

# A DRUID MISSAL-ANY

A Newsletter of the Reformed Druids of North America

Samhain, Year 43  
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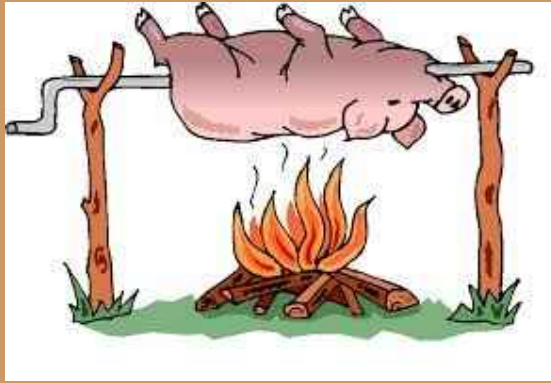


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**amhain**, Summer's end, the Celtic New Year, marks the beginning of the Season of Sleep in the Druid calendar. By Samhain the harvest is over and the crops, corn (grain), turnips, and apples were put up for winter store; anything left in the field were left for the wild animals and the sidhe. Cattle and sheep were brought down from the high pasturelands to be kept in fields close to the farmstead. Milk cows were brought into the byre for the winter and feeding by stored fodder began. Animals not used for breeding or milk were slaughtered and their meat preserved for sustenance over the cold winter. Peat turf and wood would have been gathered and set up for winter use. Samhain was a time of feasting, the biggest of the year, to celebrate and offer thanks for the good harvest. In honoring the deceased they too were invited to the feast by having a plate set at the table or set outside the door.



Samhain's origins could quite possibly be traced back to the pastoral era where animals were considered divine and one was slain annually as sacrifice and eaten sacramentally to insure a good harvest for the coming year. When animals ceased to be worshipped the slaughter became more general and part of the tribe's preparation for survival through the winter but the celebration and feast remained.

The most important feast in ancient times was the Óenach Temra or Feast of Tara. According to James MacKillop "By abundant testimony Samain was the principle calendar feast of early Ireland. Each of the five provinces sent assemblies to Tara for a feis held every third year."<sup>1</sup> Tara was the seat of the kings of Ireland (Munster, Ulster, Connacht, Leinster, and Meath) and the center of political power. At Samhain the most prestigious of the Irish assemblies or óenach took place there: installation of the the high king and the union of the king with the sovereignty of the land. In the story of the Battle of Crinna "every king of Ireland (was in Tara) for the purpose of holding Tara's Feast; for a fortnight before samain that is to say, on *samain*-day itself, and for a fortnight after. And the reason for which they practiced to gather themselves together at every *samain*-tide was this: because at such season it was that mast and other products were the best matured."<sup>2</sup> And so the reason for this feast and assembly goes back to perhaps the very origins of Samhain itself, that is, celebrating a bountiful harvest and honoring the land by the king offering himself in coition.



With this issue it has been five years since I started publishing the Missal-Any, taking up the mantle after a nine-year hiatus begun by my mentor Emmon Bodfish. Perhaps foolishly. I took it "as a sign" when he left me his collection of Celtic studies books and his Canon copier in his will. That first issue was a mere page and a half. Little did I know it would grow to an average of 24 pages and the cost of mailing it would increase from simple letter to 80 cents an issue. I've kept the subscription rate down, as Emmon did, to cover copying and postage. We're not in this biz to make money but to get the information out there.

As an anniversary present I decided to give the Missal-Any its very own web site. It will now on be found at <http://druidmissal-any.tripod.com/> including all back issues.

I want to take this time to thank Mike for his many tireless hours putting the Missal-Any into web format these past five years, for putting up with my "particularness" (yes, this rag has standards), my writer's block, and general stuff that goes on when working closely on a publication with someone. I hadn't dreamed of the

Missal-Any going in the direction of being on the web but just available in hard copy format like the first edition, and via email. Mike made it possible for the Missal-Any to reach tens if not hundred of others. For that too at this Samhain-tide I am grateful.

<sup>1</sup> MacKillop. *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Green. *The Celtic World*. Routledge, 1995.



## NEWS OF THE GROVES



### Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

It's been quite a season that I will long remember.

Most joyfully, I'm glad to announce that after a long period of study and interaction, I had the pleasure of assisting Azeem Gopalani to complete his vigiling for the Third Order at Green Belt National Park in MD in September. Traditional omens for his future were plentiful and auspicious, although those for my own were more grim. I hope this young priest will have a long career with us and offer much from his studies and practice.

I've learned much from the advice and turbulent conversations with my fellow Reformed Druids over the last few eventful months and I'd like to wish them a wonderful upcoming year, with hopes that we will bond better and deeply on many topics to come.

I had a few side trips, conveniently living here in DC. At the advice and urging of a few associates, I again visited my favorite locales, the new U.S. Museum of the American Indian and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial to better reflect on issues of concern to me. I contemplated the long-term sobering ramifications of immigration and the way majorities treat the rights of perceived minorities in their midst. Each take at least four hours to appreciate best, and they rotate in new exhibits every few months or so. I also recommend to pilgrims of this nation's capitol to visit the island park of Teddy Roosevelt's Memorial, FDR's memorial, the great oaks by the U.S. Senate office building, the National Arboretum and the Jefferson Memorials blossoming cherry trees in April. Tell me in advance if you're visiting, maybe we could meet up, as some sites are difficult to access conventionally.

On a similar note, I've also been busy taking a class in "Administrative Policy" and also one in "Immigration Law and Reform" at the USDA Graduate School here in preparation for working for the U.S. Foreign Service (State Dept) which will likely begin my entry training in either January or March of 2006. When/if that happens, I would again be drawn to a series of lengthy tours of duty overseas, and sadly have less contact with Reformed Druids here in North America. The good news is that folks will be able to visit me in more exotic spots, and I can continue my pernicious spreading of the Silly News to the people of the world.

There is a good chance that this Samhain, I will spend it at Carleton College and have a chance to meet with the two Archdruids there and see what kind of mischief they are experimenting with. I will also be busy

administering the Bardic contest starting next month (see the article in this issue).

November is "National Novel Writing Month," so I will try my hand at a 40,000+ word-long Detective Novel that naturally involves some Conservationist Druids of North America at Carleton College. I had so much fun writing "Druidical Treasure" last year, I couldn't resist doing another. So the 2005 plot is that Druid, George, meets an unexplained tragic end in the Arboretum, and ends up becoming a ghost with amnesia of his last few mortal hours. So George enlists a living Druid, Phil, to investigate his death, as George's fragile spirit begins to quickly degrade. I think the 2006 story will have a young child sent off for a year abroad with a strange uncle on a Hebridean island who teaches her a few interesting things and embroils her in a little adventure.

If you'd like some help writing a shorter story (just 1,000 to 20,000 words perhaps), just e-mail me at [mikerdna@hotmail.com](mailto:mikerdna@hotmail.com) and I'll be glad to brainstorm or help review your work.

Yours in the Mother,

Mike the Capitol Fool





## **Dogwood Proto-grove: News from Virginia**

We find ourselves as Samhain draws nigh developing an online component to Dogwood Proto-Grove. We have seen it as a necessary component because of high fuel prices, modern schedules and the wide area the grove covers and we feel it would be community friendly and easier for grove members and visitors.

AD Tony has been busy with counseling a young couple prior to marriage. AD El was in preparations for a Samhain themed wedding to perform the Saturday before Halloween. Two of our members and their family have been transferred to NC and one expects to be sent to the war overseas possibly before Yule.

Samhain Blessings to all!





## Moose Breechcloth Proto-Grove: News from Minnesota

Ok, ok, ok...I'm just as surprised about this as all of you. All of you who know me, know dang well how I feel about taking Orders and Grove membership. Truth being told, our beloved sister Stacey has been pestering me since the dawn of mankind to start a grove. So I did. There. It's done. Now LEAVE ME BE!

Truth being told, though....I truly believe it was nothing more than a ploy to get me to write for her more often. The day I can refuse Stacey anything, will be quite a day indeed. So you can all blame Stacey for this one.

I still haven't filed the Constitution yet (the devil is in the details, you know), but the Moose Breechcloth Proto-Grove is officially open for business. I should have the Constitution filed by Samhain.

A bit of background is needed though. You all know I'm hell-bent on being a solitary rogue, so I'm capping human membership at one. So I'm still a solitary rogue. Hurray! Unless, of course, Lou (my SO) decides he just has to be a part of it. I'll flex a little there. But he'll have to decide for himself on how to practice. I won't decide that for him. Visitors are always welcome to stop by and visit, and practice however they see fit. But actual membership is being capped. Go start your own grove. I've also named Loki, one of our cats, as AD. I certainly don't want the job. Lou looked at me like I was crazy when I asked him if he wanted it. Zeus, our alpha male cat, is already king of the household. And Zoe, our alpha female, is too much of a power-crazed drama queen. Poor little Loki has always been the odd cat out. So he is now AD of his very own grove, and he finally gets his day in the sun....where he will no doubt nap.

The Moose Breechcloth is also a bit different from other groves in that its emphasis is on Native American Druidism. My own brand of Druidism is somewhere where the Druid's path and the Red Road merge. So this is the flavor of our grove...Red Lake Ojibwe Druids...something you probably don't see everyday. All services will be held in Ojibwe. However, visitors are welcome to practice however they see fit. I'll be dipped if I'll ever tell someone else how to practice. But just as an FYI—I'm intensely private in my own practices. So looky-loos can go hang out elsewhere. Please respect my privacy, and I'll give you a blank check to practice however you see fit.

Still just gotta meander to the beat of my own drummer.

As far as news goes, we're just getting ready for Samhain around here. Mike Scharding is coming up for Samhain, to grace the Carleton grove with his own brand of goofiness. I'm providing transportation for brother Mike and brother Ross (from New Brighton, MN) down to Carleton College. Albeit without the "death trap" Jeep that Mike seems to fear. I have a new SUV now, so Mike should be more at ease. Mike's plane, unfortunately, comes in at some ridiculous hour of the morning, so I'll probably by-pass sleep that night all together. Mike recently asked "Who posts to the webchat at 3:00 in the morning?!" Uhh...Mike? That would be me. Sleep is SO overrated.

Plans for Samhain include my complete humiliation during a costume party. Lou has decided he wanted to dress as a Scot, and I am (unfortunately) stuck holding the sheep costume. This wasn't my idea. I'll probably follow it up, though, with a lot of tobacco being spread out, officially blessing the grove grounds with sage and sweetgrass, burying apples in the ground, lit candles, dancing, drums, and chanting (for those unfortunate enough to be within earshot). I'll also be dedicating the Grove in the memory of Lost Bird. (For you research hounds, do a Google search on "Lost Bird Wounded Knee") Lost Bird has always been a patron saint, of sorts, to me in the Native community. Her story is tragic, and should never be forgotten.

While the Moose Breechcloth Proto-Grove is officially open for business, I wanted to wait for Samhain for the “Grand Opening” and blessing. The frybread will be flying.

I’ve also been asked to host a sweat lodge for a bunch of gal pals of mine. Or “Naked Girls Gone Amuck”, as we like to call it. With everything currently on my plate, though...that MAY get postponed until after Samhain a bit. I’m quite sure Gitchee Manitou won’t mind.

I hope this Samhain finds all of you in the best of health and the brightest of spirits.

Gigawabamin nagutch,

And yours in the Mother,

—Julie Ann—

(Laughing Otter)







## Rogue River Proto-grove: News from Oregon

On Saturday, October 8 the Rogue River Protogrove, RDNA, met on the banks of Emigrant Lake (a reservoir) which is outside of Ashland, Oregon. It was a perfect autumn day with a clear blue sky and bright sunshine making it warm but not hot. There had been a recent rain so there was little danger of our fire getting out of control. For something different, we held a "Winternights" ritual which is the Heathen version of the Celtic Samhain. It was a pleasant day spent honoring the Powers, visiting and playing fetch with one participant's dogs which also repeatedly tried to put out our fire out each time they returned from swimming.

Our next gathering will be Saturday, November 12th which will be a past life regression and/or a journey to meet animal allies. On Saturday, December 10 we will hold our Winter Solstice celebration.

For more information, please email: [Aigeann@earthlink.net](mailto:Aigeann@earthlink.net)







## **Nine Oaks & Mystic Well Proto-grove: News from Nevada**

Here in the desert SW we don't have much of a season of the dead, life still lingers throughout the winters months, acting as like life in repose but still life. The Grove now has 5 full members and many others looking to join as we are seeing the tendency of many to begin focusing on the Earth Mother, so we rallied others to come with us, toting large garbage bags in hand, one group went to Red Rock Canyon and others to Mt. Charleston and a picking of loose litter we went! This took a total of a long and tiring day but well worth the efforts, and after this we gathered, with some friends of the Grove and began a monthly Earth Healing rite, and we swore to keep this going upon each month for a year or longer!

Samhain is coming, as we slowly work on the Grove and the Grove house, a wreath was fashioned with 2 wood poles to make a Druid Sigil and placed in the large bay window facing the street, and as we place out some Samhain items we prepare for the carving of turnips and the preparation for the arrival of our ancestors soon, and the rites of Samhain itself!

We intend, in the time of the waters of sleep to become more organized in the Grove and more affluent in our communications with other Druids, Groves and the community at large. This is our Grove 'new years resolution' for some of us, and others to begin the focus on the ARDA, and watching the Nine Oaks & Mystic Well wax in the growth as the year wanes on until Beltaine.

We can be contacted at [NineOaksnMysticWell@gmail.com](mailto:NineOaksnMysticWell@gmail.com)

In the service of the Mother!

Brid





## Hazelnut MotherGrove: News from California

For those of you who subscribe to Yahoo Groups, there are three which we recommend. In July 2005, two groups were formed. One, Hazelnut MotherGrove, is the online version of the grove formed 35 years ago. We discuss many topics in this group, but try to keep it to Celtic topics that NRDNA Druids are interested in. Currently we have started an open class on Ogham, the Druids' alphabet.

To join, go to: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Hazelnut\\_MotherGrove](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Hazelnut_MotherGrove)

AbbottsInnSchoolofMagick is specifically for those who are interested in Magick. Many topics will be discussed here, except for those specifically Druidic. About to start:(it will have by the time this issue comes out) an open class on the Qabalah.

To join, go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AbbottsInnSchoolofMagick>

Recently formed for those interested in a blend of Druidry and the Craft is the DruidWicca\_Coven. It was inspired by Phillip and Stephanie Carr-Gomm's *DruidCraft Tarot*, which came out this past spring. Topics discussed will be those related to Wicca and Druidry and how they intersect, in other words, Celtic Wicca.

To join, go to: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DruidWicca\\_Coven](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DruidWicca_Coven)

Stephen Abbott and I look forward to seeing yo-ur posts to these groups.

Tegwedd ShadowDancer

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## Sunset Proto-Grove: News from California

I am writing this a bit ahead, as I will be away during the time of finalization for this years Samhain Missal-Any. In the days leading up to my trip...I find myself getting jittery and excited. This is not just a trip for me, but an adventure as well. I will again make an effort to leave my comfort-zone and try new things on a daily basis.

I find the process of travel very druidic in nature:

-Plan to visit a place.

-Learn as much as you can about the place from books & people before visiting.

-Absorb as much of the place as you can while you are there. How? Principally, the use & sharpening of the senses. Listen, Look, Taste & Touch.

-Travel as lightly as possible, to allow you the most amount of freedom & flexibility in each days adventures & experiences.

-Meditate & Process on the experiences & decide which portions you can add to your cache of 'truths'.

-Implement these truths into your life- in an effort to grow & develop –

With travel, you also implement more of a 'world view' as well as the respect of many cultural intricacies into your life. I have come to see travel as a process of reaching outside ones world to capture new experiences- as a most significant way of learning; to learn new cultures, languages, and to simply find new (and sometimes improved) ways of navigating oneself through the world. During trips like these, I like to take time daily for introspection on what I have experienced and felt. To sketch something beautiful or to philosophize on something newly learned. Well...drink down a mug...'to keeping the pick-pockets at bay.'

Oriana: aka-Skye Viajante (= Sky Traveler)





## Poison Oak Grove, News from California

Mid November the Grove will be hosting a visiting Buryat (Mongolian/Siberian) Shaman. She will be doing a ceremony (annual hunting magic) on behalf of the hunters and deer where she just moved from.

We have just about recovered from the computer meltdown that happened during the middle of working on the Fall Equinox issue of A Druid Missal-Any. A new computer has been purchased and just about all the important materials have been transferred. We thank Ogma for the continued ability to still be able to send out this rag and apologize for any inconvenience it might have caused.

## 2005-2006 Wintry Bardic Contest



The Time of Sleep is approaching after Halloween, but that doesn't mean that your creative urges have to go dormant until May Day!

The RDNA will have our 5th Annual Wintry Bardic Contest from Nov 1st to May 1st, on this conference. Anytime during that period, submit to me your poems, songs, SHORT epic sagas, free-verse, or SHORT stories to me at [mikerdna@hotmail.com](mailto:mikerdna@hotmail.com) I will host them this year as the judge.

Last year we had a great turnout, 15 folk send in about 70 entries for the 14 postings we mailed out (one every 2 weeks). Make sure a few of yours get in this time.

Basic Rules:

0. Anyone can play and enter, even your friends.
1. It can be an entirely original creation, or you may parody/alter an existing work of another, but the words have to be your own or a collaboration. If spoofing, please list the source of the music or author of the original lyrics or words
2. Subject may be anything vaguely "Druidic," what ever that means. Quality is not a big concern for me either. Have fun. Enter often. Maximum of 20 entries per person.
3. Humor, anger, vexing, angst-drawn, serious, thoughtful, weird, drama-queenish is all perfectly acceptable; but nasty stuff and naughty words may be tsk-tsk'ed and finger-waggled.
4. Poetry will be collected throughout the winter. spurts of poetry will be mailed forth regularly every two weeks between November 1st and May 1st (about 13 mailings).
5. Bribes must begin at least around \$500, to be acknowledged. (Just kidding)
6. Winner will be announced May 1st, 2006 and will bear the honor of "Bard of the Reform" from May 2005

to May 2006.

7. Entries will be posted on RDNAtalk and at <http://www.rdna.info/bard5.html> and sent by e-mail to [mikeredna@hotmail.com](mailto:mikeredna@hotmail.com)

8. Submission of an entry is considered to be accepting their reprint in the Green Books of ARDA 3 in 2013.

9. Unless you tell me that they are copyrighted, I will assume they are for the public domain. I will label them either way according to your choice.

10. Winners will be selected in late April 2006 by a mixture of weighted votes over a series of winnowing rounds. The judge (me) and previous three Bards of the Reform get 5 splittable votes each and the rest of the folk get 3 splittable votes for each round (votes do not carry over to later rounds). 1st round will limit the selections to 15-20 poems/songs. 2nd round will limit to 10-15 entries. 3rd round will limit to 5-10 entries. 4th round will limit to 3 entries. 5th round will limit to 2 entries. If a single entry gets 51% of cast votes, a winner will be declared and enthroned.

To see previous Bardic contest entries go to:

<http://www.rdna.info/bard.html> 2001-2002 Winter

<http://www.rdna.info/bard2.html> 2002-2003 Winter

<http://www.rdna.info/bard4.html> 2004-2005 Winter

I've made a "Karaoke" page of all the Druidic songs from the contests of the last three years (120 altogether). <http://www.rdna.info/karaoke.html> Many of them have links to music you can listen to while you sing. I'm in the process of updating those old links, and welcome assistance in finding replacements for dead links.

## Seedy Friends in Shady Places: Part One



By Mike the FoOl  
of the Lesser  
Sycamore Grove

For the Public  
Domain, October  
2005

I've already written about vegetarian issues (Yule 2002) and I've written about the lessons of leaves (Fall

2003), so now I would like to share my understanding of the secrets of plant seeds, and what they've taught me about Reformed Druidism. As I've only had one botany class fifteen years ago, I may make quite a few errors in here. I naturally only speak for myself.

The more I learn about plants, the better I understand myself. Evolution teaches that ancestors of humans descended from trees, so I believe Druids are haunted by that ancestral memory, and long to return to the trees. While Druids tend to be interested in philosophizing about plants, it would be a good idea to take a botanical course at a night school, or buy a few sturdy textbooks to understand the scientific understanding of the biological and categorical systems of plants. It will pay off in renewed wonder at these self-reliant little miracles.

### **Etymological Categories: What's a seed, fruit, vegetable or nut?**

Those four words are really just varieties of terms for the reproductive tissues and offspring of plants; just like poultry, fish, shellfish, pork, venison, beef are all basically types of meat (muscle tissue). Like animals, most plants have "male" and "female" sexual organs, although they are quite different in structure, and some plants have both sexes in the same organism, or they reproduce asexually (just to be confusing, perhaps) or now are completely dependent on grafting as they cannot reproduce.

A fruit is (botanically) simply any ripened ovary (with the seeds) of a flowering plant (and so would scientifically include tomatoes, corn and squash); but in cuisinarian terms, a "fruit" is usually sweet and fleshy (like an orange or apple).

A seed is simply a ripened ovule of either the ancient gymnosperms (coniferous) or new-comer angiosperm divisions (most other plants with wide leaves). See the chart at the end of the article for these two great families of plants. Most angiosperms are divided into whether they sprout with one leaf (monocots like grasses) or two leaves (dicots).

Nuts are botanically, just a simple dry fruit with usually one seed (sometimes two) where the ovary wall (or part of it) has become very hard, stony or woody at maturity. Usually nuts come from pistils with inferior ovaries. True nuts are produced by the Order of Fagales (although some are not edible to us, like the horse chestnut), or they are simply too small to bother with (like birch, alder, hornbeam, etc.) Some member of Fagales, like acorns, are quite bitter, and need soaking or cooking to be palatable. Fagales are wind-pollinated and dominate much of the temperate forests, and they include Walnut, Butternut, Hickory, Pecan, Wingnut, Chestnut, Beechnut, Oak, Hazel, Hornbeam, Birch and Alder. Animals highly prize their starch and protein for use as easily storable reserves to survive the wintry season. The following are some of Fagales' families.

Family Juglandaceae: walnut, butternut, hickory, pecan, wingnut

Family Fagaceae: chestnut, beech, oak

Family Corylaceae: hazel, filbert, hornbeam

Family Betulaceae: birch, alder

When talking in a cuisinarian sense, "nut" can mean any large oily kernel with a shell. An almond, coconut or cashew is the actually seed, surrounded by a leathery/fibrous "drupe" of the ovary, often removed before selling. Pinenuts are from coniferous trees, and therefore not nuts. Peanuts are legumes. And so on. Nuts and many seeds are prized for their oils when pressed, which last longer than animal by-products and as solutions for medicines and cosmetics and lubrication.

Many seeds historically were used as for stuffing small packages or units of measurement, due to their general standard size. One example was the "carat" which was derived from the carrot seed, which being small was useful for weighing tiny jewels. Size of the seed is not always a good indicator of the size of the tree, and vice a versa. The mustard and redwood trees have tiny seeds, but are among the largest living organisms in the world.

As a side note: it is curious why the fertile terms "going to seed", "seedy", "fruity" and "nutty" are considered derogatory now in our culture.

## **The Concept of the Seed**

Seeds are much like poultry eggs. Seeds are the encapsulated growing offspring of the parent plant(s). Infant plants in seeds are mobile packages, but in minimal interaction with the environment for a varying period of time and depending on light and weather conditions. Seed-hood is often the only time a plant will ever move from its original location. Once a seed puts down roots, the plant may grow taller or wider, but rarely will leave that location in a living sense (even tumbleweed is dead while it blows about with its attached seeds).

Thus, the time of distribution of seeds or their shape for the parent tree is a critical element. Evolution has shaped their seeds to the environment in which they originally developed. As mankind has moved across the globe, we have brought them to new strange and unfavorable locales. As a result, their original adaptations and methods of reproduction often do not seem to make sense in their new transplanted homes; where they may need painstaking human assistance for pollination or even grafting (in the case of seedless citrus fruit trees) to continue to propagate. Like life, everything has causes or purposes, even if we can not comprehend or like them at the present.

Just like every animal you eat is a child of another animal, so every seed, fruit or nut is the offspring of a plant. Seeds also adopt a hybrid mix of the genetic characteristics of their parents, so over time, plants can be "bred" just like animals for human use with greater fecundity and digestibility. Humans are not perfect omnivores by any practical measure. While we can consume nearly any non-toxic part of an animal, and reasonably digest it; there are actually very few parts of most plants that we can reasonably digest. This is because we cannot digest several carbohydrate and protein structures in the cell-walls of plants, such as cellulose and chlorophyll. Many parts of even well-known commercial ones are variably toxic (e.g. Tomato stalks & uncooked Cashews) to ward off predation.

With our short (single-chambered) digestive track and limited provision of symbiotic bacteria (e. coli), we (once previously more herbivorous) primates cannot usually grind up plants well enough on the cellular layer to access the goodies inside those little rectangular boxes; which make wood and stalks and bark so tough and strong. Most plant material simply goes right through our system, just like that of even more carnivorous creatures. Several animals get around this handicap by eating the partly digested meals of their prey's gut. Yes, the leaves, stems and roots (mostly) may flavor our food or give us medical assistance, but they alone usually provide little nutritional value, just bulk and filler. Fruit and nut allergies are quite common, perhaps due to the complex chemicals needed to nurture a new life and protect against predators. But we can eat seeds, nuts and fruits (and sap); and it seems there are many theories why these enticing tidbits are made available to us and other animals.

One indeed wonders sometimes whether we cultivate the plants or they cultivate us. Discoveries in the cultivation of plants have led to new legal, social, religious and political institutions. Before the particulars of grains were mastered, hominids relied heavily on nuts and fruits to build up orchards, in what was likely the first attempt at agriculture. Then methods were found to grow crops that required division of lands, fixed buildings to store seeds in safety over harsh winters, and communally and mechanically means to plant ever larger fields for burgeoning populations.

Nowadays, less than 5% of U.S. workers are directly related to horticulture, getting dirty fingernails, and we



employ large numbers of people to package, process and distribute food. Gardening is often merely a hobby now, rather than a valuable balancer of the diet. We exist in an economy that has erased distinctions of seasonal harvests, due to importation from other climates, so the joy of the arrival of fresh apples or almonds is largely lost upon us. And it would be hard to imagine ever going back.

### **Means of Distributing Seeds**

Unlike modern humans, animals often lose a great number of their young, but a large oak may produce 80,000 oaks with only a handful destined to grow to maturity. One wonders if such tree, if it had feelings, would care less for its young because of its numbers, or would it be overwhelmed at the great carnage it faces every year? Is the success of just a few off-spring worth such a great effort?

There are five ways to distribute seeds (wind and water currents, animal transport, explosion and gravity). Gravity is the simplest approach; seeds drop to the ground and hopefully find a sufficiently sunny patch of fertile earth to grow upon. The disadvantage to plain gravity is that the new plant will compete with the parent for limited resources.

Many plants have opted to build wings (e.g. ash, basswood, maple, dandelion) to allow winds to blow the seeds a few meters away over a wider patch of ground. The greatest weakness of this method is that it is slow for moving uphill in elevation.

Others have made the seeds large and tasty (e.g. acorns, apples, peanuts), and these are carried by squirrels, birds and other critters to their nests, sometimes at great distance; where some are either luckily buried and misplaced by the animal or the seeds alone pass through their digestive tracks and come out with a healthy dose of fertilizer.

A few other seeds have developed barbs and hooks to attach to passing animals and be carried to new locales. A few species (e.g. mangrove and cocoanut) will drop their seeds into the water where they may float about for months or years before rooting themselves. And finally, some produce pods that simply blow up and shoot off seeds for a short distance.

Unlike spores (e.g. ferns) which need immediate purchase on good land, seeds are a delaying mechanism. Many temperate seeds won't sprout until a period of coolness or darkness (i.e. winter) has passed. The seed must usually absorb water to expand and break the packaging and begin germinating. This process is called stratification.

Sometimes, the most robust seeds need to be scarified by being gnawed or half-digested or stepped on before water can penetrate. Others (e.g. the Jackpine and many prairie grasses) need to be lightly cooked to open up. Most gymnosperms have more or less naked seeds inside their cones.

### **Conclusion**

Some Druids are like nomadic animals, others are more fixed in their territory like plants. New Druids to me are like a handful of mixed seeds. I try to help them find the area where they will grow best. Each seed has the basic tools to build a new robust plant, and will get there by its own means, often with the assistance of some unusual friends.



## Quotes

If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow. -Rachel Carson

Fear of things invisible is the natural seed of that which everyone in himself calleth religion. -Thomas Hobbes

For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. -Luke 6:44 (see references to faith in Luke ch 13, 17 and Matthew ch.4, 13, 17)

Of all the wonderful things in the wonderful universe of God, nothing seems to me more surprising than the planting of a seed in the blank earth and the result thereof. - Julie Moir Messervy

We must learn not to disassociate the airy flower from the earthy root, for the lower that is cut off from its root fades, and its seeds are barren, whereas the root, secure in mother earth, can produce flower after flower and bring their fruit to maturity. -Kabbalah

You cannot hold on to anything good. You must be continually giving - and getting. You cannot hold on to your seed. You must sow it - and reap anew. You cannot hold on to riches. You must use them and get other riches in return. -Robert Collier

## Links

<http://orgs.carleton.edu/Druids/ARDA2/doc/2part6-9.doc> RDNA Greenbook 9 about Plants (50 pages)

<http://theseedsite.co.uk> A nice place to learn about British agriculture

<http://www.usbg.gov/> U.S. Botanical Gardens in Washington DC

<http://www.usda.gov> U.S. Department of Agriculture (click on "Agriculture" in "Browse by Subject")

<http://www.fourhcouncil.edu/programs.aspx> Four-H program for rural youth.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page) Wikipedia provided much of the facts for this research.

# Celtic Numbering

## Part Four of Five: Triads on Civil Structures

By Daniel Hansen, AD of Olympia Grove



### TRIADS RESPECTING LAND AND HUSBANDRY:

- There are three beauties of a land: the granary, the smithy, and the school.
- Three other beauties of a land: intelligent tillage, neighbors who agree, and conscientious rule.
- Three things which make plenty in a land: planting trees, tilling the soil, and carding and spinning.
- Three sustenance of man: hunting, ploughing the land, and merchandise.
- Three discontents of a husbandman: a lazy servant, degenerate seed, and soil over rich.
- There are three things, and any who move them are accursed: the boundary of land, the course of water, and the sign of a road or a track.



### TRIADS ON THE RESPECTABLE CITIZEN:

- There are three things which will make a man a leader among his neighbors: wisdom, generosity and wealth.
- Three things which bring a man the love of his neighbors: to be a peacemaker, to be a helper, and to be a guide.
- Three things which bring respect among his neighbors: supporting himself, being wise in his counsel, and being kind.
- Three exertions becoming and praiseworthy in a man: tilling his soil, increasing his knowledge, and growing in virtue.
- Three men who will be pleasing to God: a faithful teacher, a good husbandman, and a mediator in disputes.
- Three godly things among men: handicraft, husbandry, and scholarship.
- Three things which follow every good man of great virtue: a good name and report for himself, good instruction for the children where he is, and good progress in everything he undertakes in act and deed.
- Three men for whom when they are alive only hatred is seen and praise when they are dead: the peaceful wise man, the truthful teacher, and the sincere friend whom rebukes.
- Three chief obligations of a man to his country and family: to gain possessions by diligence and integrity, to profit his country and his kindred in all he does, and to seek lawful learning wherever he goes.
- Three things which the good poet preserves after him: memory of the praiseworthy, delight in thought, and instruction in knowledge.



### TRIADS ABOUT ANNOYING CITIZENS

- There are three men who are never profitable: he who married by counsel of his flesh, he who feasts by counsel of his craving and he who fights by counsel of his rage.
- Three things of less worth than all else: a woman without chastity, a man without knowledge, and a teacher without patience.
- Three kinds of men who lose their self-control like those insane: the hunter, the dancer, and the warrior.



## TRIADS RESPECTING LEGACIES

- Three better things than riches, which the happy man keeps for his children and his heirs: instruction by reason, instruction by example, and exhortation to act as he does because of the respect and praise it brings.
- Three things which will not benefit heirs: a miser's wealth, the praise of tavern companions, and feats of sports.
- Three things which prolong the lifetime of a man: the soil which rears a child, the food that nourishes a child, and play which diverts a child.
- Three worldly honors, each one superior to every other: ploughing the paternal homestead, asserting a claim successfully, and rearing children of one's line.
- Three alms to the future: planting trees, improving handicrafts and rearing lawful children.



## TRIADS THAT ADVISE MONITORING:

- There are three things which mislead the world: the promise of masters, the garments of monk's and the decorum of a daughter.
- Three things which deceive those who trust in them: a paramour's promise, a serf's fidelity, and the season of youth.
- Three things from which there is nothing but deceit: the love of a wanton, the innocence of dominion, and the piety of one ill in bed.
- Three things which ought not to be believed: an old woman dream, a paramour's oath and a tale without authority.
- Three things not easy to trust: a drover's oath, a paramour's promise, and a hunter's word about his dog.
- Men notable in three things: a miller on his thieving, a preaching friar in begging, and a boaster in telling lies.
- Three things hard to obtain: a grave tailor, an honest miller, and an alewife not covetous.
- Three persons who desire their portion rich and savory: a cook, a concubine, and a household priest.
- Three things which do not profit the world by anything that they do, whatever their fame for wisdom, art, and piety: a grasping miser, a vain bard, and a household priest.
- Three chicks from one nest: a loquacious farmer, a logical bard, and a half-hearted divine.
- Three kinds of contenders on the death of a powerful rich man: demons for his soul, kinsmen for his goods, and worms for his carcass.
- Three things good in a miser's eyes: a brass-handled knife, much-patched shoes, and defaming the generous.
- Three ways to know a man: by his discourse, his conduct, and his companions.
- Three measuring rods of every man: his God, his devil, and unconcern.
- Three hatreds that last forever: between a married person and the stepchildren, between dogs and swine, and between Cymry (Celts) and Saxons (English).
- Three things ungodly for a man to meddle with: the office of the lord, usury, and war.
- Three things hard for a man to do: cool the fire, dry the water, and please the world.
- Three things not easy to obtain when sought: a loan of money from a usurer, without interest; the pleading of a case in court, without fee; and a dinner of rich food in a miser's house.
- Three things which pervert just judgment: the love of friends, fear of the mighty, and desire of worldly good.
- Three things not easily found: a proud man generous, a young man wise, and an old man mannerly.
- Three diversions which will surely bring trouble: hunting, war, and love for a woman.
- Three things necessary to him who enters an inn: a strong head, a tough stomach, and a heavy purse.
- Three things a man gains in an inn: entertainment which makes him poor, mirth which makes him a sinner,

and joy which makes him sad.

- Three kinds of liar, and there is not their like: a lord lying for his privilege, a priest for his office, and a woman for a son whom she loves.



### **TRIADS ABOUT MANIFOLD BLESSINGS**

- Three blessings do not bring on man either hunger nor nakedness: the blessings of his spiritual father, the blessings of his rightful lord, and the blessings of a bard of hereditary art.
- Three other blessings better than all: the blessing of father and mother, the blessing of the sick and wounded, and the blessing of a man in adversity.
- Three men it is right to give food: the stranger, the solitary, and the orphan.
- Three things which cannot be obtained: poverty from alms giving, wealth from robbery, and wisdom from prosperity.
- Three occasions for a man to speak falsehood with excuse: to save the life of an innocent man, to keep peace among neighbors, and to keep a woman content.
- Three things a man is loath to leave: the land where he was born and nurtured, the friends whom he has proved true to him, and the wealth which he has amassed through the labors of his own hands.
- Three men who win easily in their lawsuits: the generous, the wise, and the wealthy.
- Three things by which we may know our neighbor: that he is poor, that he is a stranger, and that he is in the image of man.
- Three gifts of charity: food, sanctuary, and instruction.



### **TRIADS RESPECTING ETIQUETTE:**

- There are three things proper for him who has received kindness: his thanks, his remembrance, and requital.
- Three things for which thanks are due, because that is as easy as reward: an invitation, a gift, and a warning.
- Three qualities unbecoming in a man: being important in asking, hard in giving, and evil in opinion.
- Three things which bring a man many invitations: saying little, and that wise and instructive: quiet mirth without great effort; and behaving always without arrogance.
- Three things which cause a man loss of invitations: eating too much, speaking too much, and asking too much.
- Three men who ought not to be invited to a house: a flattering deceiver, a scornful mocker, and an envious traitor.
- Three things unhandsome at a banquet: a skewer too short, a blunt knife, and a dish out of reach.
- Three indignities of a man at a feast: coughing in his drink, cutting his hand with a knife, and spilling his broth.
- Three Improprieties of a man at a feast: breaking from every piece in the dish, putting in his mouth more than his companion can respond to, and drinking with his piece in his mouth; and a fourth impropriety: finding fault in the food he eats.
- There are three reasons for keeping silent: against saying the thing one ought not, against speaking in the way one ought not, and against speaking in the place where one ought not.
- There are three reasons for speaking, come what may come: for instruction against ignorance, counsel against strife, and truth against harmful falsehood.
- Three things do not hurt any one: concealing ill manners, controlling passion, and destroying evil intention.
- There are three things without which a man is not a man: a wife, a home, and a craft.
- Three things desirable in a household: good order, good knowledge and sufficient plenty.
- Three felicities of a household: an honest watchman, careful and wise errand-goers.

# Druidical Treasure

## (Aka The Dave Fisher Code)

### Part Five of Eight



Fiction written by B. N. Tavern  
For the Public Domain, 2004 CE  
**Part Five of Eight**

*(Place mouse over pictures for secret messages.)*

#### In Our Previous Episodes

Our two poor undergraduate juniors, Matt (a Cricket & football star) and Sean (a philosophy major), are spending winter vacation too under-employed at Carleton College in rural Northfield MN. Desperate for money, they follow up on a mysterious ad in a newspaper that implies a great treasure was hidden at Carleton for the future rightful spiritual heir of David Fisher, the founder of Reformed Druidism. Following a tip from the campus Chaplain, Sean infiltrates the local Masons, while Matt goes gaga with the Druids. From the various clues they discover, they decide that only possible solution to the mystery is to check the original written materials by David Fisher, which are stored at the Druid Archive Collection. They meet the mysterious secretary, Dylan, and access is denied. With amazing ingenuity and great personal risk, they steal some documents from the Archives and discover a lengthy poem holding a cryptic blueprint to the treasure. A harrowing climb in the Lower Arboretum and a series of clues lead their search to the foreboding St. Olaf College across the town on a small forest-girt mountain, where Matt and Sean seek for a circumspect ill-rumored group known only as "DENMAD", who holds the next key on their journey. Barely escaping with their life, from the clutches and strange initiation rites of the extreme Christian group, they decode a Masonic cipher on the cover of an ancient book they stole from DENMAD. This leads them to yet again pursue their treasure search at Carleton's chapel.

The previous four episodes can be read in their entirety at <http://www.rdna.info/treasure.html> or in earlier issues of the Missal-Any at [Back Issues](#).

#### Chapter Eighteen: The Catacombs

It turned out to be several days, before their busy schedules allowed Matt & Sean to resume their treasure search, now that they had cracked the devious code on the stolen book. It was now Winter Term at Carleton College, and by a suspicious coincidence, the lovebirds, Dylan and Matt, seemed to be sharing the same "Introduction to Women's Studies" class in Laird and "Early American Literature of the 19th Century", and were study partners for a few projects, that occupied more and more of his free time. Matt often chided Sean



for avoiding the "soft" subjects in his course selection and worrying more about "hard" cash. Sean retorted that he could read the classics at his leisure in his retirement when he was more worldly and wiser, rather than waste valuable tuition on them now.



During the first week back, a lot of students from the west coast, especially the first-years, wore a shell-shocked face for a few days, as they had previously thought that +10F was bitterly cold when they left in November, but could not comprehend that temperatures had dropped further to a regular -15F, not even factoring in the ever-present wind chill that hungrily burrowed into the thickest jacket for a trace of warmth to devour. Despite this, Broomball leagues flourished on the Bald Spot as the students stomped and slid in boots with brooms instead of hockey sticks across a miniature frozen pond. As always, furtive attempts at having the campus-wide 12th Annual Nude Winter Olympics finally came to fruition on an

unusually warm day of +16F, with a great deal of unusual, quickly performed sports, blued skin and, of course, the aftermath of a free commemorative T-shirted group photo for the yearbook.

Sean and Matt were leaving a circle of friends at the student center in the afternoon and during the parting formalities after checking mailboxes, Sean began to make really exaggerated gloved handshakes with his friends, who then winked at each other, muttered odd phrases, and laughed. Matt looked a bit disturbed at that, but shook his head sadly and followed Sean out the door, his cloak swishing dramatically on purpose, like an exotic bird ruffling in mating season.

Matt and Sean were headed for the Skinner Chapel discussing odd matters, "Hey, did you hear, I won the co-ed luge-sled for the third consecutive year at the Olympics last week. I totally lost control at the end on a bump and Dylan and I, we really crashed and burned on the ice." He laughed and began to yank up his shirt, bearing tempting flesh to the waiting wind-chill to pounce upon, "That practice at Olaf paid off! Do you want to see the scars?"

Sean held up a hand, and patted Matt on the shoulder, "No, that's fine, congratulations. Let's focus on our financial future here." Matt readjusted his gear back under his large billowing cloak, that surprisingly hid the pickaxe and crowbar underneath. As this was Carleton, nobody really paid any attention to a mammoth, black-cloaked man and his skinny shorter companion, eyes painfully half-shut, for warmth, in February.

They popped into the archives and asked a different secretary to see the Druid materials and without incident were able to reinsert the borrowed copy of the Constitution and Epistle without being noticed, and they re-emerged outside and they both breathed a sigh of relief. Most of the damage from the foam and fire-suppressors had been repaired, although several large unmarked crates were missing and appeared to have been moved to safer storage.

"So, Matt, you're not still upset or angry about the Constitution and stuff?"

Matt smiled weakly, "No, Sean, I'm sure you've learned from the archive debacle, and as for other stuff, well, I've gone... beyond that." He gazed strangely at the sky, "So beautiful isn't it, the sky? One never knows when it will be one's last one."



"That's not the only thing you've been seeing lately is it, eh?" Sean shoved Matt lightly, and the gear on his back clinked noisily. "Ah, I'm just kidding you, maybe after you're done romancing Dylan, in those pointless



English classes, you'll help me find my tuition money for next fall?"

"Hey, Dylan and I are just good friends, and I enjoy her for the good company. She really has a secret soft side, just like you Sean, and she smuggled a black kitty into her dorm room too, named Machka." Noticing Sean's look of displeasure as Matt prattled on and on about her, Matt noticed Sean's distraction, "Eh? It looks like Masons can turn green as much as Druids, eh, Sean?" Matt elbowed Sean in the ribs, "She says she knows the chapel well, because she's in choir, believe it or not, and lets the cat run wild in there, causing all kinds of hijinks. I learned about some interesting hiding spots from her."

"I see," Sean said sourly, "I don't like cats, I'm allergic to them."



"Don't worry, she won't be in there today," remembering something, his arm snaked out of his cloak and held Sean by the shoulder, "Hey, how about a wee shot of Glenfiddich whiskey, as a reward for returning the Constitution to the Archives? It'll be good for your constitution, too!"

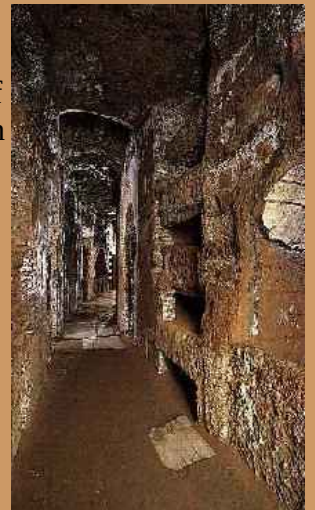
"I love Glenfiddich!" Sean beamed, the day suddenly seeming brighter as he postulated that amber fluid.

"I thought you did, but your roommate says it's not that good," Matt said a little doubtful.

"Alex, my roommate doesn't know Glenfiddich from Jack Daniels. Where is it, anyway?"

"Not many people use the lower level catacombs of the chapel anymore, too moldy they say; almost every religious group now reserves rooms in the new student center. Nowadays, only the Druids use the place during the winter months for meetings, because it is too cold to go outside until spring during the Time of Sleep. They have a storage closet down there for storing Druid gear... and Glenfiddich, I've heard."

They entered the chapel and shook themselves snowless and stomped a bit on the doormat. They then descended a long winding stone staircase deep down to the basement. The walls looked vaguely damp, glistening in the low light, with a touch of mildew in the crevices. It was about 55F all year here, being so far underground. Sean felt uneasy, as if he was being watched by somebody...or something. God was low on the priority list at Carleton, and apparently also for campus security, as there were no locked doors or cameras anywhere. Nobody would be down here, even the janitors seem to have abandoned it to the rampaging dust bunnies and fluttering cobwebs.



"So who's going to go down the creepy corridor first?" Sean asked.

"I will, come on! Nothing to be worried about, it'll all be over soon."

"What's down there?" Sean asked, his voice echoing down the hallway.

"Come on, Sean. It wouldn't be a real adventure, without a visit to a burial vault, now would it?" Matt smiled darkly. "That encrypted clue said to check out the crypt of the chapel, right? That's where we're going, and I know where the Druids keep their whiskey there for the services, a fortunate coincidence for us on a chilly day. They won't miss one bottle of Glenfiddich. But maybe I should go alone and check it out, your asthma..."

"No, my asthma is okay." Sean said coughing reflexively, "I love Glenfiddich! Just one bottle won't be missed, and it will shake off this chill. But, Matt, I don't like dead bodies," Sean mumbled.



"Of course you don't like dead bodies, that's one of the few normal things about you, but you'll soon have to come to grips with your mortality, just like all of us," Matt chided. "But, it's not really a 'crypt', it's just a dark and dingy room, once used by various groups for small Protestant services instead of the main hall upstairs." Sean entered a doorway, and Matt did his best to impersonate a 1940's radio horror story narrator. "They do joke about the original chaplain being buried under the small altar though. Sometimes he likes to come out to stretch a bit on nights like this..."

Sean scowled, but his heart beat a little faster as he came through the doorway and looked around. It was a 30-foot by 10-foot room, with some folding chairs and an altar at one end and a roughly built concrete-block wall behind it. Matt posted Sean at the doorway.

"Matt," said Sean, "why are all the seats so dusty, don't the Druids use this room?"

"Oh, Sean, Druids prefer to stand up, and besides it's only the first week of winter term. The room hasn't been used in months."

Matt went to the plain altar and looked behind it with a flashlight and pulled out a yellow steel key. "Here we go!" He went to a door at the back of the room, unlocked it with the key and led Sean past a pile of discarded concrete blocks. The thundering chapel furnace in a nearby room made it difficult to hear each other talk, "It's over here," Matt yelled and opened another door at the end of long hallway. Sean went in, and saw there was a single bottle of Glenfiddich in an otherwise empty small room, hesitated and felt Matt's heavy hand on his shoulder, rudely shoving him fully inside.



"What the hell's going on here, Matt?" Sean looked up incredulously at Matt's guffawing bulk.

Matt began to giggle a bit too disturbingly high-pitched and snorted darkly, "It's all over for you, Sean." Sean freaked and broke out of Matt's grasp and bolted past him, scrambling back down the same corridor, looking over his shoulder as Matt bellowed in laughter from the darkness. Sean's flight came to an abrupt jarring stop as he slammed into two large imposing men in dark cloaks at the entrance to the crypt.



Sean's eyes blossomed wide in terror, he looked up jaw agape, but relaxed at the sight of the faces of his fellow Masons from the Temple, "Paul, Peter, brothers, I'm glad you're here, Matt's gone crazy!"

Peter turned to Paul and said quizzically, "Brother Paul, do you see another brother here? All I see is a coward and eavesdropper." Paul concurred and the two grabbed Sean and began dragging him inexorably back into the darkness, towards Matt, who stood with arms crossed by the empty storeroom.

"What's going on here, Paul! Peter! Are you in on this too?"

They tossed his scrawny body back into the whiskey storeroom and the two stood broodingly behind Matt, like a trio from a WWF poster, arms crossed over their chests, their faces impassive.

"Matt, how do you know these guys?" Sean exclaimed looking furtively about him in the faint light for

another exit.

Matt smiled nonchalantly, "Well, Sean, you see, the connection between Druids and Masons runs deep, ... far deeper than you ever suspected. Bwa ha ha ha!"

"Matt, you're a Mason?!" Sean pointed in disbelief.



Matt pulled out a mason's trowel from under his cloak, "Yes, and we've become very disappointed with your unauthorized handling of our secrets to your friends." He paused, motioning to the concrete blocks, and Peter and Paul began transferring them over to his feet. Matt held up a tray full of concrete paste, "You can relax. You don't have to worry about graduating next year now, and this will be the last mortarboard you are going to see, now, we're going to ... uh, cement a conclusion to this problem."

Matt began to put two and two together quickly, his hands gripping the wet, grimy wall beyond him reflexively. "You can't be serious," he swallowed hard, "people will find me."

"We're quite serious, Sean." Matt began to mix some mortar in a bucket. "And nobody comes down here anymore, and it's too noisy and the walls too thick to hear you. Besides, this is the only key to this area, which I borrowed from the chaplain, and I'll hold on to it for... a few months. But don't worry, I'm sure the whiskey, will keep your spirits up... for a while. And, I think I can finish our little... project... up by myself now." Matt chuckled to himself, closing the door and locking the key and scraped the mortar for the first layer of blocks over the doorway.

Sean pounded on the door, yelling mostly incoherently. Peter opened the little window in the door, and the beating subsided. "Sean, I wondered if you realize the full gravity of this situation?"

"I do!"

"And do you realize all the secrets you've leaked already?" Paul added. Sean began to pour forth a litany of half-remembered revealed customs and such, and after three minutes he came to a halting end. Matt's wall of blocks had already reached the window level, and he tapped Paul who was leering maniacally through the tiny window.



"Excuse me Paul, move over a bit, I need to finish the wall."

"Oh, just one more question for him, Matt," Paul yelled over the incessant din of the furnace and Sean's moaning.

"Okay, go ahead, but I have class in a few minutes," Matt said stepping aside, tapping his watch.

"Sean, do you have any final words?" There was a short pause.

"I'm so sorry, can... can you forgive me?" his voice wavered inside.

Paul looked at Peter, who shrugged, and Paul leaning over to the window simply said, "Yeah, okay."

Sean looked up incredulously, as Matt knocked the blocks down with a kick and unlocked the door, pulling a

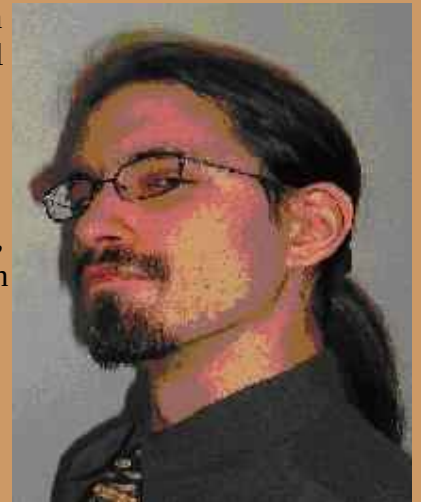
trembling, uncomprehending Sean out of the room, and led him out to the crypt's folded chairs. Peter and Paul slapped Sean on the shoulder, laughing jovially to cheer him, while Matt went back and brought out that bottle of Glenfiddich and produced some dusty glasses out from inside the altar and poured everyone a toddy splash. Sean looked chastened and morosely stared at the floor, but took the proffered drink and downed it without thinking, and slowly began to grow a little angry and addressed the men.

*"DAMN IT! What was that?!"*

Paul tapped Sean on the knee, and said, "Sean, my brother, we like to call that giving you the "Third Degree", mind you, it's not our orthodox traditional way to administer the Ordeal, but I think it's been most effective, don't you Peter?" Peter chuckled. "The essence is, of course, to realize your dependency on the assistance of others and the obligations of brotherhood, and our inherent mortality, which are to help them act with honor, right Peter?" Peter nodded. "So, we hope that you can come down to the Temple tomorrow for the associated lectures and we can do all the formalities of inducting you as a full Free and Accepted Mason. Oh, jeez, look at the time, I've got to get back to work, let's go, Peter." The two took another swig and chuckled. "No hard feeling, right friend?" Sean weakly grinned and waved at the chuckling men as they took off the cloaks and handed them to Matt, who turned and saw Sean still glaring at him. Matt raised a hand to fend off Sean's growing outburst.

"Now before you ask, let me explain." Matt said, laying down the cloaks on a chair, pouring another cup of smooth Glenfiddich for Sean, "First, I didn't tell them about the treasure. Second, all that about Druids and Masons was poppycock, of course, and third, the Druids have never used this room. You see, I felt unable to convince you to redirect your life-course, without a touch of death, so I went down to the Temple and explained a few matters and they suggested we give you a little shock. This prank is based on Edgar Allen Poe, just so you know, and you should read more of the classics from 'silly English classes', you know, it's good for your health!" Surprisingly Sean took this all in stride.

"Matt, I'm still very upset, but I think... I understand why you did that," he said unclenching his fists, "but you owe me a large pizza tonight, and we'll have to polish off the rest of that whiskey."



"It's a deal,... brother."

Sean chuckled, "I guess I always knew you were a rather Po' actor, and now I know you are also a Raven lunatic. Are you going to pull a trick like this again?"

"Nevermore," Matt chuckled, then Matt looked up startled and glanced around, "Did you hear something?"

"No, you're not going to spook me again. But what about the puzzle?" Sean said, completely forgetting why they were there in the first place.

"Oh, that! I came down a week ago to search. Look under the altar, there's another key in there taped to the underside."

Sean went over and reached under the desk and yelped and jumped back, holding his shaking hand, squawking, "Eiyaaa!"

"What's wrong, Sean?" Matt asked concerned and approaching.



"Something furry is in there."

"Really?" Matt looked amused and reached under the altar and pulled out a large bronze key in one hand and the other held out a sleepy black kitten. "Now what on Earth is Machka doing in here?" The cat pawed at him playfully and had a hair brush strapped onto its back, and Matt snuggled with it.

"What's that doing there?" Matt said pointing to the animal.

"Why silly," Matt said with a broad grin, "[it's a catacomb](#), what else would you expect down here?"



There was a knock on the door, and the two turned around, the chaplain was there, heavily leaning on a cane. He had a wide grin.

"Hello Sean. Oh, Matt, did it all work out?"

"Yes, Charlie, thanks for giving me the okay on this little prank," Matt said with good spirits, hiding the second key, and holding up the whiskey, "want a shot?"

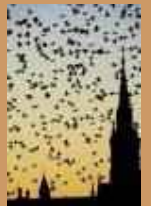
"Don't mind if I do," Charlie said taking a shot glass.

"What, you're in on this too? Man, this is how people get paranoid about conspiracy theories!" Sean griped.

"Ah, Sean, my laddy," Charlie said, downing the shot, "Next time you tip someone, don't tip the books or one day the scales will be tipped against you." Charlie put down the shot glass, wiped his lips with his sleeve, and looked around. "Matt, you'll clean up and lock up on your way out, right? Sorry, I have to run off to a humorous dinner with a Rabbi and a priest at a bar." Matt nodded. Charlie waved and left.

Sean turned to Matt, "Where do we go from here? What's it say again?" He pulled out the clue from the constitution reading the appropriate verse:

High o'er the heads of those deep in prayer  
Bestruck by the gods and polished by the air,  
Known only well by the folk of the sky  
Use wits to reach there or learn how to fly.



Matt had an idea and flicked on the flashlight under his chin, shading his face demonically, and intoned dramatically, striking a pose with his finger pointing up to the ceiling "We must go up to... the Tower of Power! Bwa ha ha ha!" He flicked the light switch on and off to simulate lightning, while Sean rubbed his chin and considered how to best get his satisfactual revenge later on this perfect dolt.

## Chapter Nineteen: The Tower of Power

Sean and Matt cleaned up the crypt and Matt deposited the cat in a warm pile of cloaks, where it quickly returned to sleep. They proceeded up to the main floor of the chapel and climbed another flight of stone step to the second floor, and Matt pointed up. In the ten-foot high ceiling was a robust trapdoor with a large keyhole in the corner. Matt maneuvered a stout oak table underneath the trapdoor, climbed up and unlocked it, pounded the door until it broke a crusty seal of disuse and pushed the door up and it flipped open on a hinge with a large thud on the floor above. He placed a chair securely on the table and climbed in, with Sean following behind.

Once inside, Sean looked around and saw that they were at the base of the interior of the chapel's seven-story tower. The walls loomed up around them, perhaps climbing yet another five stories. It was a large hollow tall space about 30 feet by 30 feet on the floor, with two-story-tall open stone windows in the walls, covered by chicken wire to keep out birds. Some large bells swung a little from massive ceiling mounts, long since replaced in use by an electronic system of speakers. The cold January winds blew through and swirled snow and debris. The weak rays of the setting sun were still strong enough for Sean to see a set of primitive rungs going up a wall with another trapdoor at the very top. Sean felt sick and woozy as some vertigo began to unbalance him; and he leaned against a wall, breathing heavily.



"You okay, Sean?" Matt said with obvious concern, Sean nodded with his eyes closed. "You know we have to climb up there, according to the clue on the book cover."

"Yeah, just give me a moment. You'll be the death of me yet, Matt." Sean breathed slowly and went over to the rungs and recoiled. "Ah shit!"

"Huh? Something wrong?"

"No, Matt, I mean, shit. Bird shit all over the place. These rungs have old bird nests on them too!"

"Dang, this treasure hunting sure is hard work, isn't it?"

"Yeah."

Matt rubbed his chin, turning his flashlight on the rungs, "I guess during the summer, the birds find a way in here. That's going to make it harder to climb. Bird shit is acidic too, might have structurally weakened the rungs. We'd better prepare for it." Matt shifted oddly and somehow unloaded his gear bag without removing his cloak, stepped away and began digging through the pile and pulled out some harnesses. "Despite what went on down there, I have absolutely no intention of losing you Sean, I'm not bright enough to do this solo, so slip on this climbing harness and lock a carabineer onto every few rungs, in case you... uh, slip on something."

The two geared up and began to slowly ascend the ladder, locking onto every other rung and releasing the old rung. After about 10 muscle-wobbling minutes they reached the top, and Sean pushed open the trapdoor, which was unlocked, and scrambled onto the roof and rolled onto his back, breathing hard, while the sky yawed in odd directions to the accompaniment of the pounding tympani in his ears. Matt came next and walked to the edge of the three-foot-tall raised lip, gazing at the magnificent view of the buildings of the City of Northfield stretching one way with its 14,000 people (only 13,993 souls if you consider the lawyers, so the joke goes), and the enormous wooded arboretum on the other side of the campus, with a glimpse of the Cannon River running down the side of it, like a silver icy ribbon below a black lattice of bare tree branches.



Sean sniffed his mittens with a unhappy face, "I'm going to have to replace these."

"You know, I think I can see the curvature of the Earth from up here." Matt noted and spit over the side of the wall. The spit, naturally, froze in mid-fall and bounced off the roof of the nave below, clattering onto the snow below. Sean crawled over in the howling wind and looked out for a second, thought better of it and slid down to a safe and stable sitting position. Matt joined him shining the flashlight on the bronze key from the altar.

"Hey Sean. More Ogham is scratched on the side of the key, take a look," Matt said, now accustomed to secret codes as if it was a commonplace fact of life as reading the morning paper. He read the words slowly;

"When you are in doubt  
You need not pout  
For the place to start  
Seek Samhain's heart"



Sean shrugged, and looked around the roof. There were four spires, one on each side of the tower facing the cardinal points. On each of them was a cross-shaped lightning rod which was securely bolted in place. Each of them was of a slightly different length. "The puzzle tells us to take the symbol of Denmad, which must be one of these cross-shaped lightning rods, but which one?"

Matt walked around and wiggled them, and noticed that when he pulled one, it tilted a little and clicked, and one stone in the middle of the floor was slightly raised. Matt went over and stepped on it, and noted that it could be depressed. Out of a corner, something flashed, and a projectile whizzed by his ear. Matt found it on the floor and held it under his flashlight. It looked like a dart with a wicked barb, smeared with some type of tacky goo. "This is just like a 'Tomb Raider' puzzle that I did last summer on a computer game. I think this might be a poison dart for making a wrong selection. I don't like poison darts."



"Really?" Sean said in a doubtful voice, "What kind of priest would install poison darts in a church?"

"Depends on his parishioners. Yeah, according to my dozens of games and extensive movie experience, there are basic adventuring patterns to death traps, so if we push the center stone, it should reset the lock for each attempt, then we pull the crosses in the right order, and then step on the center stone again, and we should unlock something. If we're wrong, then we get more poison darts. Fun eh? At least, because it is winter, so we don't have to worry about hordes of flesh-eating scarab beetles crawling out of a secret chamber! Ha ha ha!"

"Yes, delightful. May I remind you that you make a bigger and tastier target, Matt?"

"Well, fortunately, there are only about 24 logical permutations that we have to work through, if each is pulled only once," Matt rubbed his mittens, lapping up the challenge, "But, I'd rather get it right on the first try, cause it's mighty damn cold up here, and I don't want to die. What do you think the right pattern is, Sean?"

Sean thought carefully, "Well, now. What's the 'Samhain' he's referring to? That's Halloween right?"

"Yes," said Matt began to ramble instructively, "At the original Samhain service in 1963 at the end of the summer half of the year, Fisher invited everyone to think of their ancestors, and perhaps call across the veil between this world and the Other one, and one person began speaking in tongues and prophesizing, according to tradition, that there would be three stones; which some later believed to be the assassinations of Jack and Bobby Kennedy and Martin





Luther King, Jr. "

"I remember that," Sean acceded.

"But, do you know, Sean, we still have the text of Fisher's meditation from that Samhain?" Matt pulled a ragged copy of the Druid Chronicles out of his backpack and opened to the Book of Customs, chapter 7. "If I remember correctly, ah yes, here it is, in the line at the center of the poem, 'The sun, the bright fire of day, withdraws his chariot; his face is veiled with clouds, and the breath of the north wind walks the land.' So I think we should start with North." Matt lay low on the floor, then reached up and pulled on the northern cross." He paused, looking for death darts, but none came out, so he exhaled in relief. "Okay, but what's next?"

Sean thought for a while, and pulled out his Masonic cipher, "Maybe this is the actual point where we should use the four directions of the Druid service; where they call to the winds at their services to divine whether the vegetable sacrifice has been accepted? It didn't work in decoding the message on the book cover, but it just might work here." Matt nodded, went from the North to the southern cross and pulled it, then crawled to the East, then the West. He returned to the center of the roof and looked at Sean, then resolutely stomped pushed down on the center stone, which sank deep into the roof and locked down. The bolts holding on the [southern cross](#) mechanically unscrewed and the stout metal pole clanged harshly onto the stone floor of the roof. Sean grinned and picked it up, a bit surprised himself that it was so easy. It was about six feet long and one inch thick with a sharp spike on the bottom and a simple cross-beam halfway up.



"What do you think we are supposed to do with it?" Sean said looking on its smooth surface for any telltale Ogham. There was none, not a clue. Totally smooth, but discolored from a few lightning strikes and pocked from the elements. "Wasn't Fisher reputedly almost hit by lightning in 1963?"

"Yeah, for invoking a curse, I think, at the time." Matt shrugged, "Well, I don't know what to do next now, so I guess we'll have to go on to the next clue of the main puzzle in the Constitution tomorrow." Matt looked around at the other poles, and finding no clues, returned to the trapdoor and waved Sean over, "Let's get down and go back to the dorms." Sean nodded and they laborious descended. As expected, going down was even more harrowing, as they couldn't see where their footholds below, but nothing like a Hollywood cliff-scene hanging by one arm developed. That rarely happens when you're being very careful. They resealed the trapdoors to the closed position and put the key back under the altar.

As they left the chapel, Matt parted with Sean, remember to take the kitten, and put it into a large interior pocket of his own cloak, and left to go to return it to Dylan. Sean went back to his dorm room, lay on his bed and curled up, still a bit shaken by the events of that evening and fell into a deep sleep without going to dinner. His dreams were disturbing, but he awoke with an odd feeling of resolution, not too different, he thought from Ebenezer in the Christmas Carol, except he still felt rather greedy and unfriendly.

## Chapter Twenty: What Lies Beneath

A few days later, after Sean's official initiation into Third Degree Masonry, Sean met with Matt again over in Matt's room. Sean swaggered in and slammed a piece of paper on the desk and handed Matt a pen.

Matt blinked from his bunk-bed, "What's this?"

"It's a pen, and that is a confession," Sean said stabbing a finger on the document.

"Heh, Sean, I'm sorry you're still taking that prank so hard, but I've already admitted it to you." Matt said looking over the document a bit sleepily.

"Not for that," Sean waved, "It's a joint confession that we are both on a treasure hunt, and a dangerous one, and an agreement to split the rewards fifty-fifty, including our next of kin, when we get any." Sean crossed his arms and waited.

"Do you think that is really necessary?" Matt looked a little shocked, his palm on his cheek.

Sean paced the room, "After those shenanigans, and watching 'The Treasure of the Sierra Madre' on cable TV, I realize that the greatest danger in treasure hunting is not poison darts, rattle snakes and malaria, but it is betrayal and greed from one's closest partners. If only you and I know about this treasure hunt, then both of us will be under enormous pressure to double-cross the other as we get closer."



"But we have only one cross, Sean..." Matt joked holding up the tubular cross from the tower.

"I'm serious Matt," Sean laboriously sat down with a pained expression, "I haven't read much literature, but there are a few things in life that a man or woman cannot have too much of;" counting on his fingers, "wealth, health, sex, power and cable channels." Matt nodded gravely. "So for your protection, and mine, we need to entrust this document with a neutral third party, in case the worst of our human nature gets the best of us."



About this time, Dylan came in the room, with her kitten in her arms. Sean scrambled to hide the document as well as he could without drawing obvious attention to it.

"Oh, Sean-baby, you don't need to hide anything. Everyone in the dorm knows you two guys are up to something. The muddy boots, the digging tools, the odd hours, the skulking. Really macho stuff, I think. However, Patricia, the Mormon on this floor, says you're digging up corpses for the Druids, of course." She stood behind Matt and began kneading his sore shoulders. "Besides, Sarah the newsgal is my friend, and she told me you were looking for some kind of treasure." she said, enjoying the mounting concern on Sean's scowling face. "Oh you men are easy to read, you know. By your panicky reaction, I can tell that she was telling the truth. Don't ever try to play poker. But don't worry, I'm too busy to be in on your schemes, so don't mind little old me."

Matt scribbled his signature on the document, sealed it in an envelope, and handed it to her before Sean could stop him. "Hey Dylan, hold on to this for awhile, say until next year, and don't open it." She slid the white envelope into a dark pocket in her jacket.

"Don't open it, riiiiight... No problem, you guys going treasure hunting this evening or do you want to catch a movie, Matt?"

"Can I get a snow-check on that?" Matt asked.

"Sure thing, Mat, but we'll go tomorrow, okay, there's a good film coming out called, 'National Treasure' with Nicholas Cage by Disney Productions and I think you guys might like it." Dylan picked up the cat and went back to the door, turned and added, "I don't know about finding bullion, but you guys seem like the only [gold bricks](#) around here, so I'd recommend that you don't give up your day jobs while you run about on your snark quest." Then she tactically slid out just before Sean could retort cleverly.

"You told her, didn't you?" Sean accused, leaning angrily over Matt, hands on his hips.

"No, man, it's like she can read my mind," Matt protested waving his hands in a spooky way over his head, "and there aren't many pages in there, you know."

"Well, she seems reliable enough for now. Let's move quickly to the next clue tonight. Here's the verse from the Constitution puzzle;"

"Yo, I start my senior year in August, six months from now, and I can't afford to wait around, Matt." Sean snapped, "We've been pretty lucky until now, but I think if we run up against a brick wall or dead-end, we might need the extra time to overcome that obstacle."

"All right, but what do you think the clue means?" Matt asked, stifling a yawn.

"Well, despite the figurative connotations, every clue so far has led us to a physical location described in the clue." Sean rolled out a large map of the campus on the floor and suspiciously looked out in the corridor and kicked shut the door. "You know a lot more than I do about the Druidical locations and geography of the arboretum, and I asked you a few days ago to inquire about Beltane festivities and their locations. Tell me what you've found."



Matt leaned over the large geological map of the Arboretum tracing from various landmarks. "Well, Sean, Beltane or May Day was once traditionally held here on the Hill of Three Oaks every year to welcome the start of the summer half of the year, but due to the annual big Spring Concert (held usually on the same weekend) the Druids have been celebrating the Maypole Dance over in the Stone Circle Grove over here in the Upper Arb." Matt pointed to the various locations. Sean looked pleased and was looking firmly at the circle's location, but Matt interrupted, "However, I don't think that Fisher is referring to the DRUIDIC Beltane services."

Sean looked baffled, "What do you mean? Who else is celebrating May Day?"

Matt preened himself, and pulled out a corncob pipe and chewed it between sentences, "Well, except for the odd wiccan in town, no one IS celebrating it NOW, just the Druids. But, I noticed in ARDA 2 on page 538, there is a photo of Mai Fete in the 1950s and when I talked to Dylan last week, she said that from the 1920s to the mid-1960s, the theatre department and various women in town would have a Festival of May on Mai Fete Island and enact a simple drama or play." He pointed at an island in the middle of Lyman Lakes with his pipe-stem. "And I think Fisher would have been plenty aware of that back in the 60s. What do you notice about its shape?"



Sean studied the map and stood up with a start, "It is heart-shaped! Why that means the blue skirt..."

"It's actually the ring of water around the green grassy island. Yep. I was told by Dylan, that the island used to be heavily shrubbed until the late '90s, and a favorite haunting place of young couples on romantic trysts away from the lights and ears of the dorms, but not going as far as the distant Arboretum. I'm hoping to test that out in a few months..."

Sean protested, "But the poem says, 'below her blue skirt' and I have no interest in going into cold water

again after that baptism fiasco at St. Olaf College. I simply don't have any scuba gear. Maybe we'll just have to wait until the spring thaw, after all." Sean and Matt's excitement both ran into the problem and their spirits sank. The ice wouldn't be gone until March or April, and the water wouldn't be comfortable until May or June. They sat for a while kicking their heels and silently fuming, then Sean sat up and took the pencil out of his gnawing teeth and said, "Dam!"

"What's wrong, Sean?"

"Not damn, dam! Unless there was no water!"

"Huh, what?"

"Matt, those are man-made lakes, and there's a dam that they occasionally open to drain the lakes for dredging them deeper from years of silt accumulation right, I heard about that in a biology class."

"Yeah, so you're saying we need to open the dam, drain the water, and then inspect the base of the island at our leisure?" Matt slapped a fist into his open palm. "That's a dam good plan, let's go take a look tonight!"

Sean smiled and they grabbed their packs and went out into the stygian night, as it was a new moon. They trundled down to the base of Lyman Lakes and looked at the dam, whose trickling flow-over had made an enormous spray of ice reaching down to the creek at its base. They found the locking mechanism, but he noticed with a depressed sigh, "The turn-wheel is wisely missing, there's just an inset square depression. We need to get the key to open it, but I don't think we'll be able to steal that easily."

A few cars sped by obliviously on Highway 19 near the frozen waterfall, going a prudent 35 mph with the icy roads. Matt looked at the square for a while, dropped his pack and he pulled off the cross that was strapped on his back.

Sean sighed, "Um, Matt, this is no time to get religion. Praying won't help us here," Sean grouched.

"Sean, never underestimate the power of the cross," Matt snickered. And pointed to one of the ends of the cross-bar, "Look here, this one is a bit squared off, and perhaps, just maybe," he inserted it in the square, and it snugly fit in with a bit of wriggling. "It fits," he said simply.



"Well, open it, it's 8 p.m. now, and there's a lot of water to drain..." Sean urged Matt.

"Okay." Matt grabbed the far end of the cross and firmly planted his feet on the round boulders nearby and began to pull the lever clockwise. At first, nothing moved, and he pushed it the other direction, to unseat the screw a little, then heaved it back clockwise, his teeth clenched in concentration. The screw mechanism jerked slowly at first, then turned easier and easier. But no water came out. Sean looked dejectedly at Matt.

"The ice must be blocking the sluice gate." Matt nodded, stepped over, and using the sharp point on the cross, began ramming it into the ice to little effect. Growing frustrated, he pulled out a mattock and began laying into the ice, using the cross as a spike, held wincingly by Sean, shielding his eyes from the shards of ice that splattered up. Without warning on the tenth blow, the ice shattered, and a torrent of water exploded out horizontally in a torrent, shooting chunks of ice all directions with hundreds of gallons of green sludge and the occasional carp pouring out. Matt fell back heavily with a big grin on his face. "Oh yeah, who's your daddy! Woo hoo!"

"Good job, Matt, now let's come back around 3:00 a.m., and we'll see about peeking under that skirt."





They went back to their dorms, and early in the morning, meeting at the student center, Matt being 20 minutes late, as usual. They trudged down the hill towards Lyman again, and Matt looked stunned. "Um, Sean, the ice is still there."

He was right, of course, the ice being about eight inches thick was still spread around the two islands and the narrow lake, even though the supporting water had completely drained from the dam. Sean looked unfazed, "Then we'll just make a hole and go under it. Crawl, if we have to."

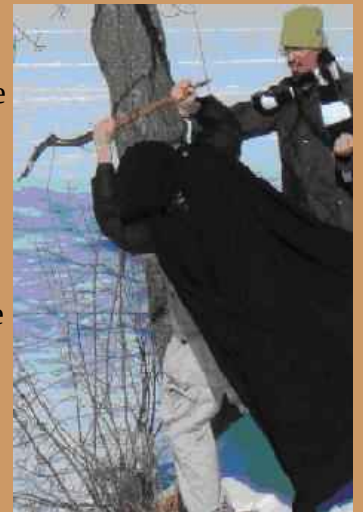
"Um, Sean, you remember I told you that I don't like to get mud on my clothes, and the bottom of the lake is pretty slimy, and..."

his words were cut off with a dropped hand of Sean.

"You've forgotten that it's winter in Minnesota. Five hours of  $-20^{\circ}\text{F}$  weather, means there is a nice thick layer of frozen mud there now." Sean polished his mitten ends and blew on them. Matt smiled back and they went on to Mai Fete Island by the charming little arching wooden bridge.

"Which side of the island should we start on?" Matt asked.

"I'm going to be daring and suggest the north side, since that seems to be Fisher's favorite." They went to the shoreline there and Matt began to swing the mattock, while Sean again held the cross as a spike at arm's length, and soon they had made a three-foot-wide crack, and they slid diagonally down the frozen mud and under the ice. They both crawled in and looked around. The mud was covered with a gritty layer of ice, like a dirty ring on a bathtub. The ice above was mostly clear and they could look up and see the clouds reflecting the light of the city's nightscape that gave their skin a smurf-ish blue hue. Like a giant tutu on a ballerina, the ice stretched out from the sides of the island. Sean hoped that the ice would continue to support its own weight and not crash down and bury them until a dire spring thaw, a thought that prompted him to hurry Matt. They crawled around the base of the island until they found what seemed to be a drainage culvert. But, of course, there was no reason for a culvert on an island only 80 feet wide.



"Your turn to go down the creepy corridor first," Sean suggested, and Matt glowered back but laid on his back and scooted and shimmied head first into the now drained, but icy, tunnel out of the sight of Sean's flashlight. After a minute or two Matt called for Sean to join him, and Sean wiggled down the pipe, approaching Matt's flashlight after about 10 feet. The culvert began to rise up a few feet and suddenly space opened up around him, and Matt looked around at a small round room with an arched cement roof, about four feet high, like an igloo.

"You know Sean, Freud would say climbing obelisks and crawling in tunnels are metaphors for..."

Sean snapped, "You know, Matt, sometimes an obelisk is just an obelisk, and a tunnel is just a tunnel!"

"Well, still, this domed chamber is pretty cool. I feel like an Inuit, huh, Sean?" Matt joked, but it was a poor joke and he got no response. Matt sighed and pointed to some beaver skeletons and piles of sticks, and ran his flashlight over the walls and the low ceiling. "It'd make a nice dorm room, with a new coat of paint, maybe a nice round Hobbit door on the top."



"Uh, huh, something's over there," Sean observed and they crawled over to a corner where there was something painted on the ceiling. Sean crawled off, and Matt followed, still jabbering.

"You know, Sean, I have heard legends of undersea cities in the Celtic lands and crannogs in lakes, but I never thought there might be one here on the campus, actually like this." The strokes had been crudely applied with a black ink by a thick brush on the white concrete, with a Druid sigil, then an arrow, then a cross and then an arrow, then a black circle under a convex curve.

Below the picture was a verse in Ogham, which Sean copied down while Matt held the light steady. He then read his translated notes aloud:

You have one symbol but it will take two  
To find it you'll need to vigil the night through  
Follow the winds through the five famous trees.  
In the last, you'll find the second of the keys.



They both looked at the words, Sean mused, "Well, we know that Fisher withdrew a bit from the Druids at the end of his junior year, and after graduating in 1965 he went to the Episcopal seminary, which would explain the movement from the sigil to the cross, and each seems to be on some sort of pedestal. It looks like that might be a cave he's pointing at the end, perhaps an encouragement for us to become a hermit, or a reference to the tomb where Jesus was buried, or Dead Sea Scrolls, or Shamanic cave meditations?" Sean trailed off, realizing he was on wild tangents.

Matt reminded him, "Although there may be metaphysical implications, remember again, everything has led to a physical location, so I'll look around with the grounds crew for natural or artificial caves in the region. Remember the line in the master poem: 'The path to her cave will be sharp and clear' "

Sean was locked deep in thought, turned to Matt and asked, "Hey, Matt, when did you say you were going to do your solitary Druidic vigil for the Third Order Priesthood?"

"Oh, Druids don't usually vigil between Samhain and Beltane, so we're not scheduled to do anything until May."

"Why not?"



"Because, Sean, winter is cold, depressing, and there are no pretty leaves to look at." Matt smiled condescendingly.

Sean sighed deeply and grouched, "It looks like we have to wait three months until your vigil for the next clue. But in the meantime we need to do some research on trees."

"That's a lot of time. I was thinking about something, Sean."

"Oh yeah? What?"

"I should really become a Mason, so that you don't have to inappropriately reveal secrets to me anymore. In a



strange way, it is really as much my fault as yours. Would you put a good word in for me?"

"Of course," Sean was surprised, then paused as if summoning some deep inner strength for the next sentence, "And for good measure, I'll join your cult... I mean club. They can't be half as whacked as the Denmads and Masons are, and at least they have a kinder sense of humor."

"That'd be cool," Matt smiled and shook Sean's parka-clad shoulder.

Sean grinned, "Do I need to bring a chicken or a goat?"

"Oh, Sean, you silly, we're REFORMED Druids, we only use vegetables and leaves." He leaned over conspiringly and whispered, "But, I've heard odd rumors that one grove in California offers up [mushrooms](#), which you know have cellular properties and biochemistry of both plants and animals. I find that most disturbing..."

Sean chuckled. He then paused at the culvert to go back outside, then said with a deadpan face, "You know, Matt, we'd better put the water back in the lake before somebody notices it's gone."

## END OF PART FIVE OF EIGHT

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

# NEWS



Death Renews Iceman "Curse" Claim

**The death of a molecular biologist has fuelled renewed speculation about a "curse" connected to an ancient corpse.**

From BBC News World Edition, November 5, 2005

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/4409512.stm>

© BBC MMV

Tom Loy, 63, had analysed DNA found on "Oetzi", the Stone Age hunter whose remains were discovered in 1991.

Dr Loy died in unclear circumstances in Australia two weeks ago, it has been announced, making him the seventh person connected with Oetzi to die.

Colleagues and family of Dr Loy have rejected the notion that he was the victim of a "curse".

It is not known how many people have worked on the Oetzi project - and whether the death rate is statistically high.

The amateur climber who found Oetzi in 1991, Helmut Simon, was killed during an unexpected blizzard in the Alps last year, not far from the original find.

His body was missing for eight days before it was located.

Within hours of Mr Simon's funeral, the head of the mountain rescue team sent to find him died of a heart attack, aged 45 and apparently in good health.

Four other people associated with Oetzi have died, prompting rumours of a "mummy's curse":

- Rainer Henn, 64, a forensic pathologist who handled the body. He was killed in a car crash the following year
- Kurt Fritz, the mountaineer who led Dr Henn to the body. He was killed in an avalanche shortly after Dr Henn died
- Rainer Holz, 47, a filmmaker who made a documentary about removing the body from its block of ice. He died of a brain tumour soon afterwards
- Konrad Spindler, 66, an archaeologist who was a leading expert on the body. He died of complications related to multiple sclerosis.

### **Scoff**

Dr Loy's brother Gareth said the two had never talked about a curse - and that Tom Loy had been in poor health, with a condition that caused his blood to clot.

An inquest into Dr Loy's death was inconclusive, ruling out foul play but unable to determine if he had died of natural causes, an accident, or both, Gareth Loy told The Australian newspaper.

An unnamed colleague of Dr Loy scoffed at the idea of a curse, the newspaper reported: "He didn't believe in the curse. It was just superstition. People die."

## **EVENTS**



### **Conversations with Nature**

Sunday November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2-4 p.m. Nature is where you find it with Iris Brightwater. Bring a Natural Object to explore using writing and art. Please bring a journal. Other art materials provided. Free will donation to benefit Change Makers. Space is limited—please RSVP by 11/3 wolfbird7 at sbcglobal.net.

Change Makers  
6536 Telegraph Ave.  
Oakland, CA 94609  
(510) 655-2405

### **The Way of Merlin: A Course in Sacred Earth Magic with Mara Freeman**



The Avalon Mystery School presents a series of eight monthly classes on The Way of Merlin: A Course in Sacred Earth Magic with Mara Freeman. Classes begin Saturday, November 5th, from 10am to 4pm in a beautiful secluded location in Ben Lomond, near Santa Cruz.

In this course you will learn to work with:

- \* The spirit of Merlin as Inner Guardian of the Sacred Land
  - \* The Magic of Trees, Plants and Flowers
  - \* The four temples of the Elements
  - \* Devas and Nature Spirits
  - \* Sacred Sites and Earth Energies
- \* The Realm of Faerie
  - \* Totem Beasts and Animal Powers
  - \* Celtic Earth Healing techniques

Cost: \$60 per class or \$400 to register in advance for series. (Some sliding scale places available on request.)

Schedule:

- Class One November 5<sup>th</sup>
- Class Two December 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Class Three January 7<sup>th</sup>
- Class Four February 4<sup>th</sup>
- Class Five March 4<sup>th</sup>
- Class Six April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Class Seven May - to be announced
- Class Eight June - to be announced

Call 800 694 1957 or email: [treeofstars@earthlink.net](mailto:treeofstars@earthlink.net) for details. To learn more about the Avalon Mystery School, visit us at <http://www.avalonmysteryschool.net/>

Mara Freeman is the director of the Avalon Mystery School. She has taught Celtic and British sacred paths internationally for over 20 years. She was trained by initiates of the Western Mystery Tradition, is a well-known teacher in modern Druidry, and author of numerous published articles, recordings, and the book, "Kindling the Celtic Spirit." (HarperSanFrancisco, 2000.)

## CALENDAR

Samhain, when the Sun is mid-way between the Fall Equinox and the Winter Solstice will occur this year on Nov. 6 11:43 p.m., 15 degrees of Scorpius, or as 16 degrees 18 minutes decl on Nov. 6 8:41 p.m. PST. On Samhain eve, put out a plate of food for your ancestors. It could be a relative or a friend. Make their favorite foods, leave a door or window open, and invite them in. Spend the evening remembering them and telling stories of them.



## A Druid Missal-Any

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This is the end of the Samhain 2005 Issue.

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## Comments on the Missal-Any?

Submissions to [poppinjay@earthlink.net](mailto:poppinjay@earthlink.net)

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