part II

By Croman mac Nessa

Version 3-4



Now, bear with me, in my explanation of Celtic Revivalism, because a history has to be told. I've told this several times, and each time I seem to remember more details and/or forget other details, and see the history in light of things which have happened since the last time I recounted it.

In 1997, I founded the Clann Nessa, which was initially only intended to be a study group. This was also the year in which I became a Member of the Henge of Keltria, a Celtic Reconstructionist group, of which I am still a Member. I had studied various Religions, Philosophies, and Occult systems since 1978, and had recently (1993) met Collin MacCaulley, known to most as "The Fluid Druid" (not to be confused with "Adge," who is also known as "Fluid-Druid," a Cornish expatriate now living in Ireland). Shortly before I met Collin, I had determined that I was going to commit to Celtic Paganism exclusively, though what I knew about Celtic Paganism at the time was largely spurious and based on the claims of Neo-Wiccan writers. In 1994, I moved back to Arkansas from Dallas, where I had been in grad school, and I began studying with Collin, face to face (he has since moved to Florida, alas). Collin is a Diasporan Celtic Tradition Bearer, a Draoi (as he uses the Irish spelling), not a Neo-Pagan, but a Pagan. The Tradition he teaches is derived from his family, believed to go back to at least the early 1600s, and influenced along the way by other teachings, including Cherokee Tradition and another branch of Druidism as taught by Harold Preece (also known as "Tex," Preece was a friend and contemporary of Robert E. Howard). Of course that Tradition lost bits of its original form along the way, and picked up other traditions, growing and changing, so that it's not what it was in the 1600s. The Tradition in question, which he and I have recently named "an Rian Fàisneach" (the Prophetic Way), is not Celtic Traditionalist, Celtic Reconstructionist, Neo-Druidic, or Meso-Druidic, nor is it, strictly speaking, Celtic Revivalist (though it's probably closer to this than the others); it's a Family Tradition, or FamTrad—note that the Nemedhian Tradition is a separate branch of an Rian Fàisneach, which has some differences from the Tradition as Collin received it and passed it on to me, which differences make the Nemedhian Tradition more definitely a Celtic Revivalist Tradition, rather than a FamTrad like an Rian Fàisneach. However, the Nemedhian Tradition (Beul-Aithris Nemedhiannach) has its roots in the FamTrad called an Rian Fàisneach, and includes elements of that FamTrad.

Anyway, I studied with Collin for five years, and at the end of that time (1999), he ordained me legally, recognising my previous studies as sufficient for the ordination, although there were gaps in my studies and training. I'm still filling those gaps in. It was shortly after this that I came online for the first time. In 1997, the Clann Nessa was an unorganised study group, and included elements from my own studies and my training with Collin. Gradually, it took on influences from the Henge of Keltria and additional studies I undertook, as well as vestiges of Scottish, Irish, and Welsh Traditions left in my family. In early 2001, a friend set up the site of Croman's Grove for me. I had intended this to be merely a website, a place where I would write my Druidic Thesis, but MSN communities allow people to join, and the Grove site started attracting applicants. This led to a sense of "pastoral" responsibility on my part, so I decided to enlarge the Clann Nessa, expanding it from a small study group to something more. Also in 2001, I became involved with another Celtic Recon group and a GT group, and they both had an influence on my beliefs, practices, and attitudes (I was no longer a part of that GT group at the end of the year and ceased being active in that Celtic Recon group late in 2004). By 2002, I had formed some opinions about both GT and Celtic Recon, and I wasn't completely happy with either one, so I began struggling to figure out exactly why I felt different from both. It was in early 2002 that I determined, for a variety of reasons, to found Corcu Nemedhiann as the larger Tribe in which the Clann Nessa would exist as the Aos-Dána. I reckon I first began using the term Celtic Revivalism about this time (maybe a little earlier or a little later), mostly to distinguish what I teach from either GT or Celtic Recon. So far as I know, I was the first person to use the term, and



those groups which now call themselves Gaelic Revivalists" have credited me with coining the term. Eventually (late 2002, I believe), I got involved with a confederation of GT groups (called ACTG, "An Conaidhm Thuatha na nGael," which means The Confederation of Gaelic Tribes), which was really a Gaelic Revivalist group (though they hadn't adapted that term yet), and realised that not all GTs were the same, that there are different hues of GT, and that some of them are nicer than others. My "involvement" with ACTG has so far only taken the form of friendship and an unofficial alliance. In 2004, with advice from Alexei Kondratiev, I also coined the term an Rian Sinnsearach (the Ancestral/Elder Way) to refer to Celtic Revivalism, Gaelic Revivalism, Gaelic Traditionalism, and those few FamTrads which are authentic (all of these Celtic/Gaelic Revivalist groups seem to have had their origins in Family Traditions, but have gone beyond that, and done additional research). So, to make a long story short, the Nemedhian Tradition which I see as a Celtic Revivalist Tradition, started out as a FamTrad, with influences from my solo studies, then took on influences from Celtic Recon, took on additional influences from GT, and has lately taken on more influences from Gaelic Revivalism (which it has also influenced) and the original FamTrad (an Rian Fàisneach) from which it sprang. The Tradition of an Rian Fàisneach, and the Nemedhian Tradition, have both grown and changed, for a variety of reasons. The Tradition as we have it is still living, and there have been, as noted elsewhere, technological advances which don't have to be abandoned (at least where they are ecologically sound), and social advances. Slavery, for example, was a feature of the Iron Age culture in question, but I think we're all agreed that, perhaps apart from some sexual role-playing (and I'm not advocating this sort of D/s thing, just noting that it's not my business to tell consenting adults what they can and can't do in their own bedrooms), it's a bad thing. What I'm talking about is Reviving the Heathen Tradition of the Érainn (and I think we could do likewise with the Heathen Tradition of the Pretani, that of the Laigin, and that of the Goidels, to allow and encourage diversity), specifically in its Religious elements, but only in the context of Celtic culture in broader terms.



What some call Druidism (what I prefer to call an Rian Sinnsearach, that is, the Ancestral or Elder Way) should be intrinsically part of Celtic cultures. There are six still-living general Celtic cultures (eight if you want to count Patagonia and Nova Scotia separately), but even within each these, there are still regional variations in legends, myths, folklore, and practice. In former times, every individual Tribe had its own customs, Gods, practices, legends, myths, etc., which, nevertheless, fit into a general cultural pattern. In these days, there are any number of variations of Druidism, some of which are more focused on Celtic culture than others, and some of which are not at all concerned with cultural context (these latter we call Neo-Druids). I'm going to be giving my comments from the perspective of Celtic Revivalism (not to be confused with the Druid Revival), which I'll explain, along with the other

variations (in broad strokes, of course), in the course of this discussion. As previously noted, my comments are based on my own personal perceptions.

When I say that I prefer the term an Rian Sinnsearach, I mean that I prefer that term for what I myself do and believe and live and teach. I also extend this term to other Celtic/Gaelic Traditionalists/Revivalists, and others who teach and live an authentic Celtic Druidic Family Tradition. My term "an Rian Sinnsearach" should not be applied to Meso-Druidry, Neo-Druidism, or Celtic Reconstructionist "Druidism".

Because the religious aspects of Celtic culture were not written down by natives until after the beginning of the Christian period, we have to note two things: 1. the Tradition did not ossify but continued to grow and change, and 2. we can't know for sure what it was before the Christian period, or aside from the record given by outsiders (such as the pre-Christian Greeks and Romans). Certainly the influence of Christianity beginning in Ireland in circa Fourth Century AD had some effects, as for example with regard to the Brehon Laws, and as can be seen in the recorded Triads. As time went on, the pre-Christian aspects of the Tradition were retained more fully in rural areas and Christianity became dominant in urban areas. However, as late as the 1600s in Ireland and the 1700s in Scotland, there were still functioning Bardic schools in



existence, and by that time, Irish and Scottish people were beginning to migrate to new lands. It must be noted that Druidism was always an Oral Tradition, which leads me to believe that it was always growing and changing, and did such more in the new lands than in the old lands where some of the Tradition had been written down (albeit not necessarily with accuracy and definitely not without interference by Christian scribes).

In the late 1600s (primarily in England), certain antiquarians began to look to the native Celtic Tradition in search of an alleged "primitive theology," which many felt would somehow "prove" the validity of Christianity. As a consequence, they ignored evidence of polytheism, or claimed that it was a later "perversion" of the original "primitive theology." Some of them (e.g. Iolo Morganwg) even forged materials which they claimed were authentic Welsh Tradition. These antiquarians eventually came up with a system that resembles nothing so much as Gnostic Christianity, and passed it down to the present day, calling it Druidry. This Druidry, which people involved in Celtic Studies name Meso-Druidry, arose during what was called "the Druidic Revival" (not to be confused with Gaelic Revivalism or Celtic Revivalism). As time has gone on, some of the groups whose origins were in the Meso-Druidic "Revival" have in fact taken the time to do more accurate research, and have in some cases moved closer to what Heathen Druidism really was, but most continue to teach and practice their own system, which bears little resemblance to authentic Celtic Tradition. At least one Meso-Druidic group, OBOD (the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids) has, under their present Chosen Chief, even moved toward Neo-Paganism and become more like Wicca (which is not now nor has it ever been Celtic, and which has its origins in the 1930s-1950s and so cannot be seriously called ancient or the like).



In the late 1800s, certain literary figures (e.g., Lady Augusta Gregory, W.B. Yeats, etc.) began an attempt to revive Celtic Tradition so as to provide a native cultural framework for nationalist movements in Celtic nations. This is often called the Celtic Twilight movement, though some have also called it the Celtic Revival. Victorian sensibilities were involved, so most of the literature produced was rather sanitized, with the frank references to sex and gore found in Old Irish literature excised from the modern Irish and modern English translations. Nevertheless, it was out of this movement that influence came for what would later become Celtic Traditionalism, Celtic Revivalism, and Celtic Reconstructionism. It's probably fair to say that the Celtic Reconstructionist movement came before the others, in terms of getting organised (but the Family Traditions which were beginning to spawn the Traditionalist camp were much older). By the late 1980s, this Celtic Reconstructionist camp was pretty well established, and already forming legally incorporated religious groups in the USA. However, before I continue with this discussion of the GT/CRev/Crecon movements, I should backtrack a bit and discuss Neo-Druidism.

In the Spring semester of 1963, at Carleton College, located in Minnesota, a group of students decided to protest the school's mandatory policy that all students had to attend a certain number of religious services or meetings each semester. The school allowed students to attend such functions, regardless of what religion was involved (theoretically, though certain religious groups didn't qualify, for whatever reasons), so these students hit upon the idea of starting their own religion (initially just as a sort of whimsical protest, but quickly growing into something more). Thus was born the Reformed Druids of North America (RDNA). They set up two tenets, which are:

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.

and

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 men do live, yea, even as they do struggle through life are they come face to face with it.

(Usually summarised as: 1. Nature is good, and 2. Nature is good.)

Their earliest ideals were apparently partially based on the brief discussion of Celtic myths in Bulfinch's Mythology (which wasn't very accurate). In June of 1964, the requirement was repealed. However, RDNA didn't go away. In fact, the group continued to exist and grow. They don't restrict their membership to Pagans/Heathens/Neo-Pagans alone, and have had and continue to have a sizeable number of Christians, Jews, Buddhists, and members of other religions within their ranks. As time went on (1968-1969), one of the Arch Druids of the Berkeley Grove of RDNA, P.E.I. (Isaac)



Bonewits, felt that the RDNA should be Neo-Pagan, but there was no way to enforce this, and the majority of members apparently didn't favour such a change. As a result, Isaac founded a sub-group within the RDNA, which he called the Schismatic Druids of North America (SDNA), which was later absorbed by another sub-group, the New Reformed Druids of North America (NRDNA). In time (1983), Isaac formed an independent group, ADF ("Ar nDraíocht Féin," which is Irish for "Our Own Druidism," and which is also called A Druid Fellowship). This was another Neo-Druid group, but with an interest in scholarly accuracy, devoted to reconstructing the various pre-Christian religions of the Indo-European peoples. Eventually, some of the members of ADF decided that Indo-European Reconstructionism was too broad, and they felt the term Druid and the like should be reserved for more distinctly Celtic types. In 1986, these dissident (for want of a better term) members of ADF founded another independent group, the Henge of Keltria, which was part of the Celtic Reconstructionist camp, though not called that yet.

The term Celtic Reconstructionist began to be used widely in 1992-1993, though the idea of Reconstructionist Paganism had been around since the mid 70s (and in fact, ADF is both Neo-Druidic and Reconstructionist Pagan, but not exclusively Celtic). It was 1994 when this camp began to really gain momentum, with the founding of certain e-lists (most notably Nemeton-L, not to be confused with Nemedhiu-L). The Celtic Reconstructionist camp is very much involved in scholarship and research with the goal of reconstructing a Celtic Pagan path. The actual beginnings of this movement can be traced to the Victorian-Era Celtic Twilight movement, and subsequent scholarship in Celtic Studies. There are many Celtic Reconstructionist sects, including the Henge of Keltria, IMBAS, and others. These groups tend to focus on the religion alone, apart from Celtic cultural frameworks. Most Celtic Reconstructionists seem to be individualistic rather than tribalistic, and have little or no interest in living in Tribal communities. There are some Celtic Reconstructionist groups who claim to be doing Celtic Reconstructionism while actually using this as an excuse to rip off ideas from "the Noble Savage" and/or "the Mystic East," instead of doing actual research into Celtic Tradition, and there are some who have made a religion out of partisan politics and/or Political Correctness. Note, however, that there are shades of Celtic Reconstructionists, some of whom are closer to Celtic Revivalists than others (and vice-versa).



The Gaelic (and Celtic) Traditionalist movement also traces some of its inspiration back to the Celtic Twilight movement and the Irish and Scottish nationalist movements of the Victorian Era, but has more than inspiration. The Gaelic/Celtic Traditionalist movement actually grew out of several Family Traditions, that is, Traditional wisdom and teachings passed down in families whose origins go back (primarily) to Ireland and Scotland. These Family Traditions are still alive in Scotland and Ireland, in the Irish and Gaelic speaking regions, and in the Gaelic speaking province of Nova Scotia, Canada. Some of them have also managed to survive in non-Gaelic and non-Irish speaking areas where descendants of immigrants from Ireland and Scotland dwell (and in areas like North Carolina, where Gaelic was still spoken until the beginning of the 20th century). Some Tradition Bearers have chosen to teach people from outside their families, some coming

from Ireland and Scotland to do so among the Diaspora, and some receiving students who go to Ireland, Scotland, and Nova Scotia to study with them. In the 1980s and 1990s, some of these people began to band together into Tuatha and Clanna (Tribes and Clans), and to use scholarship to help them restore the Tradition of their Ancestors. These people are quite serious about language studies, some even insisting that no one is a

Celt who does not speak a Celtic language fluently. They see no need for Reconstruction, since the Tradition is still very much alive (although endangered). Celtic Traditionalists are Tribal people, and most accept both Pagan/Heathen members and Christian members, so long as they are culturally Celtic (or Gaelic, for the GTs), or working to become so. Note that, although there are a handful of racist individuals who consider themselves CTs, Celtic Traditionalism is not about race or blood, but is rather about culture.

From the late 1990s to the present, some of us who have learned a Family Tradition and may have had involvement with either/both Gaelic/Celtic Traditionalist or/and Celtic Reconstructionist groups began to diverge into our own camp, the name of which I myself coined. This camp is the Celtic Revivalist camp (which name has been adopted by most Gaelic Traditionalist Polytheist groups, who now call themselves Gaelic Revivalists). At first, I was intending the term to reflect a third path, not Celtic Reconstructionist or Gaelic Traditionalist, but sharing elements with both, and not merely a middle path between them. As time went on, however, I encountered the Gaelic Revivalists who were doing much the same thing I was doing (and who later borrowed the term I coined to refer to themselves, in order to distinguish themselves from the Gaelic Traditionalists). These Gaelic Revivalists (or Gaelic Traditionalist Polytheists) do not feel that Christianity should be acceptable as culturally Gaelic, not even in the form called Celtic Christianity. They also tend to be less obnoxious than the GT/CT folk (this is a generalisation), and while still serious about Celtic languages, they're more tolerant of beginners than the GT/CT folk seem to be. The goals of the Gaelic Revivalists and Celtic Revivalists also include scholarship and Tribal living within a Gaelic or Celtic cultural framework. For us, Druidism, or more properly, an Rian Sìnnsearach, is much more than a religion; it is an entire cultural way of being. The essential difference between Gaelic and Celtic Revivalists is that, while we both work with the Traditions of Ireland and Scotland, the Gaelic Revivalists work with Irish or Scottish Gaelic Traditions, whereas we Celtic Revivalists work with the Traditions of the specific Celtic cultural groups that made up Ireland and Scotland, of which only one of four is Goidelic (or Gaelic). We also work to revive Pretanic (Pictish), Ivernian, and Laiginian Traditions, as well as Goidelic Tradition. Again, there may be some racist individuals who believe themselves to be Gaelic Revivalists or Celtic Revivalists, but I know of no GR/CeltRev Tribe that would accept such individuals, nor sexist or homophobic individuals. Gaelic/Celtic Revivalism, like Gaelic Traditionalism, is about culture, and not about race or blood, nor is it about one's sexual organs or sexual preferences (nor, for that matter, is it about one's gender identity).

This article is a work in progress. Addenda et Corrigenda will be found at the following URL address:
<http://groups.msn.com/CromansGrove/varieties.msnw>

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Mystery of The Dragon: a Ritual Meditation

By MaDagda
Duir De Danu Grove

For the Feast of Beltane Introduction

In this version of the meditation, the focus is to bring about manifestation. Samhain is the time, which begins the Time of Sleep. During this time, life is dormant, inactive. It is a time of for life to silently gather strength in order to return anew at Beltaine, which begins the Time of Awakening. For this version, we return to the Heart of The Dragon in order to awaken and call The Dragon forth, asking for It to lend It's power and strength to bring

manifestation to the seeds which were planted in the Dragon's heart at Samhain.

This version of the meditation is identical for the Samhain version in form, but altered to reflect the intent and purpose as related to time of Beltaine.

The Beginning

Everyone holds hands around the ritual area. The participants are to close their eyes and take several deep breaths and as they breathe they are to think of The Dragon.

Leader: I would like you now to begin thinking about The Dragon. The One who was awakened at Samhain. The ancient one who has existed before the dawn of time. The one who is everywhere and is everything. It's scales glisten as the leaves of trees. It's warmth emanates from the sun which warms the Earth. It's blood is the flowing waters of melting snow. It's roar is heard in the howling winds. And It's Spirit lies in the wisdom of the cycle of sleep and awakening.

We are here to seek the Dragon, so that we may bring forth those things which we desire. Those things which were planted within the Heart of The Dragon and dreamt of during the Time of Sleep. To make manifest these things we will and desire to change, thereby bringing them forth from darkness into light. Therefore we seek to awaken and call forth The Dragon, but to do so, we must enter the Mouth of The Dragon and descend into the Dragon's heart.

The Mouth of The Dragon

Leader: You now find yourself standing before the mouth of a cave. You notice that along it's edges, on both top and bottom are large, vertical rock formations that appear as if they were teeth. You now walk into the cavern into the cavern which is dimly lit and head down a narrow passage that ends at the top of a stairway.

The Spiral Staircase

Leader: You descend the stairs and soon discover that the stairway is a spiraling staircase. You travel downwards, spiraling deep into the Earth. After a while it seems that you will never stop, yet you continue onward.

The Cavern of the Tap Root Forest

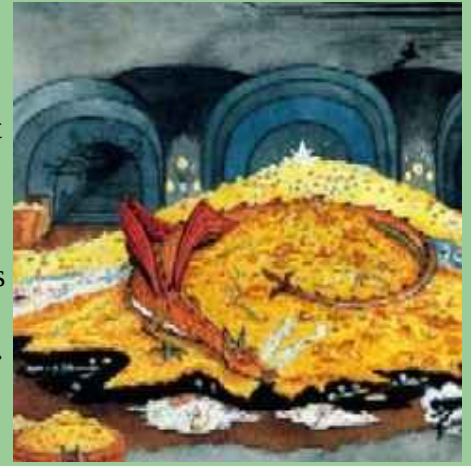
Leader: Soon you descend into a cavern filled with tap roots that plunge from the ceiling and then bore down into the floor. It is as if a forest of these tap roots lay all about you in all directions. The air is thick with the rich, loamy scent of the Earth. You take note of the varying sizes of these roots; some are as big as tree trunks while others are as thin as wire. You also notice that this cavern is alive with tiny creatures; insects, spiders, reptiles, and other such animals who have shunned the light of the sun and live in eternal darkness. After taking some time here, you now proceed your descent of the Spiral Staircase, going deeper into the Earth.

The Well of Hidden Flowing Waters

After some time, you begin to hear a faint sound of flowing water, and as you descend the staircase, it becomes louder and louder. You soon come to a landing beside an underground river and the waters roar as they flow from a waterfall at the end of the cave. The air is moist and cool. You feel refreshed standing along the shore of this river. If you wish, you may drink of the waters. As you drink in the waters, you find them to be cool and refreshing, giving you renewed strength and vitality. When you have finished, you continue down the Spiral Staircase.

The Vault of Hidden Gems

After going deeper down the Spiral Staircase, you end now in a cave filled and glowing with every sort of gem known. The room is brightly lit and it seems as if the gems themselves are the source of light in this chamber. You see before you giant diamonds, clusters of rubies and emeralds, long spires of quartz, gems of all shapes and size. As you look around you see to one wall an exit which is ringed about with giant points of amethyst, arranged as if they were teeth within a gaping mouth. You walk towards this exit and find yourself again before a spiraling staircase. You now step down the staircase, once again going deeper, deeper, and deeper within the Earth.



The Heart of the Dragon

Leader: After what has seemed to be forever, the stairs now end in a brightly lit, circular chamber. You notice the entire room; the walls, the floor, and the ceiling are made of crystal as if this room was cut out from once giant crystal. As you enter the chamber you are filled with wonder and bursting with the urge to ask about what you see.

Note: If there are enough people, assign someone to play the Voice of the Seeker.

Voice of the Seeker: What is this place?

Leader: here you enter the Heart of the Dragon. Here all things all things meet their opposites and all things are manifest.

Voice of the Seeker: The past?

Leader: And the future.

V.S. Oblivion?

Leader: And knowledge.

V.S.: Emptiness?

Leader: And Fulfillment.

Here within the Heart of The Dragon fear meets courage, weakness meets strength, wasting away meets health, hate meets love, and folly meets wisdom.

Within the Heart of The Dragon you may bring forth those dreams dreamt during the Time of Sleep and make manifest those aspects in your life which you will to change. Now take some time and think of the dreams you wish to manifest and as you do so, I will call forth The Dragon so that through the power and strength of The Dragon, we will bring forth our dreams into being.

Awakening The Dragon

Here the Leader repeats the Charm of Making x9

Anail Nathrock Uthvoss Bethudd Dochiel Dienne

Leader: We, who are assembled here within the Heart of The Dragon, call You forth. Awaken and arise O' Ancient One! Mighty One, aid us with your power and bless the dreams we will to manifest.! Great Serpent, out of darkness and into light, WE CALL YOU FORTH!

Note: The leader will let out a roar at this point signaling the presence of the Dragon.

Leader: Behold and feel The Dragon within you. Feel It move through you, out of you, and then back into you. Feel yourselves joined together in this circle enclosed and linked together by the power of The Dragon. Feel the Power of the Dragon. Feel It's strength and It's wisdom.

Know that aided by The Dragon, the changes we have dreamt of during the Time of Sleep shall come to pass. Know that the seeds of change you have planted within the Dragon's Heart will burst forth, full of life and promise.

Know also that you may call upon The Dragon whenever you have need. For the power, the strength, and the wisdom of the Dragon are yours. Here lies the Mystery of The Dragon. We are all part of The Dragon, therefore, we are The Dragon.

Now breathe deep. Breathe in the Essence of The Dragon. Feel it in your feet and ankles. From your ankles to your knees, to your thighs, and up into your hips. Bring the power of the Dragon from your hips to the your stomach and now up to your heart. From your heart, bring the Essence of the Dragon up to your shoulders and then down your arms.

Feel the power of The Dragon move about the circle as it moves to the person next to you and then back into you. Feel it leave and enter you at the same moment. Feel yourselves joined within this circle by the power of The Dragon. Savor this moment. Remember it always, for we are all one, bound by the Essence of The Dragon, because we are The Dragon.

Now bring the Essence of The Dragon up from your shoulders to your throat and then to your forehead. From your forehead, bring the Essence of The Dragon rise to the top of your head and form either the wings or horns of The Dragon there.

Now, let go. Release the wings or horns of The Dragon and watch them fly within the circle and then out of it, soaring into the universe, breathing deeply as you do so.



Ascending the Spiral Staircase

Leader: It is now time to depart, yet before we leave, take a moment to thank The Dragon as It returns to It's rest. (pause) When you are ready, go to the spiral staircase and begin to climb up to the Mouth of The Dragon. Soon you reach the Vault of Hidden Gems. You continue on and reach the Well of Hidden Flowing Waters. If you wish, you may stop and drink of the waters, feeling them invigorate you to the core of your being. When you have finished, you continue your spiraling ascent and reach the Cavern of the Tap Root Forest. You breath in the cool, rich, earthy smell of the cavern, feeling yourself becoming grounded. You continue onwards and upwards and climb quickly, spiraling out of the Earth and soon come to the cave which leads to the Mouth of The Dragon. You follow the passageway down, coming to the

Mouth of The Dragon, where you step into the warm, shining sun.

Now take a few deep breaths, and be here, in this place from whence you began your journey. Be here at this present time. When you are ready, open your eyes. Should you feel the need, you may return a portion of The Dragon's power to the Earth.

SERIAL STORY



Druidical Treasure

A.k.a. "The Dave Fisher Code"

Written by B. N. Tavern
For the Public Domain, 2004 CE

Part One of Eight

In photos, "Matt" is the blonde played by Ian Hill
"Sean" is dark played by a fellow called Raven,
Filmed by Stephen Crimmins On-site at Carleton College

(Place mouse over pictures for secret messages.)

Foreword

Nestled serenely in the Cannon River Valley about 35 miles south of Minneapolis is a small Midwestern private liberal arts college called Carleton in the city of Northfield. For about a century and a half, the "Harvard of the Midwest" has been renowned for its fierce intellectual reputation, powerful Ultimate-Frisbee teams and dedicated generous alumni. But as we'll read here, there are deeper currents and mysteries that abound under the bucolic mask of Northfield's slogan; "Cows, Colleges and Contentment." This is a story of two adventurous students seeking to lift the veil and uncover a hidden Druidical treasure in an eight-part story. It is nearly entirely fiction, with only a few actual historical figures thrown in. There are many unfounded suppositions and assertions, but do not let that interfere with your enjoyment of the story.

Chapter One: Sean and Matt

It was approaching Thanksgiving, and Carleton students had finished their fall 10-week trimester and were eagerly looking forward to the six-week winter break, until New Year's would bring the winter trimester. Outside, it was still a balmy 14 degrees, by Minnesota standards, with only six inches of snow. In Burton Hall's basement dank dining lounge, dozens of students who had not taken the last bus to the airport were bitterly resigning themselves for a rather dull long period stuck on a mostly vacated campus over an unsatisfactory brunch.

Two of the students, Sean and Matt, were unusually vocal in the dismal atmosphere. Sean, a lanky, dark-haired junior, dressed in conservative dark clothes, stood and slammed the table glowering at Matt with misplaced rage.

"You just don't understand, Matt," he growled. "If my father's business doesn't recover this spring, and I don't find a scholarship, there is no way I'm going to be able to pay for my tuition next fall. I might as well quit now and begin a job and start saving money. You're lucky, you have a football scholarship."

Matt leaned back and raised a finger in protest, "Hey now, you know, I only learned football after I got here, I had to work hard to excel in that sport. Carleton only let me in because of my All-American-Cricket athletic status in high school..."

"Not much competition there, eh?" Sean sneered.

"All I'm saying, Sean," pressed Matt with wide spread hands and a disarming smile, "is that there are other alternatives to responsible, dull wage earning to pay for things."

"No, there aren't, short of a lottery ticket miracle," Sean waggled a finger back and forth, "and I have tried four of your crackpot money schemes already." Counting off his fingers, he continued; "Student-run pizza company: Failed in two weeks. Selling vacuum cleaners door to door: that just sucked. Escort service for us to accompany St. Olaf College Women: Embarrassingly failed, not a single call."

"That was your fault. But that one was fun to try, eh?" Matt raised his eyebrows pointing at Sean.

Sean continued, "Finally, Internet start-up company: neither of us know how to program. Eight hundred dollars down the tubes. Why should I listen to another plan?" Sean morosely stirred his soup.

"Hey, now Sean, I know I haven't come through before, and my own football scholarship might be downgraded this spring, so I've been really thinking about this carefully, too." Matt pulled out a copy of the weekly Carletonian newspaper and spread it on the table pushing it towards Sean. "Read this advertisement. Right there. No really, look at it."



Sean reluctantly put down his cheeseburger and glanced at the article as if he were being offered a steaming hot pile of doggy poo.

"The claimant at Carleton should seek his loot.
May your spirits find the message divine.
Go and seek your spiritual roots
and read a round the truth between the lines! -1963."

"Huh? What's this? The grammar's messed up. A treasure hunt?" Sean tapped angrily on the article.

"Yeah, a treasure hunt. Pretty cool huh? It should be real easy, just like Indiana Jones." Matt effused with his eyes in the distance, his hands cradling piles of imaginary gold coins. Or at least, that's what Sean hoped Matt was thinking.

"Hellooooo! This is not time for 3rd grade games in the backyard. At least 99.9% of treasure hunts never pan out and you end up a dry skeleton on some desert mountainside. And you don't remember that Indiana Jones nearly died a dozen times in those movies, and I prefer not to come close, not even once, so call me crazy. No wait, I'm going to call you crazy!"

"But Sean, most of the time, they didn't know where to look, or if they did, it was already gone. We know it's here now, and someone wants to give it to us."

"Okay, Matt. Assuming this is not just some prank, by you or someone else, why do you need me?" Sean asked with visible control, stabbing some beans mercilessly on the plate.

"Sean, you're smart. Me, well, I've got enthusiasm and charm." Matt said self-evidently.

"Uh, huh. Tell you what, okay, let's just look into it," Sean said, and then cut in sharply as Matt began to smile broadly, "AND! If it is some kind of prank, we kick the crap out of the kid. In the meantime, I'm going to get a job in the dishroom this break and maybe over at a restaurant downtown, like a sensible impoverished student."

"That's reasonable, when do we start?" Matt asked striking a Herculean pose in lumberjack flannel, one that caught the admiration of a small clutch of first-year women nearby.

"Why not now? We got six weeks of these awful cheeseburgers coming during break, and I already can't bring myself to finish this one." Sean picked up his tray and put it on the conveyor belt and Matt followed.

"Where do we start?" Matt asked.

"You really do need me, don't you?" Sean asked archly, slapping his hands together and rubbing them together, "Why, the newspaper office!"

Chapter Two: The Curious Advertiser

The student center was also filled with dejected students, reading textbooks, poetry. They were neatly distributed across the room, imbibing large quantities of coffee and tea at little round tables on the wooden parquet floor of a converted basketball court. As the two men entered, the students all looked up hopefully as if waiting for somebody, anybody interesting, then shook their heads dismissively and resumed their reading. After checking their ornately framed glass-doored mailboxes, Matt and Sean bounded up the stairs to the second level.



Upstairs in the student union, past a room of sleeping campus security guards, was a humming suite of I-Macs, and a few pretentious students with dreams of the Washington Post and Watergate. One budding reporter had a pencil perched on her ear, and she working on the copy for the next issue.

"What can I do you for, mate?" Sarah drawled in a vaguely Australian accent, split between the fear that it might be another complaint and the hope it was a hot scoop; but anything was okay to fill up a dreary day of winter break.

"It's about an advertisement in your last paper." Sean said, and handed over the clipped article to her. "We'd like to contact this person. Who is it?"

"Oh, yeah, Julie told me about this chap," she said flippantly, flashing a big crooked smile at Matt, but not even looking at Sean. "You see, this fellow apparently drops off an envelope at the office every year in October and asks for the advertisement to be placed. Now mind you, we at the prestigious Carletonian usually don't place advertisements of this sort in without a good reason."

"Because they're usually cranks, right?" Sean pressed staring at Matt, who winced.

She waved her hands in the air, "Yeah, cause they're mungo whackos! But this fellow, he always drops us 2,000 smackers along with it." She said with a grin.

"What's a smacker?" Matt asked.

Sean slapped him sharply up the side of the head and continued, "So either he's a rich whacko or he's rich



philanthropist? Eh? Either way, what's his name?"

"Don't know. There's never been a return address or left his name," she looked at him with beady eyes, "Do you think there's a story here?"

Sean looked nervous, like a hunting lion sensing another lion across the savannah eyeing the same zebra, "Um, probably not. Come on Sean, we've gotta go to the chapel. God left a message on my

voicemail to visit. I wanna pray!"

"Huh?" Matt said while being dragged away, waving over his shoulder at Sarah who winked, happy that the day had at least one perk in it.

After they left, Sarah, picked up the phone and made a call, and bellowed at her fellow reporters, "I need to go out for a while, cover me while I'm gone." She grabbed her backpack, scarf, mittens and parka and strode out of the office.

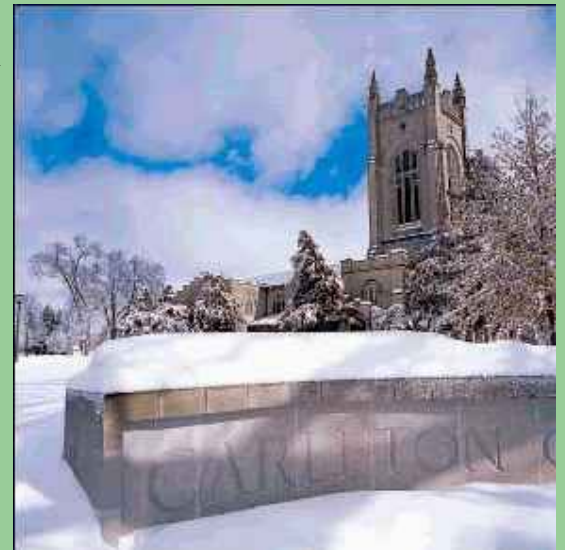
"Huh? Why, nothing's happening." Fred said bored.

Chapter Three: Going to the Chapel

Jack Frost was here in full force, and freezing people's nose hairs together as soon as they stepped outdoors. Racing a detour around the outdoor ice rink -full of stumbling screeching broomball players- in a blinding flurry of snow, the two students reached the Skinner Memorial Chapel, a large gothic building with a soaring square tower. With a slightly running start Matt rammed his shoulder against the heavy oaken door and pushed his way in and heaved it closed it behind them, against the grasping claws of a howling wind.

"Why are we here? You're not religious." Matt asked in the dim lighting.

"Yeah, hardly anyone is at Carleton. We're here to get answers. If there is even one person on this campus who knows about religious groups, it's gotta be the chaplain." Sean looked impressed with himself, puffing and preening a bit. Matt nodded and they shook off the snow and trudged to a small nondescript arched paneled door, with a sign, "The Chaplain is in". They knocked politely. Someone cried, "Just a minute!" There was some curious shuffling and a TV clicked off. "Come in!"



They opened the door of the long narrow cluttered office, practically wall-papered with books. An erudite-looking man with a small moustache in his 40s was sitting on a stuffed leather chair with a large book on his lap, apparently studying intently with earmuffs on.

"Welcome, friends. Come over and sit down." He gestured to some chairs. They went over and sat down, dripping on some papers that crept out from unstable piles of books, perhaps in search to escape the impending avalanche. He was excited, as if he hadn't had a visitor in weeks.

"Father," Sean began...



The chaplain patronizingly tsk-tsked, "I'm not Catholic, just call me Charley." He insisted.

"Charley, we want you to promise to keep this confidential." Sean said straightly.

"Of course, your communications with me are fully protected under the full might of Minnesota law," Charley said with great consolation.

"Fine, Charley, we want to know what this means." Matt interrupted and slapped the article on the desk.

After reading the article, the confused chaplain frowned and said, "I'm not sure I understand."

Sean piped in. "It's simple, we think that there is a treasure on this campus, and we want to find it."

"I see. Are you sure you wouldn't rather seek to put your efforts to winning greater treasure in heaven. I know you're young, but there are more important things in life we could talk about..."

"No. Uh uh. Not now," Sean said. "Sorry, Charley, but I don't want any of that metaphoric-treasure crap, excuse that phrase, I want cold hard cash right now before I shuffle off this mortal coil. Are you going to help us or not?" Sean declared with crossed arms, then smiled slyly, pulled out three ten-dollar bills and placed them by the lamp, and pretended to forget about it.

Charley was taken aback and stroked his chin, "Well, golly. I don't know. Let me think." About five minutes passed, and then a few more passed, while Sean began to drum his fingers and develop an eye twitch. Matt's eyes begin to roll and he started to drool surreptitiously from the side of his mouth.

"Charley..." Sean said annoyed, tossing up his hands.

Charley looked up with surprise and rubbed his moustache, "Oh, sorry, just got distracted by the question of evil, money, roots, you know. It's all connected together--oh, sorry, your question, yes." Charley got up and went to a shelf, hunted about for a bit, and pulled down a big hefty orange book, "Well there's a distinct possibility that I know which group might be related to your strange search, and Oh my, aren't they kind of strange too." He set the open book on the desk and pointed to its cover page. "I think you're looking for something related to the Reformed Druids of North America, the RDNA."

"The who?" Matt asked.

"You know, your friendly neighborhood Carleton Druids." Charley reassured him, pointing at the printing history on the inner page of the large tome. "Look here, the RDNA was founded 1963 at Carleton College. And this symbol here is called a Druid sigil, see the circle with the two lines piercing it, I remember your clue says 'a round the truth between the lines'. Circles are round, aren't they, and this group is very spiritual, odd, but spiritual." He rocked back and forth on his heels, admiring his own cleverness, but the two men stared at him blankly.

Sean wiped his nose and dryly asked, "You mean these Druids don't espouse virgin births, ominous stars in the sky, unsubstantiated non-medical healings of beggars, reports of executed homeless folk who come back from the dead, and disappear before hard evidence can be gathered?" Sean asked.

This wasn't the first time Charley had faced this ascerbic line of inquiry. Working on a campus, he'd developed a thick skin, and Minnesota had given him some protective blubber too, so he just mildly smiled, "Exactly, the RDNA are entirely level-headed and semi-rational, nearly myth-free." Charley covertly picked

up the bills and slipped it back into Sean's pocket. "You can keep your 30 pieces of silver. You should go see Iain Knoll, sophomore I think, he's listed as their contact this year. Nice kid. Tell him Charley sent you."

Sean looked a bit suspicious, "Is this group culty or something?"

"Don't think so, they're kind of like Outdoor Unitarians according to their books." Charley waved at five large tomes stretching across the entire shelf. "The Druids spend much of their time drinking tea, arguing on inter-faith issues and traipsing about in the woods. Imagine that on a wet campus of secular braniacs!"



"Thank you, Charley. Have you seen that symbol anywhere else on campus?" Sean inquired, his knee nudging the desk, slightly shoving a few books perilously closer to the edge.

"Well, no, this campus, as you know, is littered with strange rocks and hills, but downtown in Northfield, you should go to the Contented Cow and have a drink," he said with a forced smile and a Yoda-like inscrutability.

Sean forcefully faked a smile in return and tapped Matt on his wide shoulders and they daintily threaded their way to the door and Matt closed it firmly, rattling the flimsy wall. Inside the room, they heard first one book, then another hundred fall in succession, and then a peaceful aftermath and some dust came out from under the door. A faint "Damn it" was muttered inside.

"Monotheists really are People of the Book, eh?" Sean smirked. Sean and Matt hurried off to return to their dorms to change for an expedition to the downtown of Northfield, a half-mile away.

Chapter Four: The Contented Cow



The Contented Cow was a small bar tucked around the corner from the 130 year-old Archer House Hotel on the riverfront of the Cannon River. Not more than 30 yards upstream, there was a waterfall which once had turned the paddle-wheel machinery of the Malt-O-Meal cereal factory, turning out cheap knock-offs of popular brands.

As usual, there weren't many people out, and so they pushed into the mostly empty pub and whipped the door shut as the few people glared at them for bringing in the blast of harsh weather. This faux-Irish pub served the students of St. Olaf and Carleton College well, in addition to the residents of Northfield, who were referred to by the students rather contemptuously as simply "townies".

After showing their IDs and getting two Guinnesses, they picked the far side of the room away from a taciturn fiddler who was sawing away on some sad tune. They sat facing the river that was still not entirely frozen here yet, due to the turbulence from the waterfall. They reviewed the steps so far, and Matt suddenly stiffened, his jaw dropped, and he looked out the window pointing.

"What's that Sean?" he gasped.

Sean slowly looked up from his beloved mug and tried to figure out what was so dang important out there. Snow. River. Squirrel. Bridge. Snow. Bridge! His mouth dropped too. He'd never been on this part of the riverfront before, and probably wouldn't have noticed it even then, but there was a small footbridge spanning the Cannon River, decorated with a few hundred cast-iron Druid sigils like the chaplain had described, although the parallel vertical lines did not quite pierce or protrude from the interior of the circle.

"Oh - my - God." Sean said, got up and stumbled to the bar. He caught the bartender's eye and asked him who built that bridge there.

His false Irish accent slipping frequently, the bartender stopped drying the mugs. "Eh, I don't know that. Wait a minute. Alex! Come here me laddie." A young redheaded boy stuck out his head out of the dishroom. "These gents want to know who built that bridge there."

"Um, I did, guv'ner," Alex scratched his head, embarrassed at Sean's quizzical glare, "Well, I mean, I helped the construction team build it for work last summer, I did."

"Who designed it? Who paid for it?" Sean pressed the washboy.

"I'm not sure, but I think the Temple paid for it." He said scratching his head.

"Temple? There's no synagogue in Northfield." Sean said puzzled, searching his memory.

"No, the Masonic Temple, over there, across the river. There are about a half-dozen men's clubs in Northfield, you know, like the Elks, Mooses, Odd Fellows, VFW, Loons -- The Masons came over, set the corner stone of the abutment, but some fancy architect chose the design, I think. I overheard him talking once."

Sean shoed the boy off and smirked at Matt to his left. Matt looked plain confused. "So, who are the Masons?"

"Who are the Masons?!" Sean said slapping his face his hands emphasizing how obvious this fact of pop culture was, "The inheritors of the treasure and traditions of the banned Order of Templar Knights, who reportedly insidiously controlled late Medieval Europe!" Matt's eyes had glazed over. Alex looked confused at where the conversation was going and shrugged and went back into the comprehensible situation of the dishroom. Sean pulled Matt back to the window, and said in whispered confidence. "I've got a plan."

Matt looked up with hope. Sean paused, hashing out the last details in his head. "You remember the Reformed Druids?" Matt nodded.

"Aren't they the ones that you're worried about?"

"I'm not worried."

"You're not?"

"No, because, you're going to infiltrate the Druids, not me." Sean said and finished his mug.

Looking around him, Matt whined, "What just me? Well, what are you going to do?" Matt said a little



flustered.

"Well, you have a photographic memory, right? Therefore, you need to go through that big shelf of books that the chaplain claims is their literature, I'll just skim the Internet a little for connections. As for me, I'm going to join the Masons." Sean waved a hand in the air self-importantly, "My cousin is in the Order of DeMolay, so I think I have a better lock on those guys."



"Is it ethical to join a religious fellowship for ulterior reasons?" Matt said chewing the corner of his thumbnail.

"I'm the ethics major, leave that to me," Sean snapped.

"So what should I do?" Matt asked.

"Go see this Iain guy, their Archdruid, schmooze with him, get the inside scoop on that group. If anyone still knows about this treasure, he'll probably know." Sean sipped some more, "Me, I'll work the Mason angles, read the super-secret texts off the Internet, and find out what they know about any other large construction works they might have done in Northfield around or since 1963. Let's compare notes in December after a few weeks, I'm going to be busy doing dishes like Alex for awhile in the cafeteria."

"Sounds good to me," said Matt, more than a little concerned, also signaling for the bartender. "Hey, Sean, you see that girl playing music."

"The skanky 30-year-old lady, uh huh," Sean said dead-faced, knowing what was coming.

"I think she thinks I'm hot," Matt said without a touch of doubt, flashing a smile and a wave at her, which she returned. Sean hid his face in his hands, muttering into his mug.

"All right, why don't you go over there and see if she wants to fiddle with your bow?" Sean suggested. Matt stared for a minute, slowly making the connection, and smiled and got up. The waitress came over with the two full mugs, and expectantly waited. "He's paying." Sean smiled.

Chapter Five: Conspirators' Long Consultation

A few weeks later in mid-December, Sean and Matt met down at the Reub'n'stein, for a greasy old-fashioned burger and a coke, secluded in a high-backed wooden pew-ish booth, each eager with information to share. In the adjacent room, raucous pinball machines and pool tables in use provided inconstant background counterpoint to the soft country music on overhead speakers. Snow softly collected outside, so cold that it squeaked when you walked on it.

"Well what did you find about Masons, Sean?" Matt inquired, confident that he had the more interesting info, but courteously allowing Sean to go first, visibly trembling with enthusiasm.



"Well, it's about what I expected," Sean said sipping. "Masons are like most fraternal groups. It is a self-congratulatory body of mostly older men who work largely on community works, socialize and occasionally have simple pseudo-mystical initiatory rites laced with elementary folk psychology about personal

development; performed in an interfaith manner, outside the reach of the reach of divisive churches of by-gone ages, not too much unlike the Reformed Druids. In fact, there were also a few fraternal 'Druid' organizations that date back to the 18th century too, modeled on Masonry." Matt paused, as an attractive waitress sauntered by. "I've already gone through the First and Second Degree. Next month, perhaps, I'll become a Free and Accepted Mason of the Third Degree and I'll know a lot more then, but I've basically read through most of their literature online, official and the scandal-seeking exposee, so I know most of the hidden lore already. They are mostly good folks, except Greg at the Temple, who's a real jerk, and none of them seem involved in any world-class plots or schemes, just plain old townies."

"That's all?" Matt asked, and Sean nodded. "Any direct connections to Carleton yet?" Matt inquired, also noting the waitress, who despite the thick winter padding had nice wrists and cheekbones.



"Yes and no. From my scant research on the Internet, Reformed Druidry has 10 orders, like the York Rite of Freemasonry, but basically it has three primary orders, with the rest being largely honorary, right?" Matt nodded. "And this Druid sigil, is rather similar to the "circle with a dot in the middle" emblem, which is a Masonic sun symbol for God, flanked (not pierced) by two vertical lines, which represent the two Saint Johns, whose festivals are, get this, St. John the Baptist on the summer solstice and the other St. John on the winter solstice."

Matt looked up with surprise, "Well, that is kind of Druidic."

"Yes, indeed." Sean said pleased.

Matt commented, "So, I think there might have been a bit of a Masonic connection, but it doesn't run very deep. I mean, Fisher (the first Archdruid) never incorporated the initiatory passwords, handshakes, and mumbo-jumbo of the Masons. For inspiration, he seems to have drawn mostly on archaeological and historical sources here and there, and Frangquist, the third Archdruid, did most of the deeper Celtic research later."

Sean assented, munching on french fries, "That seems reasonable, they probably borrowed from many sources."

Matt read his notes, "Maybe, the Masons influenced the early RDNA founders to be obsessed with building altars as written in the Chronicles during the first year, but after Fisher resigned, that impulse fell away, it seems. Some of the altars were quite large and mortared together, and that sounds Masonic doesn't it?"

Sean nodded, noting this down, "I guess so. The Masons, as the heirs to the Knights of the Temple, have a myth of being the recipients of the secrets of the building of the Temple of Jerusalem, and it shows up in the symbolic architecture of their temples and lodges, but little for Druids, who haunt the woods." Sean opined. "Now, I dug around a lot with my new friends, and there was never apparently a Carleton chapter per se of Masons. However, one of the construction companies called "Snosam Inc.", with obvious Masonic affiliations, was integrally involved in the layout and construction of the original college campus and later trail works in the Arboretum. However that company went bankrupt in 1966, and its last owner died shortly thereafter, and the employees moved to Illinois and most are probably dead of old age by now, so that's the end of that lead. It's entirely possible they could have incorporated some clue in the architecture here, but I don't know how to find it." Sean could see that Matt was about to burst, "How's your end going with the Druids?" Then he turned off one ear and concentrated on finishing his burger as Matt gushed forth from the straining floodgates.

"Sean, this is just so cool," Matt clasped his hands together beaming, one word spilling over the next, "I'm kind of getting into the observation of nature, even in winter, and its personal questing for Awareness part rings kind of true, and now I'm also Second Order so far, but I have to wait until May for vigiling for the Third Order," leaning closer to Sean, "and there seem to be some secrets associated with that ordination

ceremony, but 99 % of the information seems pretty open to the public. With my photographic memory, I read the entire 2,600 pages in two days, no problem there, except the Gaelic and Japanese portions, and mind you I haven't processed all the information well yet, but, you know, it works for me somehow. Kind of odd that such a free-spirited group that's suspicious of texts becoming dogma, that they should write so dang much." Sean raised an eyebrow as Matt groped for words. "Oh, I'm making a cloak." He held a strong grin, awaiting Sean's reaction.

Sean spit out part of his sandwich, "Why do you need a cloak? This is the 21st century," Sean reminded him.

"Cloaks, are -useful, you know," Matt said unconvincingly, then added, "and quite warm."

Sean seemed to accept this line of argument, "Sure, whatever it takes to blend in with those guys, go for it, but I don't need one. All, I've got is this apron from the Masons, which I'm altering to add pockets..." Sean stopped trailing off. "How big a group are we talking about in the RDNA?" Sean readied his notepad for the factoid.

Matt held out a printout, "About 3,000 past members over 40 years, with about 80 percent from Carleton, by the loosest calculations and definition of 'Druid'. There doesn't seem to be more than 10-20 core members at a time in this grove, or just about 1 or 2 % of the student population, but I like to think of them as the salt or spice that livens the pot here."

"Trust me there's plenty of live pot around here already," Sean smirked in a knowing way.

"What do you mean?"

Sean changed the subject, "With the continued advertisements in the paper every Halloween for years and the lack of awareness about Masonry, by golly, perhaps the treasure hasn't been discovered yet?" Sean trailed off.

"Yeah. According to their history, it seems Fisher and most of the original founders at Carleton pretty much abandoned their missionary activities by the late '60s, leaving it to other Druids to carry the torch, mostly here at Carleton, but Larson went to Berkeley to start an alternative version they called Neo-Pagan Druidism, so I've been concentrating on the early works by the Founders and compiling a shortened list."

"Yes, it's quite possible that none of the successor Druids would know of the treasure. I checked with the Carleton Senate, and it appears the Druids have been rather hard-up for funds since the 1970s." Sean paused thinking, rubbing the stubbly beard on his chin. "When do you suspect such a break happened?"

They both hushed conspiringly as the waitress came and refilled their cokes and walked off.

"Well that's just it," Matt hissed in a puzzled voice. "As you read in Fisher's interview in the compilation, Fisher, the first Archdruid, felt a bit alienated by the time Frangquist, the third Archdruid came into power in 1964 or '65. Fisher thought he was taking the Druidry a bit too seriously, and feared it turning from a pseudo-religious simple fraternalistic system of inquiry and becoming something like a religion. I think the break happened that early, since Fisher graduated in 1965 and went off to the Episcopal seminary."

"You mean the founders may actually be the only ones who know where the treasure is hidden?" Sean had forgotten his meal already, and it was congealing in the cold restaurant.



"Yeah, I checked out their careers with the Alumni society. You wouldn't believe the amount of information they have collected on all of us, they put the FBI to shame! None of them seem particularly wealthy, and I chatted with a few of them about the subject indirectly by phone, but they thought I was talking about some metaphysical reward, and didn't seem to be evading me or hiding anything, but they mentioned something about a Druid curse, too, but wouldn't elaborate. Fisher, however, is not returning his phone calls, and apparently hasn't been successfully contacted since the early '70s by many people, not even the Alumni Office. He's a bit of a recluse, especially when the subject is Druids. He's the most likely suspect."

"Hmmm. Do you think Fisher has hidden a treasure for a more 'worthy' future successor to claim to circumvent Frangquist's lineage? I mean, he certainly wouldn't pass it off to Larson and those Neo-Pagan California Druids, right?" Sean spoke a little more quietly as the waitress passed again.

"I really think so, Sean," Matt mused, then he tapped the table, "This is all interesting supposition, and quite possible, but I'm still confused, like where should we go from here? I mean, where would Fisher hide the clues so that a true Druid, by his definition, could find them, but a bad Druid wouldn't see them?"

"Hmmm. I don't know. Conspirators think in odd ways, trust me, I've started a few hoaxes myself. For example, there was this cannon on a campus at an Ivy League school about 20 years ago, registered as a National Historic Treasure, and one spring morning it just disappeared. There was just a big hole in the ground and an enormous pile of dirt next to it. Well, the FBI was called in to investigate the disappearance and noticed that there were no tracks or damage to the surrounding grass, so nothing must have lifted it out of the ground, with its heavy foundation, or pulled it away. "

"A helicopter? Aliens?" Matt offered?

"No. And no sensible clues at all, Matt. Well, it was dangerous to leave such a big hole in the middle of a busy campus, so they began to fill the dirt back in, and their shovels hit something hard. Guess what? The cannon was there, right inside the pile of dirt!" Sean smirked as Matt laughed and cola spewed out of his nose, and he rolled in semi-shocked pain at the sensation.

When he recovered, Matt blorted, "So, you're saying the clues might be right before our eyes, say in the historical texts, something anyone would have access to, but not notice, and we just need to read them and spot something out of the ordinary?"



"Exactly, Matt, Look at the clue from the newspaper again; 'A great treasure awaits its claimant at Carleton. Go to your spiritual roots and read a round the truth between the lines!' Those roots could be referring to something below a tree at the original grove site."

"Yeah, Druids dig trees..."

"But it's too cold to dig now, so maybe it also means one of the founding documents, penned by Fisher himself. Did you bring that anthology with you?" Matt nodded and pulled out a big 900-page orange book and dropped it on the table, which shook a bit,

and began leafing through the index.

"See here, the index shows the date of all the documents, and each document's author is listed under the title. We really don't have many documents written by Fisher. Actually, Frangquist was the big writer and document producer. However Fisher did pen the constitution in 1963, wrote a few sermons, composed the original liturgy (which we have a few examples) and added a few meditations to the Green Book, mostly from Hindu sources, it says. Anything else is lost."

"That's a start, but these are not photocopies, and might have a different layout than the originals." Sean complained.

"Well, this anthology is just a portable, well kind of portable, copy of the Druid Archives," Matt supplied.

"Where are the Druid Archives?"

"This guy Mike, who collected the big anthology, re-established the archives right here at Carleton again in the 1990s, in the basement of Gould Library," Matt smiled broadly.

"Maybe we should contact him, you know, he could be a valuable source of information," Sean rubbed his hands as a cold gust of wind entered the store brought by new customers.

"Can't. He's gone, away to Korea or Japan right now, I tried to reach him," Matt sighed.

"Well, the archives should be open about now, and they might even have more documents written by Fisher that aren't included in the anthology, and Fisher looks like the key to this puzzle."

A family came in and sat in the adjacent booth and a baby began to cry while its mother and uncle tried to soothe it.

"Let's finish up here and go check it out. I also need to check my e-mail at the campus. My father should be sending me an update on how his company is doing."

Sean and Matt cleaned up, paid the bill, carefully bundled up and yanked open the door and staggered into the snowstorm that was picking up in intensity. Nobody really marked their departure as memorable in this glorious adventure. If they had looked carefully, they would have seen in their clenched eyes the dreams of quickly-won treasure. But it would turn out that things are not as easy as they first seem.

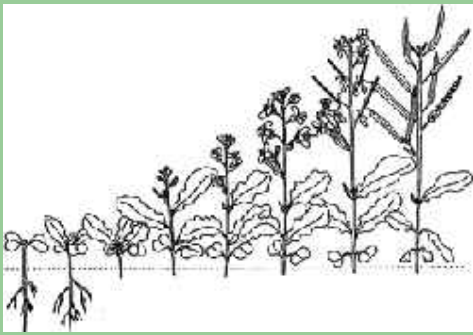


END OF PART ONE OF EIGHT

Tune in next issue, for the further adventures of Sean & Matt.



Report Expects Druidism Growth



As summarized by Mike of DC Grove

A recent report by Dr. Michael T. Cooper of Trinity International University has been compiling essays on modern Paganism, and has recently published a 26 page report predicting growth for the Druid movement based on research on Ar nDraiocht Fein (ADF) and Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids (OBOD), entitled "Contributing Factors in the Growth of Druidry in North America: A Case Study of Ar nDraiocht Fein" in April 2005, which was presented to a conference.

After describing the difficulty of researching Druidism in its current phases and giving a short history (that includes the RDNA), Dr. Cooper lists five factors that ensure a thriving existence for Druidism. The first factor was the superficial christianization of Western Europe, that rather than supplanting local varieties, incorporated customs into a powerful organizational vehicle. Secondly, there is a strong desire to re-enchant the material world after dissatisfaction with the promises of modernity. Globalism, as a two-way enmeshment in the cultures and world-views of numerous cultures, is listed as the third factor, as it points out the weaknesses of each faith and entices people with new possibilities. Dr. Cooper also lists an impatience or feeling of inadequacy among the populace with the present form of Western Christianity, with its authoritarian, male chauvinism and lack of ecological concern. Finally, he says that the revivalism of pre-Christian forms of religion touch on long dormant cultural loyalties and thinking, making it an easy transition for people of Western European heritage.

The entirety of this essay is available on <http://www.researchndruidry.org/Analysis.htm>



**The Pagan Alliance presents:
The 4th Annual Pagan Festival, formerly known as the
Interfaith Pagan Pride Parade and Celebration**

Sponsored by the San Francisco Bay Guardian and KPFA,

2005 Theme: /Weaving Traditions/
Keeper of the Light: M. Macha NightMare
Master of Ceremonies: Shay Black

When: Saturday, May 7th, 2005

Time: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Where: Civic Center Park in Berkeley, California, located on Martin Luther King Jr. Way (between Center and Allston); Next to Farmer's Market. and close to the Downtown Berkeley BART. Carpooling is encouraged; Public Garage Parking Available.

What: Procession (parade), Interfaith Ritual, Traditional Dance, Music, Poetry, Crafts, Authors Circle, Vendors, Information Booths, Food, Altars, Children's Area.

Awards and Prizes for Best Float and Best Costume

Visit <http://paganfestival.com> or www.thepaganalliance.org for more Information, and for Parade Participant, Information Booth and Vendor Applications.

Community Services:

- Anonymous Orasure HIV Testing by California Prevention and Education Project. Please sign up at testing@thepaganalliance.org
- To donate blood to the Bloodmobile, sign-up at blooddrive@thepaganalliance.org
- Food Drive to benefit the Alameda County Community Food Bank. Please bring Packaged, Non-Perishable Food to donate.

Same Day After Party at the Starry Plough Pub and Restaurant, 3101 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley, CA 94705. Featuring Tempest and the Sharon Knight Band 9:30 pm, \$12 www.starryploughpub.com



An Comunn Gaidhealach-America (ACGA) 9th Annual Scottish Gaelic Immersion Weekend

An Comunn Gaidhealach-America (ACGA) presents its 9th Annual Scottish Gaelic Immersion Weekend, held for the first time in Ohio, from May 19-May 22, 2005. ACGA and The Great Lakes Gaelic Society will co-host this long weekend, featuring some of the best Scottish Gaelic instructors from Scotland, Canada and the United States.

The immersion weekend is a unique opportunity for learners of Scottish Gaelic to come together with more advanced and native speakers in both a classroom setting and informal gatherings. Whether you are a new learner with no experience or an advanced speaker, the immersion weekend will provide opportunities to speak Gaelic in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

Extracurricular activities will include old time Scottish dancing on the Friday evening and a cèilidh on Saturday evening. The beautiful facilities of the Burr Oak Resort include a ravine hiking trail, tennis courts, indoor pool, miles of nature trails and many vantage points from which to view the magnificent scenery. Burr Oak Resort is located in Southern Ohio in the Burr Oak State Park. For more information on the resort and park, and to browse their website, log on to their website at www.burroakresort.com.

For more information please see the ACGA website

http://www.acgamerica.org/events/immersion/imm_2005/imm2005.html or email Frances Acar at frances@waspfactory.org



Saline Celtic Festival

<http://salineceltic.org/>

The Saline Festival began as a result of the Sister City relationship between Saline, MI and Brecon Wales. It is a volunteer organization comprised of an executive committee, event chairs and many volunteers. Area residents are invited to become part of the organizational and volunteer efforts of the festival. We meet monthly at City Hall. We have an office in City Hall at 100 North

Harris Street.

The Festival is a one day event that draws about 10,000 people.

Mark your Calendars for July 16 2005 for the 10th annual Saline Celtic Festival.



Astronomical Beltaine will occur on May 5 at 2:54 a.m. or as 16 degrees 18 minutes decl on May 4 at 11:45 p.m., both Pacific Daylight Time.

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Please note the new mailing address!

E-Mail: poppinjay@earthlink.net

This is the end of the Beltane Issue



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Webmastered by Mike Scharding

