

A DRUID MISSAL-ANY

A Newsletter of the Reformed Druids of North America

Yule, Year 43
(December 21, 2005)

Volume 21, Number 8



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Yule, a Minor High Day in the Druid calendar, marks the Winter Solstice. This was a more important day it appears from the archeological evidence in the preceding Megalith Culture. Not only is the rising point of the sun marked in the stones of Stonehenge, but many of the Megalithic tombs are so constructed that only on Midwinter's Day does the sun shine into the interior, usually through a round window cut in the portal stone, or along the funnel-shaped corridor of stone pillars leading up to it. The link between death, the Sun, Midwinter and an afterlife or a re-birth is a very old one, predating the Druids and even the arrival of the Indo-Europeans in Europe. In the cultures of Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, about whom we have more information than has survived about either the Megalith culture or the Druids, the celebration of the Solstice is linked with the birth of the new, young Year-God, Corn-God or Vegetation-God. (Yes, the Christians co-opted this motif. According to the tax roles the historical Jesus was probably born around May.)

As we know that the Druid year began on Samhain, we know that they did not consider this the birth of the new season, as did many other Neolithic cultures. But the traditions of Bardic revels and of feasting on the wild boar, the vigil of the Yule log, and the decorating of Yule trees very probably do come from the Druid past. So also may be the tradition of going from house to house, singing a ritual song particular to the holiday, i.e. caroling. But in Druid times this would have been something like the "Hogamany Carols" and the related rituals of circling or dancing around the house, beating on drums and bull hides. This tradition was preserved in the remote Highlands until the nineteenth century. The ritual use of the bull hide, also used with other Druid rites, links it to Druidic, especially the Druidic Filidh tradition, and not to the preceding Megalithic or pre-Indo-European ones.

Here is one such carol. Try marching around your house and singing it this Solstice, with or without bull hide.

(Sun-wise, of course!)

Cairoll Callaig

Nis tha mis air tighinn dh' ur duthaich
A dh' urachadh dhuibh na Callaig;
Cha leig ml leas a dhol ga innse,
Bha i ann ri linn ar seanar.

Dirim ris an ardorus,
Teurnam ris an starsach,
Mo dhuan a ghabhail doigheil,
Modhail, moineil, maineil.

Caisean Callaig 'na mo phoca,
Is mor an ceo thig as an ealachd.

* * * *

Gheibh fear an taighe 'na dhorn e,
Cuiridh e shron anns an teallach;
Theid e deiseil air na paisdean,
Seachd ar air bean an taighe.

Bean an taighe is i is fhiach e,
Lamh a riarach orinn na Callaig,
Sochair bheag a bhlaith an t-samhraidh,
Tha mi 'n geall air leis an arain.

Hogmanay Carol

I am now come to your country,
To renew to you the Hogmanay,
I need not tell you of it,
It was in the time of our forefathers.

I ascend by the door lintel,
I descend by the doorstep,
I will sing my song becomingly,
Mannerly, slowly, mindfully.

The Hogmanay skin is in my pocket,
Great will be the smoke from it presently.

* * * *

The house-man will get it in his hand,
He will place its nose in the fire;
He will go sunwards round the babes,
And for seven verities round the housewife.

The housewife it is she who deserves it,
The hand to dispense to us the Hogmanay,
A small gift of the bloom of summer,
Much I wish it with the bread.

By Emmon Bodfish, reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Yule 1988



NEWS OF THE GROVES





Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

Well I'm on the waiting list for State Dept, possibly beginning work as early as March or May 2006, and who knows where I will go, but rest assured I will be as Druidic overseas as I was in Japan or Britain; spreading the Druidic news over there too in my spare time.

While still here, I went all out decorating my office; holly, tinsel, intricately cut snow men, lights up the wazoo, wrapping paper doors, miniature tree, etc. It was a lot of fun to explain the different holiday decorating styles in America. One officer took me out behind the CHINESE Embassy where their bamboo forest had run amuck and spilled over into the city park, and we took a few bamboos to make a Japanese door decoration with bamboo, plum branches, pine trees, and assorted good luck symbols. All of it was bound together by rope and called a "kodomatsu" for New Years.

My dutiful disciple who has better discipline than I has been busy at University of Maryland attending various functions with his friends. He thinks a possible group may emerge, but if it doesn't, he'll just keep enjoying all the activities, even if it isn't a grove. Druidism is in the doing rather than in the naming, I believe.

Azeem's training went so well, I released a rough draft of a little pamphlet called, the "DC Grove Unofficial Welcome Pamphlet" (<http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/uwp.doc>) that I'm also using to assist other folks who are setting up protogroves in odd corners of the U.S. One such person, Beth, came down from NY for an anthropologist conference, and visited me for several hours to pick my brain about modern Druidism for a Ph.D. research project she is working on. If you are also in the D.C. area, stop by and visit me too. I'm much more interesting than a big pile of marble.



Lark Proto-Grove: News from Florida

Hello Stacey,

Long time no updates, huh? Well, as the founding member of the Lark Proto-grove, I've just been seriously lurking for a while. It occurred to me, however, with the recent viewing of Oriana's vacation pictures that you all might be interested in my upcoming visit to Japan in February 2006. It *does* really have a druidical turn to it this time (as opposed to my Hello Kitty pilgrimage of 2004) since I'll be visiting the Kokufu Bonsai Ten—The National Bonsai Exhibition of Japan. So, I'll be going on a tour with many tree-focused people from all over the US and meeting up with even more like-minded folks from the international bonsai community. I'm guessing that they hold this event in the winter, the dormant period for trees, so the structure of the branches can be examined more closely. Anyhow, our tour will also be visiting Kyoto and hopefully viewing some Ume blossoms, if we're not too early. I've been a little disappointed with bonsai enthusiasts in this country

since they seem to see bonsai care and styling as a hobby rather than a spiritual sort of art in which one can lose one's personal identity for a time. It would be kind of like a Zen meditation on the tree in which you become so focused on the tree that you begin to merge your sense of self with your sense of the object. Of course, I haven't much room to talk since I only have a couple of bonsai trees and I don't exactly meditate on them (I have enough trouble remembering to water them)...but I'd still like to surround myself with people who have that outlook.

Back to my proto-grove's inactivity. I guess I've been feeling guilty for "larking about" with something that so many take very seriously. Although I've recently come across (in a college class) a Hindu perspective that validates my approach...to an extent. It's the idea of "Lila" (LEE-la) or "play" that's often tied up with the notion of reality being a manifestation of the divine; and moreover, with the concept that existence is a result of the creative play of some ultimate deity. Therefore, you can benefit from the attempt to change your perspective on living in this world to that of a joyful participation in the play. Sounds a little like the Buddhist concept of a bodhisattva forgoing Nirvana to happily participate in the world's sorrows. From that point of view, goofing around isn't quite as bad as it would seem...if you focus on your "larking" as being part of some sort of cosmic frolic

Esther (Hello Druidess)
of the Lark Proto-grove
Tampa, Florida



Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross

Muskogee/Mother Grove

Brrrr. It's cold out there. Not astoundingly cold like I assume it is up North, but cold nonetheless. Today we got the first copy of the 2005 Annotated Edition of the MOCC Muskogee/Mother Grove Liturgy Manual (dang long title, but the one on the cover of the book is even longer) photocopied and spiral bound. Be duly impressed. We're getting rituals up and running pretty well, and all seems to be doing all right. Everyone gets revel yells (get it? revel yells/rebel bells???) in this yuletide season. Although we tend to 'do it right' during the dark half of the year, with robes and all, we also tend to be less vocal, as this is a time of remembrance. Remember, you are the Light—or, at least, you should be. This declare above all: Healing and Light and Peace.

~Br. Myrddin A Maeglin,

Co-Archdruid, MOCC—M/M Grove.



Hesperus Grove: News from Colorado

Hesperus Grove has been quiet over the past few months, many members are now in hibernation mode and any form of energetic activity is at an all time low. I am planning a Winter-Solstice gathering on the 22nd of December, with a Devali (festival of lights) theme to brighten the dark recesses of winter and celebrate the birth of the 'new sun.'

Last week my wife's grandmother died in hospital. This got me thinking once again on themes of autumn, life and death and inspired me to pen a sort of fall-epicedium (a funeral ode):

'Ever-Falling Water'

Hoarse cry of
Crumbling parchment
Peeling, fluttering in circles:
Whorls in a North wind.

Gasp of brittle joints.

Slow whine of the millers wings,
A heavy harvest
Of grains splitting,
A leathered face, paled by soft mist.

Hemp shrouds, heaped, silent.

Spirit in the basin, ivory
Palms molding life
Chanting a rhythm
Of light into the mass.

A gentle breath wanders through the kitchen:

Communion of bliss, born on the lips.

I successfully completed my Masters Diploma in Herbal medicine at The Australasian College of Health Sciences in Portland, Oregon. Anyone seeking advice or help with herbs, study or health support are invited to contact me (right now I offer a free service to RDNA members or others.) Finishing this course gave me the time to begin studying the Druidry program at Bandarach College of Druids, a free - online study which I highly recommend.

Right now, I'm trying to conceive of a 'Wren-Day' (traditionally St. Stephens Day) game that would interest my children over the holiday. Perhaps hiding small colored wrens, they hunt for them and get a reward for their efforts. But the primary intention is to keep these all-important traditions alive.

With Yule blessings

David

News from Robin (our member in Washington):

My plans for Yule are very quiet. In the past, my family has done the traditional gift exchange with our immediately family and extended family, but this year, my husband and I are doing something different.

We've gotten involved with a Pagan Service organization in our local area of Washington, DC. We've helped out with an event called Samhain Sandwiches, sponsored by Crescent Moon Service Corp, where a group gathered to make meal bags to help feed the homeless in DC. In a grand effort 2700 meals were made from generous donations from around town.

We had such a positive experience from this event that we've decided to carry on the giving spirit a bit further and into the Yule Season. We've decided to donate the money we would have spent on mundane gifts for family and are now donating it to charity. Our philosophy was that the money would be better spent helping others rather than having it get a brief acknowledgement by someone that has a lot already. Our wish for Yule, is for ourselves and others to bring a little Peace and Happiness to those in need.

Another project that I've just completed was a gift idea restructured into being a bit more thoughtful. The long growing season of Summer, I began to crochet blankets that were slated to be Yule gifts for friends. My thoughts changed after seeing the devastation and destruction from Hurricane Katrina. Over the weeks of summer, I crocheted like a fiend and ended up with six blankets that have been donated to a local shelter in my area. I hope that the blankets will bring warmth and blessings to those that receive them.

Recipes:

Wassail

1 gallon (or more) apple cider
1 large cinnamon stick, broken into pieces
13 allspice berries (one for each full moon of the year)
1 apple, sliced crosswise (to reveal the pentacles within each slice)
1 small whole orange, organic if possible, studded with 8 whole cloves (one for each festival of the year)
Irish Whiskey (my favorite, but you may use other whiskeys or even burgandy or claret, if you wish)
Maple syrup or brown sugar

In a large soup pot, gently heat the cider with the cinnamon stick, allspice berries, apple, and clove-studded orange.

Then add the whiskey and maple syrup, to taste. Start by adding a cup or so of alcohol and taste to determine the potency you're after, adding more and tasting until you get it right or you're beyond worrying about it.

Do not allow the wassail to boil unless you want to lose some of the alcohol.

Serve steaming hot in mugs. You could follow an ancient custom and have your friends bring their own special wassail cups from their homes (just about anything will work as a wassail cup.) As you fill their cups, add a few wishes for the coming year. Make splendid and outrageous toasts! Enjoy!

...Taken from *Witch in the Kitchen, Magical Cooking for All Seasons* by Cait Johnson. (Destiny Books)



Nine Oaks & Mystic Well Proto-grove:

News from Nevada

As the season is changing out here in the desert sw, much of our activities have been turned 'inwards' and making various Yule meetings and get togethers. Much of our planning is about the coming Spring preparations for the time of the Waters of Life and the stages it takes to make a successful proto-grove!

We are making plans to have more contact with other RDNA Groves as the wheel turns...as our own activities will take a more active stance in the coming seasons.

We can be contacted at:

NineOaksnMysticWell@gmail.com

Peace!



Hazelnut MotherGrove: News from California

As the long winter's sleep begins, it is a good time to join a few more Yahoo groups. Here are three groups that might tickle your fancy:

Hazelnut_MotherGrove@yahoogroups.com
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Hazelnut_MotherGrove

This is the online version of the fabulous grove that Stephen Abbott led for over 30 years. We discuss Celtic subjects, and currently there is an open class going on Ogham.

AbbottsInnSchoolofMagick@yahoogroups.com
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AbbottsInnSchoolofMagick>

This is the online version of the school that Stephen Abbott ran for over 35 years. Here we discuss Magick, Divination, and other occult topics. Currently there is an open class going on the Qabalah.

DruidWicca_Coven@yahoo.com
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DruidWicca_Coven

This group was inspired by the DruidCraft Tarot by Philip and Stephanie Carr-Gomm, art by Will Worthington. It shows that Druidry and Wicca can get together and have quite a bit in common.

Tegwedd ShadowDancer





Sunset Proto-Grove: News from California

Time for quiet solitude and reflection on the past year, and forward to the return of the sun.

Time for pine boughs, ice-skating (yes we have that here), Yule Logs, wonderful homemade soups, a roaring fireplace and eggnog, a good book(possibly druidic in nature-)and a cozy fleece blanket.

Time to think about goals for the coming year and farther out.

Time to embrace pets and children and keep them close- cherish the moments of the season of sleep.

Time—it slips away.

May your Yule-time be peaceful.

Skye



Poison Oak Grove, News from California

On November 12th the grove hosted Chonbaatar, a Khongoodor Buryat shaman, who needed a space to do a hunting ceremony for the elk hunters in Washington. There were many shamans in her lineage, and shamans in her family served in the court of Chinggis Khaan (Genghis Khan). Accompanying her was her partner Berik, who sang hoomei, which is throat-singing that produces two or three tones, and their Tibetan mastiff Glee. The ceremony took place after dark in the grove site. In it Chonbaatar prayed mostly to Bayan Hangai, who is the patron of the natural environment-the forests. This was very reminiscent of Cernunnos in the Celtic pantheon. As with all Buryat ceremonies she also prays to Tenger Etseg (Father Heaven), Gazar Eej (Mother Earth), and Dedes min—the ancestors. This too reminded me of the RDNA service where we honor Be'al and the Earth Mother. It is very important for a shaman to serve his/her community. The hunters that Chonbaatar was praying for are good folk who are very respectful to the land. A successful hunt will mean meat for their families this winter.

A couple of things stood out to me although the entire ceremony was awe inspiring. In Siberian shamanism they traditionally use vodka for their “arshaan” or energized liquids much like the RDNA tradition of using whiskey for the waters-of-life, except that each participant gets their own little bowl to sip out of during the ceremony. As it was my home I was honored by being chosen to be the fire tender. There is no time frame for a shamanic ceremony; it last as long as it is supposed to. I am used to building small fires that last about a half an hour for the length of the RDNA service. That combined with the sand in our temporary altar being

still wet from the recent rains did not a big fire make. Both another participant and I blew on the fire to get it going bigger but to no avail. But when Chonbaatar started her drumming the fire shot up into the air into a tall pyramid shape and stayed that way. I'd never seen anything like that (and hoped no one would see my astonishment in the firelight). This was a powerful person who could channel energy.

As thanks for allowing her the space to do the ceremony, Chonbaatar gifted me with sage, and she and her partner offered to help build the new altar on the grove site. It was an honor for me to have them use the grove site for their purpose.

On Saturday December 10 the Archdruid went out on a cold winter's morn. Okay, so it wasn't the sixth day after the New Moon (it was the ninth), she didn't have a white cloth (she used her jacket), didn't have her sickle (used a razor blade scraper), and didn't sacrifice two white bulls afterwards (she had chicken soup for dinner), and the tree wasn't oak (it was walnut), but she harvested some mistletoe to use in the grove's Yule service the following Sunday.

Celtic Numbering

Part Five of Five: Triads on Civil Structures

By Daniel Hansen, AD of Olympia Grove

TRIADS RESPECTING THE GOOD HOME



- Three things which make a man glad: his wife loving him, his labor prospering, and his conscience easy.
- Three things fitting for a man when he is at home: his wife chaste, his cushion in his chair, and his harp in tune.
- Three things of great comfort for a man. to have: a wife in his bed, his fire in his hearth, and his money in his purse.
- Three felicities of a wise man: kindly soil, a chaste wife and a goodly son.
- Three things which will exalt a man: a wife chaste and diligent, a master faithful, and safety.
- Three things which help a man to get rich: his wife saving, his family not wasting, and himself laboring.
- Three things which: equality of age, things which make a marriage happy equality of lineage, and equality of possessions.
- Three felicities of man and wife: being merry at home, good in their church, and mediators among

neighbors.

- Three things a man gains when his wife is virtuous: his household obedient for love of him, his children gentle in manners, and the respect of the neighbors.
- Three things in a wife which make her husband leader among his neighbors: skill, industry, and wisdom.
- Three things which bring dignity to a woman: discretion in speech, contentment in the life she leads, and being peaceful among her neighbors.
- Three things which make a man content with his dinner: his wife clever, his food savory, and his stomach healthy.
- Three things pleasant to a man at his dinner: a sharp-edged knife, a sharp pointed skewer, and a clean plate.



TRIADS RESPECTING THE BAD HOME

- There are three uncomfortable things: a house without a wife, a chamber without food, and a body without health.
- Three things which make disorder in a household: the man drunken, the wife execrable, and the children intractable.
- Three things a man is better without: a dishonest household, disobedient children, and a drunken wife.
- Three things which drive a man from his house: his wife quarrelling, his roof leaking, and chimney smoking.
- Three infelicities of a household: an idle evildoer, keeping a paramour, and lodging a priest.
- Three things which make a man needy: his wife luxurious, his household negligent, and himself extravagant.
- Three things which do not bring a man great reputation: his wife being mistress, his house cheerless, and his land waste.
- Three things which bring a married woman hate instead of love: peevishness, desire for precedence, and pampering her own stomach.
- Three things in a woman which bring on her the world's disrespect and her husband's hatred: lying long in the morning, being stubborn, and being slattern.
- Three indignities of a woman: being garrulous, being querulous, and being slanderous.
- Three things which bring on a woman a bad opinion of her: being apt to dally with men and youths, being greedy in dainties, and speaking ill of her neighbor's wives.

TRIADS RESPECTING HEALTH



- There are three things most precious to a man: health liberty, and virtue.
- Three things which do not suffer trifling: health prosperity and time.
- Three things which keep a man in health: moderate food well apportioned labor, and natural warmth.
- Three foods of man which bring health, long life, and clear understanding: corn food, milk food, and garden food.
- Three foods which bring disease, short life, and dull understanding flesh food, sweetened food, and highly seasoned food.
- Three customary acts of man. which make his healthy and long lived: work, by tilling, in moderation; rising early; and innocent mirth.
- Three customary acts which cause short "Life and disease: too much labor, too much sleep in the morning, and peevishness.
- Three frequent changes which bring long life: change in food,. change in work, and change of amusement.

- Three good things in a man who loves health: enough sleep in the spring, enough food in the summer, and enough fire in the winter.
- Three things which strengthen the body: lying on a hard bed, cold air, and dry food.
- Three things whose excess shortens the life of man: flesh food, drunkenness, and too much association with women.
- Three unfailing remedies in every disease and sickness: nature, time, and patience.
- Three things of which a man does not see half enough: life, health, and riches.



TRIADS RESPECTING PRUDENCE

- Three things the prudent man will not show: the bottom of his purse, the bottom of his knowledge, and the bottom of his heart.
- Three things which the good man ought to curb: a young spirited horse, a young indiscreet daughter, and a garrulous tongue.
- Three things like the one to the other: a fine granary without corn, a fine flask without drink, and a fine daughter without good repute.
- Three things not good to leave: a ship before wind, a woman to her rage, and a son to his ignorance.
- Three things which do not go well if hurried: war, feasting, and argument.
- Three things which a man obtains from traveling in a strange land: hunger cold, and derision.
- Three things trust in which does not end well: health in old age, fair weather in winter, and felicity from things of the world.
- Three things it is best to leave alone: a strange dog, a sudden flood, and one wise in his own eyes.

TRIADS RESPECTING NATURE



- There are three things which keep order and system for everything in the world: number, weight, and measure.
- Three things which we cannot control: time, space and the truth.
- Three things good as servants, bad as masters: water, fire, and wind.
- Three things which shall lay waste where they come: water; fire, and the curse of God.
- Three archenemies of man: fire, water, and a king.
- Three gluttons of the world: the sea, a king, and a city.
- Three things no being can be without: covering, movement, and shadow.
- Three things which should be chiefly considered in everything: nature, form, and work.
- Three unequals of the world: beauty, love, and necessity.

TRIADS RESPECTING HUMANKIND :



- There are three things which are never at rest in a man: his heart in working, the breath in moving and the soul in purposing.

- Three things in the world between which there is a wonderful difference: the faces of men, the utterances of men, and the writings of men.
- There are three things from which it is not easy to win from a man: his beliefs, his genius, and his nation.
- Three things on which every man should reflect: whence he came, where he is, and whither shall he go.
- Three things hard for a man to do completely: know himself, conquer his appetite, and keep his secret.
- Three things a man cannot conceal: great love, great hate, and great wealth.
- Three things of which the whole is not good: doing the whole of which passion desires, believing the whole that is throughout the land, and showing whole that one knows.
- Three martyrdoms without slaying: the liberality of a needy man, the chastity of a young, and fair maintenance without wealth.
- Three things which the loss is woe: the attainment of wisdom, a pure conscience, and the love of God.
- Three things which strengthen men's hearts: fear of speaking the whole that he has learned from another, fear of extreme prosperity, and fear of offending God.
- Three things which weaken man's heart: fear of speaking the truth, of wretched poverty, a fear of devil.
- Three things which dazzle world: deceit, supremacy, and excessive love for man and human beings.
- Three counsels of the yellow bird: do not grieve greatly about what has happened; do not believe what cannot be, and do desire what cannot be obtained.
- Three things which come on man without his knowing: sleep, sin, and old age.
- > • Three things which come together: age sin, and grief.
- Three things which keep their word faithfully: death, God's retribution, and repentance.
- Three things it is many to obey: truth, the world which is to come, and the cock at dawn.
- Three things of which not half is believed that is boasted of them: wealth, understanding, and goodness.
- Three things never end: the flowering of charity, the soul of man, and perfect love.

TRIADS RESPECTING KNOWLEDGE :



- Three things necessary for the doing of every act: knowledge, ability, and desire.
- There are three springs of knowledge: reason, phenomenon, and necessity.
- Three things must a man do who desires to learn: listen intently, contemplate intently, and be silent continually.
- Three teachers of man: one is event, that is from seeing and hearing; the second is intelligence and that comes from reflection and meditation; and the third is genius, individual, from the gift of God in inborn grace.
- Three instructions not wide to believe: what a man imparts in support of what is for his own profit and success; what he imparts with hatred to another; and what a man wise in his own eyes imparts
- There are three things, which strengthen the mind and reason: seeing much, reflecting much, and enduring much.
- Three things embellish the mind: hating folly, proficient virtue, and desire to learn.
- Three resources of man: intelligence, love, and prayer.

TRIADS RESPECTING WISDOM:



- There are three foundations of wisdom: discretion in learning, memory in retaining, and eloquence in telling.
- Three concords of Wisdom: generosity and wealth, knowledge and humility, and valor and mercy; and he is neither man nor sage in whom these are not found in concord.
- Three marks of wisdom: simplicity, endeavor, and long suffering.
- Three securities of wisdom: memory, reflection, and custom.
- Three qualities which show wisdom: holding to reason, holding to imagination, and holding to improvement.
- Three synonyms of wisdom: necessity, decency, and expediency.
- Three things which obstruct wisdom: pride, covetousness, and timorousness.
- Three special virtues of wisdom: generosity, industry, and prudence.
- Three initiations of wisdom: lawful teaching, effective customs, and instinctive love.
- Three operations of wisdom: taming savagery, spreading peace, and improving laws.



TRIADS RESPECTING WISE FOLK:

- There are three schools of the wise man: conscience, reason, and instruction.
- Three things essential for 'the wise to know: his God, himself, and the deceits of the world.
- Three things the wise man obtains: prosperity, dignity, and praise.
- Three things of which the wise man may boast: his understanding, his handicraft, and his virtues.
- Three plagues of the wise: women, drink, and bad temper.

TRIADS RESPECTING THE FOOLS



- There are three school of the foolish man: the punishment of the law, ill happenings in life, and retribution of the life to come.
- Three things which befall the unwise man.: failure, disgrace, and sorrow.
- Three boasts of a fool: riches, lineage and dissipation.
- Three laughter's of a fool: about the good man, about the evil man, and about what he knows not.
- Three things which the fool calls imprudent: to seek knowledge, come what will; to give alms without thinking what is to come; and to endure for truth and justice without fear of what may come

TRIADS RESPECTING WISDOM APPLIED:



- Three things of which everything is capable, and without which nothing can be: strength of body and mind, knowledge, and love of intuitive wisdom.
- Three things which may not be opposed: nature, necessity, and decay.
- Three men hard to believe: a wanderer from afar, the reader of a book in a strange tongue, and he who is older than his neighbors.
- Three men it is not wise to believe: the stranger about his possessions, an old man praising the day that

was of yore, and a man who boasts of his wisdom.

- There are three concords which uphold all things: concord of love and justice, concord of truth and imagination, and concord of God and occurrence.
- Three words of counsel from St. Teilo: know thy power, know thy wisdom, and know thy time.
- Three men who will please God: he who loves everything living with his whole hearty he who loves every beautiful thing with his whole strength, and he who seeks knowledge with his whole understanding.
- Three things between which is great difference: what is praised and what is forgiven; what is forgiven and what is suffered; and what is suffered and what is not punished.

Druidical Treasure

(Aka The Dave Fisher Code)

Part six of Eight



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

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

(Place mouse over pictures for secret messages.)

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 ga-ga 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. After a few pranks, they overcome a few dangerous obstacles in the chapel then discover a hidden chamber under a lake which leads them to the conclusion that only by Matt's becoming a Druid priest, will the quest continue forward.

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

Chapter Twenty-One: Beltane Follies

Sean and Matt had a few months to wait until the winter half of the Druidical year had ended, so that Matt could vigil to solve the next clue on their quest. The first dull week off from the search was rough for Sean. After so much danger and excitement it was hard to sit still, since he lacked the dotting distractions of the heart that occupied Matt. As usual, Sean invested his restless energy into washing plates in the cafeteria dish room and making job applications for summer internships. The following weeks passed quicker and quicker. Spring break came, and Sean did nothing decadent or exciting, as is actually true for most college students, despite what the teenager movies imply.

Sean and Matt spent a week talking with people in the geology department and going around the Goodhue and Rice counties looking for natural caves, but couldn't come up with anything suitable within 50 miles. Sean even went to the student pub on campus, called "The Cave", which had brought in trashy garage bands for 40 years, and still served 50 cent beers which were far worse than the performers. But nothing developed from that angle of research, except a hangover.

As the temperatures began to peek above freezing in late March, not only did the snows begin to reluctantly recede, but so did the heavy jackets, cloaks and woolen hats of the besieged students. When the weather reached 40 degrees, hordes of joyous cabin-fevered students began to strut about the campus in shorts and T-shirts; the same ones who would have shivered at the same temperature in the fall. But now to them, 40 degrees seemed like sultry weather from Barbados, due to the buildup of some mysterious antifreeze in their blood, and a good layer of college blubber from lots of food and not much exercise.

Not wishing to rely solely upon Matt's prodigious memory, Sean had begun reading the Druid Anthology, snorting at the superstitious parts, but in a few spots, perhaps nodding at a passage. As he promised to Matt, Sean took a literary survey of 20th-century America, and spent less time on medieval history. Because it was his junior year, he was beginning to consider what project, his comprehensive exercise ("comps"), he would undertake for his history major, which would absorb much of his senior year's free-time. That is if he did have a senior year with his shaky finances. And yet, all too soon it was the end of April and the first flowers





were beginning to come out and students seemed a lot friskier and friendlier than ever before. Finally, during the latest of their weekly winter-time conspiratorial meetings at the labyrinth on Stewart Isle in Lyman Lakes (hard to be overheard in the remote location), Matt said, "Beltane is on Saturday, this weekend, if it doesn't rain...or snow, so be ready," with a sly look and left.

While Sean was going to classes that Friday after visiting a reclusive friend in Goodhue, he saw two young women run up to him and they stopped. He didn't recognize them in their summer clothing, but it was Sarah and her roommate Patricia.

"Hey, Sean-arooni, just the chap I wanted to see," she said grabbing his light sweater.

"Um, hi Sarah, Patricia, what's up?"

She ran some fingers up his collar and held him firmly by one shoulder, "Not much. Yeah, you know all the girls think your new 'adventurer' look is real cool."

Behind Sarah, Patricia gave a supportive thumbs up and winked, "Matt can search for buried treasure with me, anytime." She growled.

"Patricia!" Sarah said in false shock at the giggling junior, then sobered up and leaned closer, "Bad news for you, Sean. You're a marked man, you know that? Some tall, blond guys, Oles maybe, have been walking around campus asking a lot of questions about a beefy fellow and a scrawny sidekick."



"Scrawny?" he asked petulantly.

"Yeah, well that's what they said," she said, letting go and flipping out a notebook, "I talked to one of the blokes, right Patricia?, A Norwegian-type guy, who...." Sarah was interrupted.

"No, way, he was definitely Danish!" Patricia blurted.

"Like Hell he was, did you see his ears?" Sarah shot back.



Sean rubbed his face with his hands in sudden exhaustion as the argument continued. Only in Minnesota would such an argument be pertinent, but it soon ended, and Sarah continued, "Well, it's lucky for you guys that you dyed your hair back, that'll buy you some time, but you apparently took something of great value to them, and they want it back, and I think they want to collect some interest too."

"Well," Sean stammered.

"No, you don't have to tell me, yet... I do want the scoop on all this when you're finished your little quest and can reveal it all. Until then, watch your backs, especially Matt's, he's far easier to spot in the crowd than you. Gotta run. Ta ta, Sean!" And they dashed away towards the stately Leighton Hall. Sean stopped for a moment, but for the rest of the weekend, he felt paranoid and was constantly looking over his shoulders, and jumping anytime he saw a blond in the crowd, but nothing happened of note until the next day, on Saturday.

Against his better reason, and driven by curiosity, Sean attended the Beltane festivities at the Stone Circle of the Upper Arb, on a warm Saturday afternoon. There were rumors that stone circles appeared in odd places over the years at Carleton, many with no visible marks of construction equipment, as if they just sprouted out of the ground like mushrooms in an autumn rain. A few years ago, a free-spirited student named Irony had relocated a few stones from the Hill of Three Oaks to this distant oak grove off the beaten path in order to lower the incidence of vandalism by drunken students. The twelve stones were about man-size and sunk into the ground with a large trilithon dolmen in the middle, where various foods were laid out at the Beltane feasts.

He hadn't been there long, when a few students ran off into the nearby woods and came back with a 40-foot maypole, dug a hole in the ground, pulled out various ribbons to the top and then planted the pole firmly, with many ribald comments. Other students casually filtered in, a few that Sean had seen on campus occasionally, a few obvious hippie-wannabees and a few seemingly reasonable folk. They spread blankets and performed the most basic act of sun-worship, they sun tanned, enjoying the deliverance from the winter months. One particularly harried fellow came in, Iain Knoll apparently, and began delegating tasks to the indolent revelers and preparations were eventually completed when the piper came and the maypole was danced, and one lady grabbed Sean off his vulture-like posing on the rock, and made him join a round or two before choosing yet another suitor.



Donuts were hung from trees and folks tried to catch them in their mouth while being tickled with their hands behind their backs. Ladies skipped around as only elementary school and college women can do. The busy fellow, definitely called Iain, eventually corralled the folks into one location, and read a quick service of ten minutes, noting that the summer half of the year had arrived, flowers were blooming, and passions were ablaze, and that the day should be spent being merry. Interestingly enough, a light breeze appeared from nowhere when the cardinal directions were faced and invoked, and Iain called forth anyone wishing to become Druids, and Sean discretely jumped into the midst of a small crowd of eager folks. A few words, a sip of whiskey and it was done, and

Sean went back to the food bar to find some food, and noticed a harper had begun telling odd stories off to the side about people selling their souls for musical prowess, and he migrated there, wondering what his new Druid-hood meant. Such a difference from the rigidity and formality of Masonic initiation, he thought, and no bum-whackings with paddles like.

There was a horn blast and Matt and Dylan processed out of the forest from different directions, dressed in medieval garb, heavily patched in a few places. Dylan, for once, was dressed in a non-black outfit, an elegant light blue dress with pink slippers. Matt was sporting some type of Shrek ogre costume, heavily adorned with sewn-on green leaves, looking a bit like the Jolly Green Giant. Iain met them by the altar stone and informed them that they had been elected the May Queen and Oak King of the Day, sprinkled some whiskey on each of them, and the two were sent packing off into the fields and forests with a screeching chorus of well-wishers to "reawaken the fertility of the Arboretum" by whatever means they could devise. Not knowing anyone well, but recognizing the food, Sean relied heavily on the drink to pass the time, and actually dozed off for a few hours against a small stone while others frolicked and played games. When he awoke, Matt and Dylan were standing over him, looking slightly tussled, Matt's suit missing many leaves. The sun was beginning to set, and all the revelers had left Sean to sleep off his booze. Someone had lain a blanket over him to keep him warm in the coming chill of evening.





"Wake up Sean, it is almost time to go to the Hill of 3 Oaks for the evening's bonfire. Do you like the grove's traditional royal garb, they say it might be 40 years old." Matt shook his clothes so that they rustled, a leaf of two falling out.

Sean yawned and before he thought, asked, "What took you two guys so long? Hey, I don't suppose that 'blue skirt' also has a clue under it?"

Dylan smiled and leaned forward, hands on her hips, reciting her line, "The Queen of May is called that because she may or may not..." Sean picked up the allusion.

Matt intoned, "Of the Oak King they ask Woody or Woody not?" he said, then they joined in chorus, "But instead jump ye over the fire hot, and take your partner to a soft quiet spot!" and most disconcertingly giggled, for a moment lost in each other's presence, to the discomfort of Sean, who felt that Druids did not always work well in threes.

Slightly blushing, Sean changed the subject, "Whatever, your vigil is still on schedule for tonight? I've been waiting also for three months, you know."

"Yeah, Iain says he'll take you to a traditional starting point in the Arb to walk around a bit, I think it might be an important custom from Fisher's period," Dylan quipped.

"How do you know about Fisher?" Sean's eyes narrowed, "Hey I thought you were a Wiccan, what's with all the Druidry and prancing about?"

Tossing her raven hair back, knocking a few stray oak leaves out of her tresses, "Well, you work with what you've got, honey, and the Druids have the best party in the spring, and I do get around quite a bit... to different groups." Looking at the sunset, she said, "Good night, Matt, have a good vigil, I've got a paper to write!" And she was gone into the twilight, running light-footed in the woods. Sean watched her leave, as one would admire a fawn coursing gracefully in the woods, and he felt like chasing her as a wolf, but shook his head to awake from that daydream.

"Well, Sean, Iain said you could accompany me out to the starting point at 8:00 p.m., but I would have to leave you at midnight, for the greater part of the vigil must be without people."

"Pity to spend a night like this alone, eh?" Sean poked

Matt spoke in a strangely calm and slow voice, "Sean, one thing you'll learn, is that in Nature you're never alone; and besides the Gods walk beside us at all times, although sometimes in our blindspot."

"So, you really like this cult?" Sean asked archly.

"Well, I don't think it's a cult..." Matt protested.

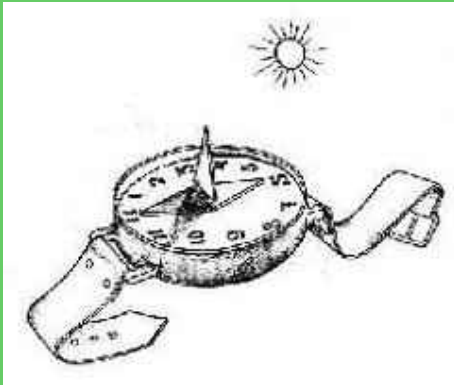
"Cultists never do." Sean smiled assuring him.

"No, come on, man, I did a seminar on modern religions, and these Druids don't fit the standard pattern for a cult in my textbook. See, there is no charismatic, all controlling leader, no fixed doctrines, a very fluid choice of deities, no membership fees, lack of conducive attendance, emphasis on personal exploration, loose group dynamics, no drugs and no paranoid withdrawal from society. It's very low-key and it would be a crappy way to design a cult, but it seems like the perfect business model for sloppy artistic exploration of world



religions."

"I know, I read the basic literature online too, I just wanted to tease you. These Druids are just weird outdoorsy Unitarians with a touch of Masonry, I think." Sean said.



"Well, yeah, except women are more integrated and no one here thinks that they are Masons." Matt paused, "Fisher was also in that order like your cousin, and Nelson was a Mason in his later years, I think, but no one else has mentioned them in the literature about sigils or structure since then, until 1996, and then only in general terms, so perhaps this Mason angle is overblown."

Sean grunted and clapped his hands together, a little bored, "Matt what time is it?"

Matt looked intently at his wristwatch, which had a miniature sundial on its face.

"Uh, Matt, that won't work at night."

"Sure it will," he shined a flashlight on the sundial, "it's 7:45 p.m. We're to meet Iain at Farm House soon, let's go."

Sean stared at him, expecting him to laugh, but Matt turned and left with a serious face. They left the raucous revelers, who were enjoying a towering bonfire on the Hill of Three Oaks, and their two shadowy figures were swallowed by the night.

Chapter Twenty-Two: Wind in the Trees

Matt's looming cloaked figure was a lumbering dark spot in front of Sean barely visible against the dark background of the night woods. Sean was not particularly gifted with night vision, bumping into Matt occasionally whenever he unexpectedly stopped to enjoy the nocturnal vista. Below the college's water tower, a very tired-looking Iain was there in a mauve cloak waving at them as they arrived at the edge of his vision. Sean guessed that cloaked figures are few in the woods at night, and usually friends of Druids.



"Evening, friends. Sean, I'm glad you entered First Order, I think it's the biggest step, actually." Iain greeted them warmly, "Let's go this way." He led them across the highway to the Lower Arb, talking with Sean, "I'm very grateful that you have helped Matt through many trials over the last year. A good friend is a great help in trying times. So much of Druidism is spent solitarily, that we sometimes forget our obligations of brotherhood and sisterhood. Lots of raccoons and critters out tonight, don't let them startle you."

They reached a deeply sandy pathway, wandered past an unlit old white farmhouse and after a wall of trees they came upon an enormous natural prairie stretching far away. A narrow trail bisected the long expanse of head-high grasses which swayed rhythmically in the gradually strengthening winds and the skies looked a bit turbulent. "It seems traditional for there to be unusual weather during a vigil night, so please be careful what you do or ask for, for magic is afoot."

"What did he say about magic feet?" Sean whispered? Matt shushed him.



They reentered the trees and began to take a confusing series of curved trails, up and down hill, through marshes and stands of pine trees, until they finally came to an enormous dead tree trunk 14 feet around, and only 20 feet high, lacking most of its original branches. Iain patted it sadly.

"This was one of the remaining giant elms of the Eastern Woodland Forest that were once one of the three dominant trees in America. Like the chestnut, the elm has fallen to a blight and most don't live past 20 years, more or less vanishing from our forests in less than a generation in the 20th century. However, you'll notice that a young

elm grows next to this dead giant, and so Druidism continues onward." He cheered up at this point and continued, "A few years ago, an old-time Druid visited and told me that this was the best place to start a walking vigil, and so I'll leave you two here to wander for a few hours and then I'll meet you, Matt, at the arranged location at midnight for your tending of a fire through the remainder of the night, and to impart a few last pieces of advice." He paused as if he wanted to add something, then shook his head, "Strange things always happen out here, good luck." Iain smiled and gently bowed to Sean and shook his hand, as if expressing the turnover of Matt's safety to him, then whipped his cloak around him and passed more or less noiselessly into the woods, rather than sensibly taking a trail, and soon was gone from their senses.

Matt inspected the little elm tree, "So, Sean, we're here after three months, what do you want to do now? I wonder who planted this elm, it's only about 10 years old?"

"We'll know that when we finish all the riddles, right?" Sean whipped out a flashlight, whose head was covered with a taped-on red filter to avoid blinding their eyes' delicate night-vision. He read the poem again.

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.



"Now," Sean stated, "I researched through most basic Celtic mythology, and there are just oodles of legendary trees, but naturally none of them are in America, and just about every tree is sacred in some aspect to the Druids, and was encoded in their Ogham alphabet, so that's not very helpful. Oak, hawthorn and ash are a famous triad motif, but we're to look for five trees, so again, not very helpful, although the seeds of an ash tree are called 'keys.'"

"That's all true, Sean." Matt said wondering where it was going.

Sean smirked and raised a finger, "But of all the Fisher-era texts, there is only one document that refers to wind and five trees and that is the 'Song of the Earth Mother,' the one I heard today at the service, so please sing it for me. A one, a two and a three..." Matt began singing a little self-consciously on autopilot, as the song was done at nearly every service.

O Earth-mother!
We praise thee that seed springeth,
that flower openeth,
that grass waveth.
We praise thee for winds that whispers.
through the graceful elm,
through the shapely maple,
through the lively pine,
through the shining birch,



through the mighty oak.
We praise thee for all things,
O Earth-mother, who givest life.

Matt's eyes glistened a little by the end of it (obviously not enough sleep, thought Sean), as his deep voice ended on a reverberating low note that filled the dark night. Meanwhile, the winds had picked up a little more in intensity, whipping his hood off his head and playing with his hair. "So you think we need to follow a sequence of trees to find the secret key? But which direction should we go from this elm? I don't know which way is north or south."

"Well, I doubt that its north this time, but the sun set over that way in the west. And I thought you were a big fan of Bob Dylan!" This time it was Sean's turn to answer in song, a bit off-key, "The answer, my friend is blowing in the wind, the answer is blowing in the wind." The wind howled a bit coming in from the west and blowing to the east.

Matt arched a brow and rubbed his chin, "Sean, I don't know how much you drank today, but are YOU seriously suggesting we follow the winds?"

Sean chuckled, "Well, actually, the winds are pretty darn consistent in direction throughout the year in Minnesota. Indeed, this is the way a Mason or Druid would proceed, facing the rising glory of the morning, in hopeful waiting of new life. So let's go east, young man, and find that maple tree."



Matt looked a little embarrassed, "Um, Sean, I don't know what a maple tree looks like."

"What!" Sean nearly stumbled in shock, "How can you be a Druid if you don't know what a maple looks like?"

"Well you see there are Druids who have green thumbs, and there are Druids who like to contemplate the concepts of Nature. I'm one of the latter ones."

"Well you know what a Canadian flag looks like, right? That's a maple leaf."

"Oh, I know that, but it's May, Sean, and the maple leaves are still locked in their buds, so I'd have to make a guess based only on their trunk's appearance, and I wouldn't want to 'bark up the wrong tree' if you know what I mean."

Sean was quiet for a minute, took a few crunchy steps in the woods, and said with enthusiasm, "Hey, every tree tends to still have dry leaves at its base in the spring, so we'll just look for a big tree with maple leaves under it!" Matt clapped his hands and smiled, patting Sean's shoulders, for a moment he looked like he was going to kiss him in joy, and the moment passed uncomfortably and was forgotten.

Pushing into the forest, scrabbling through unseen (but quite prickly) underbrush, they followed the wind, and about 100 feet or so their flashlight showed a large number of half-decayed maple leaves around a wide smooth-trunked tree. They passed through another stand of pines, with a particularly large one in the midst of their path. Soon afterwards, a tall eerily white-barked birch shone in the stygian depths of the woods. After about 10 minutes of totally draining bush-whacking, they reached the edge of the trees and looked out among an enormous field of dried standing corn stalks, eight feet tall. Sean glumly scanned the field looking for trees, and began returning to the forest "Looks like we ran out of trees, Matt. Maybe we should go back a bit and try again." Matt halted him and tapped him on the shoulder and gladly pointed at a tall, massive oak tree in the middle of the corn.

"Matt, I could have sworn that tree wasn't there a minute ago," Sean said suspiciously, trying to look at it from the corner of his eyes, as if it would disappear if he took his eyes off it.

"Ah come on, Sean, trees don't just walk around," he smiled, "You're as blind out here as a mole at nighttime underground with sunglasses on, admit it, and I think you've been watching too much Tolkien." Sean rubbed his eyes and went over to the large-limbed tree, perhaps centuries old, and walked around it, and called to Matt.



"What's all this corn still doing up?" Sean asked, snapping a bone-dry stalk and swinging it about irately.

Matt had a quick answer, "Probably the College has just purchased this field to expand the prairie project, and asked the farmer not to plough the corn stalks under, but rather to let the prairie naturally creep in and take over." Sean began to circle the tree's massive girth, looking for something out of the ordinary.



"We're looking for some sort of symbol on this tree, maybe in the branches or under a root," Sean instructed him, swaying his flashlight back in forth in a searching pattern. Matt yelled out suddenly, gesturing strongly in the gloom from around the tree's girth.

"Over here, Sean, I found a hole in the tree!" Sean ran over, and indeed the tree was hollow with a one-foot hole about six feet up. Matt held Sean's foot and gave him a boost, and Sean stuck his arm in reaching about inside, hoping there wouldn't be a rabid raccoon or grubby rot-worms inside. The expression on his face changed in surprise and he began pulling something long and heavy out of the opening. It was a four-foot steel pole with a Druid Sigil on the top and bottom, facing up and down. Sean stepped down, this pole must weigh 40 pounds, he thought.

"Great job. Okay, Sean, let's get back in the forest and work our way back to the campus." They reentered the forest path after pushing through the line of trees and were beginning to work their way downhill towards the Cannon River, when they heard voices and saw torches in the distance.



"I heard voices over in that direction!" cried a familiar voice that was uncomfortably close and they heard approaching running footsteps. Sean stood transfixed like a deer in the headlights, but Matt grabbed him and threw his dark cloak around them and hunkered down to the ground, a few feet from the trail. The footsteps of an unseen mob ran past them and continued down the pathway.

Sean couldn't resist looking and sneaked a peek out of the cloak at a tall blond man dressed in white shirt and shorts as he disappeared into the woods around a bend. "Good thinking, Matt, fortunately our modern generation has a short attention span, and they'll give up soon if we just stay here." Sean felt Matt nodding behind him, then he heard someone say something in the distance that froze his heart.

Chapter Twenty-Three: Minions of the Maize

A familiar voice, that of Jared pierced through the quiet veil of the dark woods, about 30 yards from the two hiding Druids, "We know they are in the area. Everyone divide the area off into quadrants, pattern delta-alpha-lambda, and search every nook and cranny, they could be hiding, but there is no hiding from the eye of God!"



Sean whispered, "Damn it, these guys are really organized! Nobody should be out in the middle of the Lower Arboretum at 9:00 p.m., unless these Denmads escaped from the boozy Spring Concert on the Hill of Three Oaks this afternoon. We've got to get into the standing corn and make a dash across for the highway, but quietly."

"I hope they aren't STALKING us, eh?" Matt whispered.

"Cut the corny jokes."

"Okay," Matt said crisply, "Let's go, I haven't heard any voices lately."

They got up and noiselessly as possible, they picked their way through the trees, back to the fields. As they were surmounting the barbed wire deer fence, Matt's cloak got caught on the wire and he dropped the heavy iron pole which fell in slow motion, clanking off a rock at the edge of the field and rolled out of sight. The distant will-o-the-wisp torches in the forest stopped for a moment, voices exchanged and the bobbing torches began converging on their position.



"Run!" hissed Sean, bursting into action, heading for the field.

"But the pole." Matt said, groping the darkness.



"Forget it! We'll come back for it later."

The two began ploughing through the tall dry corn, back in the direction of the oak tree. They broke into what they thought was the previous clearing, looked up, and there was nothing but a circle of flattened corn. Sean stood there shocked. "Matt, I think we're lost." Sean gulped and looked around, as the wind picked up the chaff of the corn stinging their eyes.

"Indeed you are lost, on a dark pathway far from the Lord's light, but we bear a sample of it," said a voice of a man stepping into the large clearing with a half-dozen folks, and more behind them. "I hate to say it, but we never finished your induction service, and you have desecrated our Holy Book and taken it from us." The winds had reached a furious pitch, nearly extinguishing the torches and the corn swayed violently and the cloud cover seemed to be lowering for a storm, rumbling menacingly.

Sean recovered his composure, "Most sorry about that, old chap," Sean quipped, pressing his back against Matt for safety, knowing they were vastly outnumbered, trying to recall his three lessons of fourth-grade karate class, "We'll mail that back to you tomorrow."



"There will be no tomorrow for you, demon spawn!" Jared shouted him down. "I am the instrument of God and I am here to invoke His wrath, and may His hand smite you for your sins!" They threw their arms up yelling, "We curse you, we curse you, we curse you!" surprisingly cheerfully, obviously enjoying it a bit too much! At that moment there was an ear-splitting crack and lightning struck in several spots in the field, and a few trees fell down, ablaze like ballerinas twisting gently to the ground. The Denmads looked shocked, screamed in fear, falling to their feet, scrambling aimlessly around the clearing, deafened and in panic, as the lightning continued to rain down mercilessly all across the arboretum and campus in the distance, one strike coming remarkably close to the clearing.



They dropped their torches and fled, even Jared, and the dry corn immediately shot up in flames in several spots in the field, whether from the lightning or the torches, surrounding Sean and Matt who belatedly began running away from the ring of flames towards the center of the field. The flames were being magnified and pushed

relentlessly by the wind across the fields almost as fast as they could run. Up ahead, a few flames caught their eye, and a steady wall of flame, apparently from a felled tree blocked off their escape and was headed in their direction. They looked about in the midst of a raging sea of fire closing in on them on all sides. There was no way out.



Coughing in the smoke, Matt turned to Sean, "What should we do?"

"I don't know!" Sean barked, his eyes streaming with tears from the irritation of the smoke, "But I'll say one thing, if you think you were hot stuff before, that's nothing compared to when that wall of fire hits us!" He bent down choking, stumbling in the hazy field of dust. "Matt we're in big trouble, if those flames keep coming, we're going to be lucky to escape with just third-degree burns!"

Smiling weakly, his face orangily illuminated by the approaching flames, "Do you think that will be sufficient for the Masons' initiation?" Matt chuckled weakly while wheezing. "Sean," Matt chokingly bellowed, "Wait, I've got an idea, when a train... is going to hit your stalled car,... you run AT the train, not away from it, to avoid the impacted debris.... (Cough) We should go run into the wind and fire."



"That sounds crazy!" Sean yelled, "But I sure can't think of anything better to do, right now! Better a fast death than a slow one, go out with a blaze, I always say!"

"Good, hold on." Matt hiked up his cloak and they wrapped it around themselves and turned to the approaching 40- foot tall inferno coming at them, and both swallowed and started charging towards the flames. Just when they were about to meet the roaring inferno, they leapt forward and were briefly suspended in time, surrounded by a universe of flames and blasting hot air that seared his cloak below them, setting the wool ablaze, rippling from beneath by the hot rising air. Then after a few seconds they hit the ground with a bone-crunching jolt, bouncing off in odd directions, rolling further through the holocaust, and finally began rolling through the crispy brittle black corn stumps still blazing for about five yards, and suddenly the blast of heat was gone, and Matt threw off the blazing wool cloak, whose foul sizzling stench of burnt wool, was overpowering what was left of their sense of smell. They looked around at the vast charred landscape as the wall of fire proceeded down the field eating up the remaining corn, leaving smoky swathes of black stalks behind it.

"Tarnation, we been from the frigid grip of Nordic Hel to the fiery furnace of Italian Hell, and yet we still live." Matt murmured in awe, "We truly live in a narrow tenuous comfort zone between ice and fire."

They were alive, and quite aware of it, and after making sure all their pieces were still all right, they got up and shook themselves off. Their adversaries were gone and after about thirty seconds, first one drop of rain, then another fell on the sizzling earth, and a light mist descended from the lightning-bedazzled sky. Sean jogged over and retrieved the iron bar with the Druid sigils. The two walked towards the distant lights of the campus and Northfield, and soon they crossed a wide firebreak and they found the virgin prairie was still unharmed on the other side. The grass was slightly dampened by the rain, and Sean and Matt were quickly soaked. The residual lightning periodically strobe-lit the road ahead for them. Then, they heard that voice again.

"Where do you think you are going?" Matt and Sean turned, and there was Jared and a fellow brother staring with total contempt and hate, pale and flustered about 50 feet away. "When are you going to accept God's judgment and obediently die?" Behind the white robed Jared, the familiar face of Gestalt was providing obsequious nodding and threatening gestures.



Sean found his composure, "Damn it, when is this night going to end?! Hey, fellow! You're the one who asked God to smite us. Seems like he doesn't have very good aim when it comes to dishing out his vengeance, so be careful next time!" He chuckled, mud-smearing hands on his hip.

"You won't get away this time," Jared threatened, and in his hand he had something that sparked, a stun gun, in the rain? "I hear that you Druids customarily like moving stones, huh? Well, we True Believers have an old-time custom about stoning that we also find quite moving. So, I'm going to escort you down to the riverbed, where my fricasseed followers are waiting, with a lot of rocks, and we'll have a grand old time, down by the riverside."



Sean cautioned Matt back and something big and large lumbered itself into their viewing range, snorting its displeasure in the rain. It was a bull! Perhaps disturbed from his late night grazing in the fields. Sean's gaping startlement at the behemoth was broken when he saw something fly past his peripheral vision and there was a sharp crack, and something struck the bull on the flank, infuriating it into a bellowing roar. Two more cracks sounded in quick succession and the bull began to stomp and snort looking for its assailant. Sean turned, and saw Matt flailing it with a bull-whip, waving the tattered remnants of the red inner lining of his cloak, yelling

"Ya, ya!" The idiot! Sean thought admiringly, certain, he was going to get them killed in a new unexpected manner.

The bull charged Matt and he dodged it somehow, more by luck than grace, rolled to the side and stood up as the bull turned around and he stood firmly with the cape, and pulled it aside at the last moment. Matt cried out, as the bull passed, "Ole!Ole!" That left the bull staring squarely in the direction of Jared and Gestalt, the Oles, and the bull's dim eyesight locked on Jared's white shirt in the darkness.

Jared looked fazed, but half-heartedly intoned, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the fields;"

"Psalm 8, I think, a favorite of Fisher," Matt whispered behind his palm to Sean in the pouring rain.

"The Lord has put nature under the dominion of man, I need fear no beast if my faith is strong!" The bull unloaded a pile of dung, dug the earth and began to clomp slowly forward with increasing speed at the wildly gesticulating man. His assistant, Gestalt, grabbed Jared stating, "Perhaps we should do further exegesis on that passage in the original Hebrew, Brother. NOW!" The two began to break into a blind scrambling retreat as the bull rushed past Sean and Matt who crouched down to avoid being seen. The bull and the two white-robed folks disappeared over the hill, screaming and yelling. Sean and Matt, pleased at this turn of events went the opposite way double-speed, walking fast. They had no idea when the bull might come back, or if it was the only one. They soon found the pathway leading back towards the highway and crossed over to the water tower.

Sean looked up at Matt who handed him the backpack, "Well, Iain was right, Matt, strange things really do happen on vigil nights. I can make it back to campus from here. I don't think Jared will be bothering us again tonight."

"Oh I don't know, Sean, I haven't seen anything supernatural out here yet!" Matt said dryly, sounding more

than a bit disappointed.

"What about the lightning, and the bull, and the disappearing tree?" Sean raged, before he stopped, realizing how ridiculous he sounded, even to Matt, "You're absolutely right, all natural phenomenon, good luck, and lost directions."

"How do you suppose Jared knew we'd be out here tonight?" Matt mused, enjoying seeing Sean so worked up.



Sean was puzzled too, "Yeah. Not certain yet, the Denmads can't be always hanging out here in the Arb all the time, maybe just a lucky guess for May Day."

"Yeah," Matt said, much of his hair was burnt and falling off as he rubbed it, "Well, I've got a lot to think about tonight. Meet me at the Hill of Three Oaks tomorrow morning at sunrise, and we'll see if we can figure out the next part of the puzzle. I now must go and meet Iain and begin my vigil, but I think I've already looked at enough fire for one night." Matt chuckled, and Sean echoed it.

"See ya, pal." Matt said. Sean turned and shouldered the pack more securely and went back down to the campus, going around Lyman Lakes, along the highway. Matt looked at his clothes, "Damn, this cloak needs a bit more repair!"

END OF PART SIX OF EIGHT

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

NEWS

Harry Potter And the Philosopher's Stone: Scottish Gaelic Edition!

The popular book by J.K. Rowling will be available December 30, 2005 in hardcover. The publisher is Bloomsbury USA. Order your copy today!

Pa. May Let Hunters Use Prehistoric Weapon

By MARK SCOLFORO, Associated Press Writer Sun Nov 13, 7:15 PM ET

An ancient weapon that struck fear in the hearts of Spanish conquistadors, and that some think was used to slay wooly mammoths in Florida, may soon be added to the arsenal of Pennsylvania's hunters.

The state Game Commission is currently drafting proposed regulations to allow hunters to use the atlatl, a small wooden device used to propel a six-foot dart as fast as 80 mph. The commission could vote to legalize

its use as early as January.

It's unclear which animals atlatlists may be allowed to hunt, but the proposal is being pushed by people who want to kill deer with a handmade weapon of Stone Age design. The name, usually pronounced AT-lad-ul, is derived from an Aztec word for "throwing board."

"For me, it would be a thrill to have a deer get up close enough and to throw my dart and hit the deer, bag it like my ancestors did," said Jack Rowe, 45, a veteran hunter and atlatl enthusiast from Sayre.

In Alabama, one of a handful of states that currently allow the use of atlatls for hunting or fishing, few hunters use them during deer season, said Allan Andress, the chief fish and game enforcement officer for the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Even spear hunters — Alabama game law also allows spears—outnumber those using atlatls.

"As you might imagine, it's not something that most people have the skill or the patience for," Andress said.

Pennsylvania Atlatl Association president Gary L. Fogelman, who got the atlatl bug about 20 years ago, said he doubts that large numbers of deer will ever be killed with the weapon.

"You've got to know what you're doing, you've got to be good with all the outdoor skills in order to be able to score with this thing," said Fogelman, of Turbotville, publisher of Indian Artifact Magazine.

To use an atlatl, throwers hook arrowlike hunting darts into the end of the atlatl, which is generally a wooden piece about 2 feet long. The leverage of the atlatl allows them to throw the 5- to 8-foot darts much farther than they could throw a spear.

At BPS Engineering in Manhattan, Mont., a leading manufacturer of atlatls, sales have averaged about 450 in recent years, said owner Bob Perkins. Customers pay \$140 for his company's 2-foot maple production-line model, the Warrior, along with a set of five 5 1/2-foot aluminum darts.

Perkins has killed two deer with atlatls and, a couple weeks ago, got his first buffalo.

"Atlatls were the first true weapon system developed by the human race," he said. "They were used longer than any other weapon. Comparatively speaking, the bow and arrow was a recent development in projectile technology."

There is evidence that the weapons were used more than 8,000 years ago in Pennsylvania, said Kurt Carr, an archaeologist with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Prehistoric atlatls have a distinctive counterweight feature called a winged banner stone that has helped confirm their existence at digs in Huntingdon and Bucks counties, among other places, said Carr. Atlatl use goes back far as 12,000 years elsewhere in North America and far longer in Europe.

"It takes some practice, but it's like the bow and arrow. I can't shoot a bow and arrow for beans, but I can use an atlatl more effectively," he said.

The World Atlatl Association, which has 380 members, has held an annual accuracy contest since the mid-1990s, and this year more than 2,000 people participated.

"People that are interested in archaeology and ancient history are the ones that seem to be drawn to it," said association president Richard B. Lyons, a retired firefighter from Jeffersonville, Ind.

Game Commissioner Roxane Palone, who generally supports legalization of atlatl hunting, said there are other game commissioners who probably will join her to vote for it.

"It's a good way to expand hunting opportunities," she said. "I don't think it's any more unusual than people who use long bows to hunt."

If the commission gives preliminary approval in January, a final vote in April could clear the way for atlatl hunting in Pennsylvania late next year, Palone said.

On the Net: World Atlatl Association: <http://www.worldatlatl.org>

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Warm glow of Irish peat takes edge off oil woes

By Paul Hoskins Fri Nov 25, 2005



As an autumn gale assails his hilltop cottage, Pepijn Martius sits beside a peat-fired stove, savoring the earthy smell and glowing warmth that has cost him little more than a sore back.

"For my pocket it's much better," said the 27-year-old Dutchman. "If I would heat with oil or gas I would spend probably quadruple the amount of money that I spend on peat."

"And it keeps me warm twice," he adds, referring to the physical labor involved in harvesting the dark, carbon-rich earth which is the first stage in the

formation of coal

The clumps of peat, or turf, are dug from Ireland's bogs -- waterlogged land formed after the last Ice Age. They must be turned regularly and stacked to dry before hauling them home.

It's a time-consuming task but soaring oil prices mean a new generation is rediscovering the tradition.

Irish-born Martius reckons 150 euros buys enough peat to run his central heating and provide hot water for a year -- a fraction of Ireland's average annual domestic gas bill which, after a recent 25 percent price hike, is set to hit 946 euros.

A short, bumpy ride from his home in County Roscommon is the source of his energy: a blustery bog where the only respite for chilled bones comes from a black, 8-foot wall of earth dividing the original field from years of peat digging below.

Here, despite using mechanical cutters, owner Jimmy McLoughlin is struggling to meet demand.

"Up to about five years ago it was down to nearly nil but the oil price changed all that," said McLoughlin. "I didn't have enough turf this year for people."

"SQUELCH AND SLAP"

The 52-year-old farmer charges 12 euros for cutting a row which contains about 1,000 peat bricks. For an extra fee he'll turn, dry and deliver but Martius prefers to do that himself.

"It adds a kind of quality to your life," says the hotel worker. "It's the outdoors and you're working for your fuel."

Those with memories of a less affluent island have a different, but no less romantic, view of what Irish poet Seamus Heaney called "the squelch and slap of soggy peat."

The Nobel Laureate often exploits the discovery of human remains in "the display-case peat" to delve into Ireland's troubled past and history's cruel, cyclical nature.

John P. Flanagan, 80, is one of thousands of workers who spent World War Two, or "The Emergency" as it is known in Ireland, digging peat by hand to keep trains running and bakers' ovens alight after coal imports dried up.

"There'd be 40 men working on this bank here and another 30 ... over there," he says, pointing across the deserted field, near McLoughlin's plot, with a turf spade known as a "slean."

Peat has been used for fuel since prehistoric times but it wasn't until the 18th century that deforestation, spurred by British shipbuilding, made it Ireland's major source of fuel. By the 1840s, when the Great Famine killed an estimated 1 million people, peat was often the only source of heat.

OIL CRISIS

Small wonder that Heaney's "kind, black butter" plays such an important part in the national consciousness.

"I was quite impressed with the way people talk about it," said Martius. "It's part of their lives."

In the nearby midland town of Lanesborough sits a more modern manifestation of peat's significance and of a postwar policy to reduce Ireland's dependence on imported energy.

Opened in 2004, the 100-megawatt Lough Ree power station is one of two new peat-fired plants belonging to the state-owned Electricity Supply Board (ESB), which has been generating power from peat since the 1950s.

"Strategically, of course, they worked out very well and the 1970s proved that with the oil crisis when peat power stations came into their own," said station manager Pat Treanor.

A 15-year contract with state peat producer Bord Na Mona that caps price rises gives ESB customers some protection from oil prices that have roughly doubled since 2003.

From the roof of Lough Ree it's easy to see why there's little chance of a breakdown in the supply chain that feeds its furnaces with 800,000 tons of peat annually. No pipelines or oil tankers, just a small train ferrying fuel from the bogs.

Such large-scale exploitation has forced Bord na Mona to diversify into renewable energy to secure its future.

"There's a finite amount of peat on the bogs that's viably harvestable -- 15 years is all these stations have," said Treanor. "At night, with the weather like this now, wind energy probably already meets 20, 30 percent of the whole requirement."

For environmentalists, it's too little, too late.

"Bogs are a huge store of carbon dioxide so if you do start cutting and burning them you're actually releasing a lot of greenhouse gas into the atmosphere," says Caroline Hurley of the Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC).

The bogs also provide a haven for vulnerable birds, particularly waders and ground nesters like the golden plover and red grouse, and to plants like butterworts and bladderworts which have adapted to the poor soil by becoming carnivores.

But peat's economic importance to the traditionally depressed midlands means Hurley faces an uphill battle: "I don't think people are worried about burning peat to be honest ... they are only too happy to use a cheaper substitute."

Given that Ireland is 17 percent bog land -- a proportion only exceeded by Finland, Canada and Indonesia -- it is not easy to persuade small-scale farmers of the environmental urgency.

"I depend on it at certain times of the year when there isn't any other income," says McLoughlin.

Or, in the words of one Irish proverb: "He who has water and peat on his own farm has the world his own way."

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Give us a kiss! Druids reveal the mystery of mistletoe

Dec 06 10:29 AM US/Eastern

From <http://www.breitbart.com/news/2005/12/06/051206152925.yak3icb2.html>



Druids recreated an ancient ceremony at Britain's largest mistletoe market to honour the festive plant, traditionally held over the heads of those in the mood for a cheeky Christmas kiss. Devotees of the Celtic religion also revealed the little-known—and surprising—reasons why the festive sprig is just the job for those feeling both festive and frisky.

Out to rediscover the plant's spiritual side, druids performed the blessing in England's self-styled "Mistletoe Town", Tenbury Wells, in Worcestershire, central England.

The druids believe mistletoe is special because it never touches the ground, and possesses symbolic fertility qualities.

Druid Stefan Allen, from the Mistletoe Foundation, revealed just what makes mistletoe so appropriate to smooch beneath.

"Traditionally mistletoe was considered to be the semen of the gods and of the forest, because the berries contain a liquid that looks like and has the texture of semen," he said.

"This is the real reason we kiss under it at Christmas, this and because mistletoe blooms in the dark womb of wintertime."

Huddled in a circle, the druids clasped bunches of mistletoe and performed a ritual asking for the plant to bring blessings to all the homes it was going to.

After the ceremony, an auction of mistletoe and its prickly Christmas bedfellow holly began at the town's Old Cattle Market, with bunches predicted to fetch up to 100 pounds (147 euros, 173 dollars).

Mistletoe expert Jonathan Briggs said it was boom-time for his favourite plant while the outlook for holly was "sad".

"This year is a very good year for mistletoe. We have got a large number of berries and they are very white," he said.

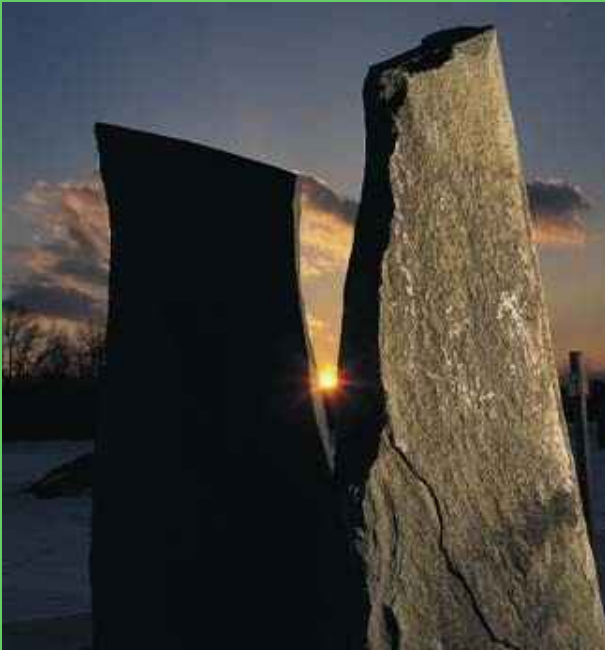
"Conversely, holly is looking pretty sad, with not so many berries on it at all, but we have large quantities of mistletoe and it's looking absolutely perfect."

Mistletoe received a further seal of approval after members of Britain's lower House of Commons proposed a motion backing the creation of an annual national Mistletoe Day, planned for December 1 each year.

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EVENTS

WITNESS THE WINTER SOLSTICE SUNRISE & SUNSET AT THE UMASS
SUNWHEEL



SUNRISE 7:00 a.m. & SUNSET 3:30 p.m.

WED. & THU.—DEC. 21 & 22, 2005

Members of the general public and the University community are invited to join Dr. Judith Young of the University of Massachusetts, Dept. of Astronomy to watch the Sun rise and set over the tall standing stones in the U. Mass. Sunwheel for the winter solstice. This is when the Sun is at its most southerly position in rising and setting. Sunrise and sunset gatherings will be held on both Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 21 and 22, 2005. Visitors for the winter solstice sunrise viewing should arrive at 7:00 a.m. and visitors for the sunset viewing should arrive by 3:30 p.m. For those interested in learning about the sky, there will be a presentation which will include the cause of the seasons, the

Sun's path in the sky, the phases of the Moon, and the story of building the U. Mass. Sunwheel. Bring your questions, your camera, your curiosity, and dress VERY warmly.

A \$3 donation is requested to help cover the cost of additional stonework for the Sunwheel.

The calendars list Dec. 21, 2005 as the day of the winter solstice, with the exact instant of solstice being 1:35 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. The word solstice means 'standstill', and refers to the fact that the rising and setting location of the Sun stays relatively fixed on the horizon for almost 2 weeks around solstice, with Dec. 21 in the middle. The astronomical cause of the Sun's 'standstill' is one of the topics which will be explained during the Sunwheel gatherings, along with the 18.6-year cycle of the Moon. Skywatchers will have a treat in store with the full Moon of Dec. 15, as the Moon reaches the peak of its 18.6-year cycle, when the full Moon rises and sets over the northern moonrise and northern moonset stones in the Sunwheel. At midnight, the December 15 full Moon will be noticeably high in the sky, higher than the summer Sun ever gets. Although the Moon will not be quite as far North on Dec. 14, the forecast for that day is better, and the high Moon will still be noticeable. For more information on the Moon's 18.6-year cycle see <http://www.astro.umass.edu/~young/moonteaching.html>

The U. Mass. Sunwheel is located south of Alumni Stadium, just off Rocky Hill Road. It can be reached from the center of Amherst, following Amity St. to the west. After crossing University Dr. at the light, continue on Rocky Hill Rd. for about 1/4 mile and make your first right on to Stadium Dr. and park. All visitors should wear warm clothing suitable for standing still on frozen, snowy, or soggy ground, and you may wish to bring a folding chair and/or blanket.

For more information, see <http://www.umass.edu/sunwheel>

The Festival of Brigit

Date: Sat, Jan 28, 2004

Title: Brigit Celebration

Time: 7-10pm

Leader: Mara Freeman

Cost: \$20

RSVP: 800-694-1957 or treeofstars@earthlink.net

Since ancient times, Celtic peoples have celebrated early spring as the time when Brigit, the Goddess of Life, returns to the land. Known as a woman of wisdom and bringer of light out of darkness, Brigit was also a healer, guardian of holy wells, keeper of the sacred fire, and the poets' Muse.

Like our ancestors, we will learn how to bring Brigit's wisdom into our daily lives. Once again, we will sing the songs, listen to the poems and stories, dance the dances and perform the lovely old ceremonies that welcome back Springtime with its promise of renewal, healing and inspiration.

Mara Freeman is from Britain and has been a leading teacher of Celtic spirituality for over twenty years. She is an initiate of the Western Mystery Tradition, an Archdruidess of the Irish Druid Clan of Dana and Honored Bard with the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids.

An international presenter and well-known storyteller in the Bardic tradition, she is also author of many published articles and a regular writer for *Parabola*, the award-winning journal of myth and tradition. She has also produced three albums of Celtic stories and meditations set to music. Her book, *Kindling the Celtic Spirit* (Harper San Francisco, 2001) has been hailed as the best modern introduction to Celtic spirituality and sacred traditions.

Dividing her time between California and West Wales, Mara teaches at many universities and learning centers, including Omega Institute, New York, Naropa University, Colorado, and the University of California in Santa Cruz. She leads annual retreats and pilgrimages in the British Isles and Ireland. In 2005, Mara founded the Avalon Mystery School, a three-year training program in the Western esoteric arts, which can be taken online or at intensive workshops in the U.S. and abroad. Mara also has a private healing practice in the Celtic tradition of Anamcara, or soul-guidance work, using her extensive training in the arts of psychotherapy and seership.

www.celticspirit.org

CALENDAR

Midwinter Solstice, when the Sun reaches its most southerly position, will occur this year Wednesday, December 21st at 10:35 a.m. PST. Go outside and turn toward the Sun with arms raised and fingers outstretched at this time and shout "Sial! Solstice Sun! Erbe-dite...All hail the returning of the light!"



A Druid Missal-Any

A Druid Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$8.00 and email subscriptions are free. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's post mail subscription free. Write A Druid Missal-Any, P.O. Box 406, Canyon, CA 94516.

This is the end of the Yule 2005 Issue.

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Comments on the Missal-Any?

Submissions to poppinjay@earthlink.net

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A Druid Missal-Any is an RDNA publication that began in 1983 by Emmon Bodfish and ran until 1991. This newsletter was re-established by his student Samhain 2000, Day 1 of Geamhradh Year 38

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