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imlec, imelc, La Fh?ll Brighde, the Festival of Bride, Bridgit, Bredes, the Celtic goddess of fire and the hearth, of divine inspiration and poetry, protectress of the flocks. Bride is a daughter of The Dagda. He is also known as Eochaidh Ollathair, Eochaidh the Great Father, "oll" meaning great, and "athair" father in Irish. He was considered to have much wisdom as another one of his names Ruadh Rofhessa, The Mighty One of Great Knowledge, shows. The Dagda is considered the "Father of the Gods" in the Irish mythological cycle of the Tuatha D EDanann. This is not because He was the paternal father of all the other gods, but because it

"expresses merely the paternal character inherent to the notion of chieftain" according to Marie-Louise Sjoestedt in *Celtic Gods and Heroes*. He was not even the leader of the Tuatha De Danann arrived in Ireland. This does not happen until their leader Nuada is slain in battle, and is replaced by Bres, a Formorian king, who turns out to be a tyrant, and is deposed. It is then that The Dagda becomes their leader.

The Dagda was also known as Dagda Mor, "The Good God," not because of any moral attachment but because he was good at every thing. He could work miracles and could control the weather and the crops. He had a cauldron, which was one of the treasures of the Tuatha De Danann. It was called The Undri that provided food for everyone in proportion to their merits, and from which none went away hungry. He possessed a club that one end could kill the living and the other revive the dead. It was so large that when He dragged it behind him it left a track as deep as the boundary ditch between two provinces. "The Dagda" was not a name but title that he earned. Marie-Louise Sjoestedt recounts, "...an episode of the Battle of Mag Tured enables us to establish its exact meaning. At the council of war held by the gods of the Tuatha, each on announced what He proposed to do in the common cause. When The Dagd'a turn came he said: 'All that you promise to do I shall do myself alone.' 'You are the good god,' said they, and from that day he was called The Dagda.' Like Her father Bride too was "good" and possessed many attributes in Her guises as Patroness of Poets, Bards, and Smiths, Celtic Goddess of the fire and hearth, healing, poetic and divine inspiration, childbirth, the flocks, and crops.

In some accounts Boann or Boand was either The Dagda's wife or his mistress, and She is mother of Bride. Boann is associated with rivers, and the river Boyne, is named for Her. Originally, according to legend in , there was only a well in the river's place, Sidhe Nechtain, now called Trinity Well in Dromin, Co. Limerick. The well was shaded by nine magical hazel trees. Whoever ate of these nuts immediately possessed the knowledge of everything in the world. Only the salmon that lived in the well were allowed this privilege, and they swallowed the nuts as they dropped into the water, thus knew all things and became known in legend as "The Salmon of Knowledge." All others except Nechtan himself and his three cup bearers were forbidden to approach the well. Boann, to test the power of the well, violated this geas by walking around it three times widdershins. Its waters rose up in three waves and take one of her thighs, one of her hands, and one of her eyes. It followed her as she fled to the sea in shame, and drowned her, and Boann herself became the river. Her name contains the Old Irish word for cow, "Bo," and is translated by Professor Anne Ross as "She who has white cows." Like Her mother Bride was also associated with cows as protectress of cattle. Recorded attributes of Saint Bride, which were probably co-opted from the goddess, were being nourished as an infant by a white cow with red ears, which signified an Otherworldly animal, dealing swift punishment to anyone who dared steal Her cattle, and the abundance of milk that Her cows could produce, and that She was often represented by a cow. Also like Her mother, Bride is associated with river and wells which incorporate Her healing powers. The Brighid in Ireland, the Braint in Wells, and the Brent in England are rivers named for Her. People would bring water from wells dedicated to Bride such as Bridewell in London, Bride's Well in Kildare and on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland, and sprinkle it on their homes and its occupants, the farm buildings, the livestock, and field, invoking Her blessing and protection.



News of the Groves



For the [Full Grove Directory](#)



Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

We've been having fun here in Digitalis Grove. Every month, it looks more and more likely that Azeem may pull off a splinter grove at the University of Maryland, tentatively referred to as Terrapin Grove. If it doesn't cement into a Grove, it certainly might become an interesting group of folks anyway.

We had a convention when Sister Hazel (Carleton AD 03-05) visited me and Azeem for a 2 hour lunch break at a Japanese restaurant to discuss her adventures during self-imposed exile to tropical Thailand. She was working there on transgender policy research and had many intriguing stories of social changes. We also discussed a rough draft of Isaac Bonewits (ADF bigwig & past RDNA mover/shaker) called "Bonewits Essential Guide to Druidism", an obvious companion volume to last year's successful "Bonewits Essential Guide to Wicca". We'll do a formal book review later of "BEGD" later after publication is complete, but we all agree in advance that it was exactly the kind of "first-read" books that we'd REALLY like to give a newcomer to our Grove; covering ancient history, renaissance and modern details, describing services and giving good objective advice on picking a group to join.

Finally, out of mounting interest in various disaster relief events of the last two years, I've begun an intensive round of evening classes with the Red Cross in emergency health and disaster relief. Most of the classes are free, and it satisfies my desire to further my long neglected studies as a member of the 4th Order of Grannos. Perhaps I'll found a Red Sigil organization someday? Finally, I have the most important job interview of my life on Feb 2, so put a prayer for me so that I might pass the Foreign Service interview.



Dogwood Proto-Grove: News from the Shenandoah Valley, VA

Greetings ALL in 2006! AD Tony performed a wedding and handfasting the first day of 2006.

The online component is in the building stages and will be available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dogwoodgrove>

May your Imbolc herald end passing of the dark time no matter where you are!



Palm Grove: News from Florida

Hello, and Great tidings of warmth in the afternoon (if not in the morning and evening).

Well, It has been a busy time of year here at the Palm Grove. We have added a sundial to the front of the grove. Its inscription reads "Be as true to each other as this dial is to the Sun."

We should all live by such a slogan.

The Plants have all withered by The Winter Gods but the Palm trees are doing well. Soon it will be time to replant the herbs and other plants. We are hoping for a better turn out this Year.

On the Brighter Side, we have added another new member to the Grove. Please to welcome Kim. She is shy but she catches on fast, and has already found a beautiful flowing gown-robe for herself.

She is to be wed to David at the end of this year and we are planning the first Palm*Grove handfasting at beltaine and then the wedding at the next Yule. It should be wonderful (We hope they can stop fighting long enough to make it through till then



Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross Muskogee/Mother Grove: News from Oklahoma

Editor's note: many apologies to the Muskogee/Mother Grove for leaving out their Samhain News. We include it here in its entirety.

The Muskogee Grove is slowly coming back off of hiatus. We initiated our first person since October of last year, Br. Shining Bull map Arinyes. His head is still swimming with too much information. The Co-Archdruidess is in bad health (prayers are appreciated) after her recent heart attack and some several other minor health problems, so she wasn't able to make it to the Initiation, but at least now she's going to see a doctor, which is almost as good as you can get.

The 2005 Annotated Liturgy Manual is nearing completion. About all that is left are the Core Curriculum (which we are basing primarily off of the Seven Liberal Arts—as they were and, in our opinion, should have been—and a Druid 'Seminary' Program, ideas for Cakes and Ale, Suggested Reading List as well as a summary of articles from the local newsletter and some charges that were delivered at local rites recently. Anyone with suggestions for either the Suggested Reading List or the Core Curriculum may submit their suggestions to: myrddinamaeglin at yahoo.com and put "MOCC Core Curriculum" or "MOCC Suggested Reading List" in the subject line. Hopefully it will be more than complete around Yule.

We are planning for a nice, traditional Samhain ritual on the 31st. That's right. We're pulling out all the stops and having it in full robe and everything now that the summer's over and these hot and heavy robes won't make us sweat to death, sung chants, lots of incense and candles and food...and then the likelihood of getting smashed thereafter at the Samhain revel.

This declare above all: Healing and Light and Peace

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



Moose Breechcloth Proto-Grove: News from Minnesota

Salutations from winter basecamp!

The Moose Breechcloth suffered a set back when our AD Loki (one of our cats) went AWOL. The little buggler is still MIA, and no doubt finding his own adventures elsewhere. Thanks to all who sent well wishes for finding him. He's in the Mother's hands. We hope she guides him safely home.

In other news, Lou and I have been doing our winter camping thang as much as we can. We get out at least once a month to take advantage of the Mother's winter wonderland. Snowshoeing, tracking wolves, and fine tuning my cast iron skills are always on the roster. I just added a 40-lb cast iron turkey roaster to my cast iron collection, and Lou just loves to haul it around. A 17" cast iron discada is next on my list of purchases. Bison fajitas anyone?

This coming weekend (January 21) is my annual Polar Bear Plunge with all proceeds going towards the

Special Olympics of Minnesota. There are too few opportunities to not only make a complete ass out of yourself, but to have to pay for the privilege as well. Lou managed to get himself volunteered this year to help with the registration of the plungers. He's still wondering how he managed to get put on work detail, but that's the nature of Special Olympics. If you're just standing around doing nothing, someone is bound to stick a clip board in your mitts. If you're in Minnesota, tune in to WCCO news at 5 PM on January 21 for the coverage. I'll be in the red union suit and rabbit fur hat.

I only had two deer hides to tan this year...not a bumper crop of deer hides this year...rather disappointing. Especially since I had hoped to send one to our beloved Sister Stacey, to try tanning a hair-on hide for herself. Alas, I don't even have enough hides to tan one for the co-worker who provides the pelts for me. Maybe next year.

Finally in news, this coming January 31 is the birthday of none other than yours truly. We have a group dinner planned at my favorite West African restaurant located in Saint Paul. If you're in the Twin Cities at the time, give me a call and join the group. Growing old is not for sissies. Neither is West African stew.

Hoping the season finds all of you in the best of health, and the brightest of spirits.

Gigawabamin nagutch,
and yours in the Mother,

Julie Ann and Lou



Rockspray Grove: News from Indiana

The Rockspray Grove is slowly continuing on. We are trying to find others with a similar path to welcome to our group discussion but as of now we are finding little. We try bringing up new topics of interest and sharing things we are learning on a weekly basis.

Matt



The Nine Oaks & Mystic Well Protogrove: News from Nevada

Greeting to all who worship the Mother!

The Nine Oaks & Mystic Well Protogrove took a little different slant during the Yule time, we went against the grain of things and performed more of a Northern slant to the 'rite of Yule', by 'giving' to the Norse Gods instead of the Celtic pantheon we usually work with. We took a vote and chose this for experience, also to meditate on what similarities between the Celtic and Teutonic ritualism, and of course obvious differences in the lore, and energies.

Being in the desert, and having a very mild winter this year so far, we chose to focus on the Earth Mother as Erda, mother of Thor and as ourselves also. Our take from Mothersnight (Dec 20th) to the 12th night (Dec 31st) was filled each day with songs in the Grove, gifts of giving and much meditation and scrying, we also took near daily trips to Red Rock canyon to a place where a stream of water runs near a small waterfall and there in this caverned Grove we connected to the earth Mother and gave Her our healing energy and touch. The Nine Oaks & Mystic Well Protogrove has sent out invitations for any and all to come work with us...

friends to the Grove, and even curiosity seekers to come as we do 'services' and 'Earth workings', as our last gathering had 43 people show up.

We are preparing for Imbolc now, keeping to the Celtic aspect, as we have had at our last meeting a bardic wordsmithing, connecting to Imbas and coming up with effective and modern prose for Imbolc and the rites to be shared over three days at the Grove...We look forward to the coming Spring and the seasons turning to a fruitful, blessed New year to come!

We can be contacted at... NineOaksMysticWell at gmail.com

The Mothers blessings on the Reform!

Brid



Canine Grove: News from Washington State

Since the Northwest will still be in the throes of it's 6 month long winter rain season, it dawned on this soddened druid that there won't be a heck of a lot of visitors to the stone henge replica in Washington. Methinks a trek to the monument and an Oimeic ritual in the companionship of raindrops would be right nice! Will let ya know how it goes!

Bindi the Sodden



Rogue River Grove: News from Oregon

The Rogue River Protogrove (aka Clan of the Triple Horses) will be holding its Imbolc celebration in a private residence in Medford, Oregon, on Saturday, February 11. Please bring a healing candle to light during our ritual. Please contact me for full details: aigeann at earthlink.net



Sunset Protogrove: News from California

How do we know Oimeic is coming?

Well- the Freesia outside have started sending up new apple green shoots. The first new baby lamb has arrived in my favorite field of sheep already. All the farm workers are out trimming up all the dormant grape vines, to urge them to send sprouts soon. Also, when leaving work now, I get to see the last slip of the sun that only two weeks ago, was long gone as I had left. Of course the stores are full of hearts & candy—I think those all pretty good signs.

Due to the weather I have not as yet, been able to get out hiking to find a new grove site, since the previous one was made permit access only as of the 1st of January. Soon however, the sun will be out for more than one day at a time and I'll get out exploring as soon as I can be sure I won't be 3 inches taller when I get back to the house. For now though the proto-grove is homeless. Have been observing high days at home during these wet months anyway. Artichokes are in season and we have been enjoying 'flower feasts'.

2006 has started off quite well however, in spite of floods and power outages, in our home we are quite

positive about the opportunities for this coming calendar year.

A wonderful New Year, Oimelec and Spring season to all of you.



Poison Oak Grove: News from California Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

Northern California was hit by a deluge of rain over the New Years. It was said to be the worst storm in recorded history and the little town where the AD lives and the grove site is was without power for four and a half days. Nothing like camping in your own home! The good news is that despite mudslides along the roads the grove site, excavated on the side of a hill was still intact! There was a section we wanted to dig out a little more but thanks to the Earth Mother and Dalon ap Landu that was taken care of by way of the rain for us.

Due to the rains the ground of the grove site is now soft enough to begin the planting of the eight sacred trees. The first one, Giuthas, was planted in time for Oimelec as it is the tree that signifies that High Day.

The AD and Server attended a wheat-weaving class given by a member of their Scots Gaelic class, who also contributed the Brid, Bride, Bridget article for this issue of the newsletter (see below). They made three-armed Brigit's Crosses for Oimelec and Mordiford Hearts.



Spending Time in Nature: An Epistle

By Norm Nelson, Patriarch of Braciaca

At the beginning of a new calendar year, may the beauty and the peace of Nature be with you all as it has been with me.

Our family's cabin (on leased Forest Service land in the center of the Black Hills) has become an essential part of the life of everyone who has ever been there. The log cabin (real logs, not the pre-shaped kind!) has the proverbial "three rooms and a path"; a large screened porch extends across the entire front length and wraps around one end, where the kitchen is. Out in front of it is a small, open meadow full of wild flowers all summer long.

My father once sat on a bench in front of the cabin and, without getting up, counted some 25-30 different species of blossoms. This incredible meadow is surrounded by some pines and spruce, which densely cover the surrounding hills, and a few scattered oaks, and bounded on one side by a babbling creek, about 30' from the cabin, which in some places is waist deep for those who like to wade. (It's also about 55° in mid-summer, so can be very refreshing!) As the background for this beauty, grey granite cliffs, abruptly rising almost vertically to about 75 to 100 feet high, wall in two sides of the scene.

The tradition since my folks bought the cabin in 1959 has been to sit in front of the cabin or on the porch while there [the absence of biting flies and mosquitoes makes it better inside the screens] and just look at the meadow for extended periods of time. About 10 years ago, someone found and put up a little sticker in the porch that says "Don't do something, just sit there!" The beauty of the meadow, the sound of the wind sighing through the pines and the ever-changing cloudscapes in an unbelievably blue sky will often lull you into a sort of wordless meditation that engenders a deep inner peace and banishes the cares of daily life and

the world outside.

We're part of a group of 10 cabins and a rustic chapel, called Camp Remington, founded ca. 1923 for vacationing Episcopal clergy and their families. A dear friend of mine who lived in Rapid City regularly rented one of the other cabins nearby with her family before her first husband died, and after his death used to come and stay with us or rent one nearby. She remarried and moved to Troy, NY, then to NYC, and eventually to Wilmington, DE. She has now moved back here. Every summer while she was living in the east, though, she came back to the Black Hills and lived at our cabin for a couple months; she still moves from town to there for at least a month every summer. She used to tell of how she would praise the area to her eastern friends, who were horrified-how can you live without running water or indoor plumbing or electricity or any heat except a fireplace?— and she frequently has said, joyfully, to me that whenever she was there, she would sit on the porch and "store up the meadow to be able to visit it all year" no matter where she was.



To me, this kind of "Nature worship" is a powerful part of being a Druid. The peace you can find hiking, climbing, wading, or just sitting quietly and absorbing the forests, streams, and cliffs remains an essential part of your being for the rest of your life. And Nature has answered this appreciation and devotion in various ways. My favorite example: in the 2nd year of the Order (the summer of '64), I wanted to hold some casual, solo RDNA services up at the cabin, and went searching for an appropriate altar. At the base of the cliff in front of the cabin, I found a large, vertical boulder which had apparently fallen down from above many years ago, since it was half-buried and covered with lichens. The front face was (and is) about 6' high, with a shelf about half way up it which was just large enough to hold the chalice; it seemed ready-made for RDNA celebrations. Only during my first service at that altar did I realize that, surrounding it, were the only three oaks in the immediate vicinity! "And this was taken to be a sign..."



Brid, Bride, Bridget

By Pat Hatchel

My first introduction to Brid/Bride/Bridget (accent over the i in the first two names) was at an Irish Arts Foundation seminar, The Celtic Way, presented by Eddie Stack, author, folklorist, and faculty member of New College in San Francisco. Stack referred to her through out the seminar by the earliest name of this Celtic goddess, Brid. To pronounce Brid properly, you would say the English word bridge replacing the short i sound with a long e. The information Stack presented was limited to Irish history and custom, because the Celtic ways held sway there much longer than anywhere else.

Brid was a triple goddess. She was symbolized by a triskel of spirals. On the eve of February 1, she went around the countryside visiting homes, byres, and fields bestowing her blessings. Her blessings were vital to the family's well-being. This was a time of change and expectation as winter lost its grip, the land began to waken and be worked, and the fertility of all life would determine the prospects of the coming year. Brid's Eve was considered an especially magical time. The most magical place to be was Bridget's Well at Liscannor, County Clare.

On Brid's Eve several ribbons were left on the window sill or tied to the door latch so they could be blessed and touched by the Goddess. They were taken into the house the next morning. These "brathogs" were

considered the most potent of charms with a vast array of uses. They were placed on cradles to protect babies from illness and changlings. Immigrants and fishermen pinned them to their inner clothes for protection. There were healing rituals and cures associated with Brid charms. On this night a potato might be left on the window sill to be planted later with the seed potatoes. A bit of seed was wrapped in a piece of cloth, placed beside Brid's cross, and left there until planting time. These seeds would be mixed with the rest of the seeds to be sown to ensure a good harvest. Because of her association with the hearth, no one was allowed to take fire from the house during this time, even in the form of lighted tobacco. To do so would risk bringing misfortune.

It was believed to hear a lark sing around Brid's day was a good omen for happiness.. Seeing the oyster catcher, a sea bird, on the shore around this time indicated a good fishing season. The Irish name for the oyster catcher is Giolla Bride – Bridget's Pageboy.



Preparation for Brid's visit included a very thorough house cleaning. Everything must be in its place and anything borrowed returned. Food was prepared for a gathering of friends and family. Children had the job of gathering rushes, placing a bundle outside the house.

When the festivities began a female member of the family representing Brid went out, gathered up the rushes, and knocked three times asking to be admitted. Each time, those inside the house bowed low and asked for her blessing. The third time their request was answered with a thousand blessings and Brid was accepted into the house. Everyone began to make crosses out of the rushes. Any left over rushes were laid by the fire and in the byre with the cattle. Food was set on the crosses. After the meal the crosses were set around the house for protection. The crosses would be renewed each year, but the really beautiful ones would be kept for many years to come.

Stack said the feeling for Brid continued to be so strong that people still made crosses at that time of the year wherever in the world they were with whatever they had at hand. He then showed us a cross he had recently found on top of a dustbin It was made of newspaper. I studied it carefully and made one of wrapping paper that night. In spite of his gift for words, Stack did not feel he could really make us see the elaborate, beautiful crosses that would be kept. He went on to say that the original Celtic cross had three arms; the Christians added the fourth. Therefore it was not unusual to find the four arm St. Bridget's cross in the house to keep the priest happy and the three arm cross in the byre, which was probably more important to the family's well-being.



My next encounter with Brid occurred when I found Invocation to St. Bridget (Clean Suggane), a traditional Manx piece arranged for harp by Charles Guard. Guard published it in his book *Manx Music for the Irish Harp*. The invocation was collected by Mona Douglas from Mrs. Bridson who lived in Glen Mayre on the west coast of Mann. It was sung by the woman of the house on St. Bridget's Eve, January 31, to ask her to visit and bless the household. Listening to the music one can hear Brid asking or being asked to come in three times, discussed twice, and a quick, simple answer or acceptance after the third to end the piece. Guard notes that the full texts of most of the songs in his book are available in *The Manx National Song Book* published by Shearwater Press on the Isle of Mann.

Wheat weaving and straw work brought Brid to my attention again when I saw Nan Rohan's instructions for making a St. Bridget's cross in California Wheat Weaving Guild's beginner's book. It was made slightly differently from the one I made, though at first glance they looked the same. I found more variety in *A Golden Dolly*, a long out of print book by M. Lambeth. There is a photo of four St. Bridget's crosses. One is a four armed God's eye type design. One is a four armed roughly interwoven design that looks like it would

serve well as a hot pad. The other two are a four arm and a three arm design that differ from the form I was familiar with in construction. They were made using group linked spirals that cause the central portion to become deeper as the spiral works its way out. You wind up with a three or four sided pyramid with the usual arms coming out at the base. I continue to wonder how this fairly simple symbol could become one of the special beauties Stack mentioned.



Druid Veterans Headstone Project

I am pleased to announce that I finally have a completed packet ready for any Druid Vet who wants to have the "Awen" Druid symbol on their headstone.

If anyone wants a packet please send \$4.00 (for postage and handling) to me at:



Ellen Evert Hopman
P.O. Box 219
Amherst, MA 01004

Until we have a deceased Druid vet who has designated a family member or Druid clergy to fill out the form and say that they want the symbol on their headstone we can't do anything more at this time.

Thanks,

Saille



Druidical Treasure

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

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

Part Seven 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. Sean attends a mysterious Druid ceremony, and an all night vigil to become a priest turns remarkably dangerous for Matt; involving disappearing trees, torch-bearing mobs, lightning storms and short-tempered livestock. Matt now prepares to finish his solitary vigil.

The previous six episodes can be read in their illustrated entirety at <http://www.rdna.info/treasure.html> or in earlier issues of the Missal-Any.

Chapter Twenty-Four: The Sitting and the Sighting

Iain met a very tired Matt in a secluded peaceful grove where a large pile of wood was stacked, with a small fire happily crackling next to it, a beacon in the damp dark. As Matt entered, Iain took a flaming brand from the small fire and handed it to Matt with a simple speech; "Here you will stay; and do not allow sleep to overtake you, but keep open your ears that you might hear. Take this brand and think of why you are out here, what do you seek, and what you will bring to the Druids as a priest of the Third Order." With that Iain gracefully rose, left and melted into the forest with nary a sound. Matt lit the fire with his brand, and sat down staring ever deeper into the mesmerizing, controlled fury of the fire, gently nurturing it over the hours, as the night was filled with the various songs by a chorus of frogs and cicadas about him. Sometimes, he thought he saw shapes darting through the woods, but concluded they were either squirrels, fairies or furtive lovers; none of whom wanted him to interrupt their nocturnal pursuits.



He thought about many questions he had prepared, thought about wild things that mischievously arose and crossed just on the fringe of his consciousness, occasionally getting sleepy and jolting back to consciousness with an embarrassed jerk. He eventually couldn't endure the stillness anymore, so he shored up the fire, and went for a stroll, retracing his earlier route across the upper Arb, past the

barren mid-night silent highway, and pushed through the brush out to the field where he had found that strange oak with the iron bar. Surprisingly he found the tree was still there, easily enough this time, and pressed his back against its sure fixed bulk, watching the roiling clouds, which now having dumped their burden of lightning spears and buckets of rain, was beginning to depart reluctantly, perhaps to regroup later further east. One time of many when Matt shook awake from near-sleep, someone was standing before him in a black velvet cloak, speckled with a few glass sequins, and the air around him seemed thicker than water, and his sleep-encrusted eyes couldn't focus well at all. The figure quickly turned to leave, bounding away with amazing speed, but he got up and chased it across the field and with great difficulty until he caught it at the edge of the forest, and spun the entity around, and threw back the hood.



"Good evening, Matt," a deep female voice said, the words rolling across his face like breaking waves on a beach.

"Dylan! What are you doing here?" Matt asked in disbelief, why would his girlfriend be out here?

She continued impersonally, "You called for me forth, but few can see me, and fewer catch me." Matt could feel his own pulse in his hands and temples.

The words came of their own to him, "I thought it might be you out here," he said dreamily without screening, "While many bulls have nose rings, I didn't think many would have diamonds set in them, or pierced ears. Is this for real?"

She chuckled and pressed closer, "Perhaps you're just dreaming now, Druid." She rubbed her flanks, "And yes, watch it with that whip next time, or I'll really hit you hard back with it, I swear!"

"I'm sorry, Dylan, I didn't know you were... what? ... a goddess?" Matt couldn't quite find the words.

She sighed quite long her breath white in the chill, "Saaa, I guess you might use that word. Call me Dalon, Matt, since most use that name in these woods." She ran two fingers through what was left of his burnt locks, that came away in crispy pieces, and she scattered them into the winds, where they fell slower than feathers.

"This complicates our relationship, of course. What are you, really?" Matt shivered, and gripped her shoulders tightly and lightly shook her desperately but firmly.

"That's a hard question to answer in terms you could comprehend, I'm not so sure myself, it has been so long, and I've been so many things, but I certainly am not alone in my work, here and abroad," effortlessly, she twisted and emerged from his grasp smiling and chuckling.

"But, I thought Dalon was male, like the Chronicles state," Matt insisted off-hand.

"Silly boy, I usually come in whichever form of what you most want to see me in, sometimes I come as a burst of courage or determination, for virtue or vice is ever at hand if you but call and choose it. Sometimes I come as a fawn at dawn, or a bevy of pheasants taking wing in the field. I do get so tired of the same limited format in most Christian lands, but I do what I can, wherever it is possible." She smiled gracefully, and swept an arm across the campus, "Here, I appear often in this beautiful land as an oak tree." Her smile turned wistful, "Now, what Fisher didn't know is that oaks are hermaphroditic, but then again, he wasn't a biology major."



"So you're not going to tell me if Dylan is really you, are you?"

"Now, that would be telling, wouldn't it? Fairy logic is very different from human rules, so don't try to understand it, just learn from it. Would you settle for maybe and maybe not?"

"If it really is you, then we could never have a family and children?" Matt pressed, as she turned away to look at the first stars peeking out from the opening clouds and was silent for a moment.



"Offspring of mortals and gods are indeed usually big troublemakers, some even causing religions to be founded," she chuckled at a few memories, eyes half closed. "Such troublemakers they are... But do not worry, if you seek another, I and she will understand it, for we are not the jealous type, I know you will always come back to me, and I will always come to you." Placing a finger on the septum of his upper lip, "I must forbid you to ever broach this subject with Dylan, for if it is true what is happening now, I will have to depart, and if it is not true, she may not be able to understand or trust you, perhaps it is best for you to consider it but a dream."

"So perhaps my romance with her/you is..."

"Perhaps just a metaphysical search for Truth and Deity." She put a finger on his lips as his next question came to the surface. "Shhh. You have many more questions, more than I have the answers that you will understand. Your quest is nearly done, your soul is ready, but your heart is uncertain. When you have solved the last of the puzzles, you will know who keeps the treasure and whether you still want it then. I will always be here with you, closer than your jugular vein is to your body, throbbing within your blood." She wrapped the cloak about her lithe body and said quietly, "It's time to go." And she was gone, but Matt caressed the space where he thought she had been, trying to hold on to the evaporating memory of her touch.

"No wait!" Matt reached out and found himself in the rubble of the field, no tree in sight, the air returned to its usual consistency, and like a light switch, the night noise resumed on cue in a cacophany. Matt lumbered back to his lonely campfire as if on autopilot. The neglected fire was dangerously close to snuffing itself out, being mostly coals now. He wondered, how many hours, or even days, had passed? It didn't matter. He rebuilt it and waited for the sunrise, occasionally consulting the tiny sundial on his wrist by the firelight.

A few hours passed, and Sean hiked over from the campus and was waiting at the base of the Hill of Three Oaks, in the rosy haze of a damp May morning. Far away, from the forest edge, a large man, Matt presumably, came forth and trudged across a Frisbee field towards Sean, obviously very tired. His eyes were mostly on the grass as he talked with Sean.

"How are you doing, Matt?"

Tired, beyond words, Matt grunted, and they wordlessly sat down. A few minutes later, a jaunty cloaked figure strutted from the direction of the Goodhue Dormitory, approaching the hill. Iain bowed once to Sean, and tapped Matt's broad shoulders, "So, did you sleep?" Matt shook his head, and Iain motioned for Sean to remain, took Matt by the hand, and led him up to the top of the hill as the sun began to peek over the horizon.



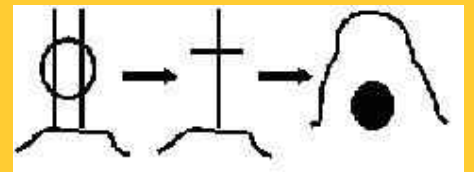
A few more cloaked figures reverently strode out of the forest here and there, heads erect, purposefully crossing the grass. All converged on the peak of the hill. There, silhouetted against the sky, Sean watched them read a few words from a sheet, turn a few times, hold up a chalice, and it was soon over, as Sean noticed his sneakers were completely soaked through with dew. Each figure then departed by their same earlier approaches, and Matt stumbled down the hill alone to Sean.

"I think I know the solution to the puzzle." Matt yawned half asleep, "Did you bring the two symbols?" Sean nodded and they went downhill towards some pine trees, which were huddling together in a circle, and on the other side of the trees was a square granite monument on a mound overlooking the campus, about chest high. "Give me the cross pole and Druid staff." Sean passed them to Matt who proceeded to explain, "You see, Sean, listen to the puzzle again;

When black and white are one day in line
When all forms of God are known to be divine,
Sight the two and carefully through them peer
The path to her cave will be sharp and clear

"And then we take the wall graphic that we found inside the crannog of Mai Fete Island:"

"You see Sean, that graven image got me thinking of the biblical hills of Olives and Calvary and the cave where Jesus was buried, things of apparent concern for Fisher. Now there are only two hills of note on this campus, listed in the early Chronicles." Matt counted on his fingers, "One of them is the Hill of Three Oaks up there where I was just ordained, and the other is Monument Hill down here, where the first altars were built out of scrap rock, and destroyed by the Anti-Druids, whoever they were, and they're long gone." Matt started to stumble sleepily, and bumped into Sean, who shifted uncomfortably and shook him by the shoulder.



Matt scratched his chin, "They were possibly the Denmads, but that was probably too early for Fisher to have already thought about founding them, but perhaps Denmad was based upon the model of the Anti-Druids, as you've speculated, since having a foil or opponent is good for group cohesion. Now this granite stele has four sides, one side etched with a memorial for the first Christian baptism in Minnesota, first Christian marriage and first church service back in the 19th century. The fourth side is oddly blank, and according to Scharding,

the 30th Archdruid, in his interview he states that Shelton, the 8th Archdruid, cryptically stated that blank side spoke of Druidism."

"So?" Sean tapped his foot in the wet grass, noticing some tiny purple flowers amongst the tall storm-tossed grass.

Matt continued, trying to concentrate on the topic, "So, over the years, Denmad, or someone else has been planting wooden crosses here in the grass, much to the annoyance of the Druids, even though the Druids never acutally use this spot anymore. And this gave me an idea. If you look on top of the stone, there is a big hole, the perfect size for this!" Matt rammed the cross's base into the hole which sank securely into the hole, gleaming in the morning sun. The crosspoint was 10 feet in the air, far over their heads.

Sean gasped, "That means the Hill of Three Oaks is..."

"Is the viewing spot to 'gun-sight' the location of the cave." Matt went back to the pine trees and tied back a few branches with some red ribbons from his pocket. "Back in the 1960s, this site wasn't nearly as heavily overgrown, and these pine trees were quite small." Matt came back and examined the monument's blank face again. "I thought so. There we go." He pointed to the two horizontal side edges of the blank faces, heavily chipped, "More of that Ogham code stuff, I believe, Fisher really should use some runes or something else, this is getting a bit too easy."

Sean scoffed, "I'm not complaining about easy. What's it say?"

Matt quickly whipping out his notepad. In all of two seconds of scribbling, he read it, "It says;

In good times heed the big brother, Bill
When the way is clear, try to be humorous,
In hard times heed the white dwarf's dog, Will
When it's uncertain try to be serious."

Sean shrugged immediately in unison with Matt, "Uh-huh, yeah, whatever, we'll have to decode the meaning of that later, now let's get up to the Hill of Three Oaks."

The two mounted up to the apex of the Hill of Three Oaks, which enjoyed a commanding view of the surrounding camps and Arb, stretching out before their gaze. Matt went over to a large low-lying gray boulder by the remains of last night's bonfire. He pointed to a barely perceptible inscribed Druid sigil on the rock and he planted one end of the sigil staff on the rock, stepped onto the altar stone and fiddled with the other end of the staff. The sigil on the other side of the bar hinged open like a sight on a rifle. Matt squinted through the sight, looking down towards Monument Hill's cross and aligning them. "There she is!"



Sean pushed Matt aside and looked down toward the cross through the sigil. "I see it Matt, down at the base of the hill of the Japanese Garden, there's a big wall of ivy and some concrete jutting out at various spots." Sean looked up at Matt beaming, "That must be where the cave's entrance is located! Let's go find it!" Sean began to stride in that direction, only to be stopped short by Matt heavy hand on his shoulder.

"Um, wait a minute, Sean." That cave has been there for forty long years, so what do you say, let's let me get 40 winks because I'm just about collapsing on my feet as we speak. Besides, it is daytime and we'll need to get our spelunking gear out of the dorm and do this kind of activity at nighttime. We shouldn't rush now, especially since most of these challenges have proved to be quite dangerous and difficult, more so if you're half asleep"

"Good thinking, Matt."

"Yuh-huh." Matt yawned polishing his fingernails on his sleeve and blowing on them pretentiously, "Practical patience, a necessary virtue with Druids. We're also quite humble folk, perhaps the best at it, you know."

"So tell me, Matt, anything else happen on your vigil?"

Matt mumbled something that sounded like, "I had seen things that I had not seen, and I had heard things that I had not heard and I had felt things that I had not felt." Then cryptically ending the conversation like that Matt headed towards the dorms and Sean followed behind him, carrying the iron bars. Some birds in a nearby tree began to start an excited chorus, but Matt's only quest now was for a large pillow and a soft bed.

Chapter Twenty-Five: The Tunnels of Terror



Later that Sunday night, Matt awoke from a deep slumber and went over to Davis Hall to see Sean who was writing a letter by hand that he sealed in an envelope, and slipped under his pillow. Sean looked up and smiled, "Caves and tunnels and trips to the underworld are dangerous places, so in case there's a problem, they'll know where to find the bodies." He lightly patted the pillow. Matt looked a bit shocked, so Sean consoled him, "Cheer up, that's just a one in a million precaution, think ahead, right? It might be 40 more years until another group of idiots follows

the clues to our location. Now, are you all ready my sleepyhead?"

Remembering that he was indeed still tired, Matt yawned and stretched a little and nodded, "Yeah, I got some dinner on the way over. The sun sets in another 20 minutes, so we should get going." They picked up their gear packs, and as they were leaving, Sean's third roommate, an angry fellow named Craig, looked at them suspiciously and shook a finger at them.

"Sean! Now be sure to return by midnight this time, I need to get some sleep for classes on Monday, and last night you came in at 5 a.m. and you smelled like a burnt sheep! And you still haven't explained that odd green stain on my bed from winter break!" With a slight twinge of apprehension, "Just, what do you Druids do out there at night?"

Sean began to explain, but Craig held up a trembling hand, "No, wait, I don't really want to know. Oh, Matt, I've taken a few messages from Dylan, she wants to know why you missed your coffee date today, she said, 'don't be latte again.' That's a coffee joke I think."

"It's complicated." Matt said without any outward signs of expression.

"Whatever, dude, I don't care, so you tell her," Craig waved, "Have fun guys, and clean up when you return or I'll complain to the R.A."

They waved goodbye and made good time across the campus, clanking and tinging as their gear slowly settled into a fixed position. The weather was fine with wide clear sky lined by a thin purple rim on the horizon as the last of the sun's sphere disappeared. At Cowling Recreation Center they turned right, past the charming little Japanese Garden and hobbled down the tall hill to the floodplain

and soccer fields below. Up to the north they saw the distant vista of the Hill of Three Oaks, perceptible yet in the setting glimmer from the west. They went to a corner of Bell Field and approached the spot along a steep hillside, where the slope was covered in an arm-deep layer of ivy.

Sean flicked on his ever-present Maglite and aimed it onto the wall of ivy and began banging a sharp pole into the dirt in a systematic search. One region was particularly damp, with a trickle of water coming out of the hill, and when he poked it, there was a clang there under the topsoil.

Sean smiled, "It wouldn't be a real treasure hunt without at least some spadework, eh?"

"Oh, I dig it, man," Matt smirked hefting the shovel.

They removed about a foot of composted dirt, and pushed the ivy aside, and found a rusted metal sign with a radiation symbol bearing the words, "Fallout Shelter". A lot more digging revealed a heavy padlocked door.

"Looks like a storm shelter for tornadoes, kind of like in Oklahoma." Matt declared.



Sean went to work, adding a lubricating spray to loosen up the lock, and after much cursing, it snapped open dully, and he pulled the chain out of the handles and the door swung up and open and some fetid air wafted outwards, and Sean sneezed violently, and careened out of the entrance and landed on the ground, "Damn it, how many moldy buildings are we going to have to break in to?"

"So it's a fallout shelter, huh?"

Sean still coughed a little, getting some fresh air, "Yeah, the campus is actually criss-crossed like a rabbit warren, with underground tunnels, for routing the heating pipes and electricity and phone lines. Most of them were open for foot traffic in winter and rainy days until 1988, when the threat of lawsuits closed off the last of them. Now, ever since then, we have to freeze our butts off above ground. This is probably a disused segment, forgotten from the Cold War, many of them are sealed off. I don't think even the grounds crew knows how many there are."

"Yeah, Sean, it doesn't look like this one has been used in 30-40 years." Matt pointed down the corridor, which had a few inches of water in it, "Look at the old lighting fixtures, and the rust on the padlock." Matt peered down the corridor that stretched past the reach of their flashlight, various creepy ideas rising unbidden to his mind.

Sean broke the silence, "All right, whose turn is it this time to go down the creepy corridor?"



"I'll go first, and I promise, no funny business this time." Matt went inside ahead of Sean, splashing with each step up to the ankle, the unseen footing on the floor a bit uncertain due to fallen concrete and generic slippery slime all over. Sean soon recovered and fell in behind Matt, sliding down to his knees, once or twice. The 15 foot wide and 10 foot tall corridor went curving into the hill for about a fifty yards and came to a sudden stop at a wall.



"What do we do now?" Matt inquired.

"I'm not sure, any ideas?"

Matt thought for a moment and spoke confidently, "Well, you said the Masons had an Order of Demolition, so can't you break down the wall?"

"That's the Order of DeMolay!"



"Démolé? Is that French for razing buildings?"

"No, it's a program for the children of Masons, like a prototype for Boy Scouts. Besides I'm a Speculative Mason not an Operative Mason." Sean stated proudly, arms crossed. Matt had a blank look.

"What's the difference?"

"Operative Masons are actual craftsmen, who build cathedrals, work with stone. Speculative Masons just use the symbolism of building in order to understand our souls."

Matt looked perturbed, "Oh, I see, I guess it's a different ball of wax when it is Masonry, isn't it? I remember you giving me a rather hard time for not identifying maple trees in the winter by their bark, like I wasn't a good Druid! I guess I'm a Speculative Druid then, eh?" Matt poked a slimy finger into Sean's chest.

"Now, calm down, Matt, I'm sorry about that," Sean smirked with a clever idea, "Besides, if you're a "miner" in English, can't you just use 'deconstruction' to get rid of the wall, Mr. Derrida?"

Matt put on a forced straight face and spoke paternalistically, "Ha, ha, all right, all right, that's good, but this witty banter is not getting rid of this wall, old chap, and it being reinforced concrete, we'd never break through in a week of picking. So, maybe there's a clue around here to help us go around it, secret passage kind of stuff, look around?"

"What about those white circles on the ceiling? Could they mean something?"

Matt nodded, "Yeah, I saw those. I thought they might just be calcium deposits leaking through, but they do seem to be arranged in a pattern that seems familiar. That one looks like a big 'W'. Any ideas?"

"Well, the school does have a large astronomy program, could they be a star chart, and that 'W' would be Cassiopeia?" Sean suggested, and began reaching for one.

Matt slapped his hand vigorously, "Possibly, but if we choose the wrong one, we might get a death-trap. I don't like death traps, not good for living things, um, death traps... Sounds silly, but you know how these dungeon adventures are rigged. I have no interest in being hit by another poison darts or falling through a trapdoor. Death is low on my list of priorities, let's think and choose wisely first."

"There aren't any trapdoors. Well, obviously, we'd better review our last puzzle verses, I was hoping this one would be more obvious," Sean said responsibly, rubbed his smarting hand covered in crud. "I think the verse we found on the monument seems appropriate here. But, I don't know much about astronomy, that's stuff for Druids, you like gazing at heavenly bodies, and all that."



"Well, we Druids were supposed to be good at charting the stars, but I'm still working on that skill." Matt paused and thought, "I'm still a First Degree Mason, so I don't suppose you can tell me if there are any prominent stars in Mason theories? Perhaps the one-dollar 'Bill' has a clue, it's full of Masonic symbols, right?, put there by Big Brother?" Matt snapped out a one-dollar bill from his wallet and gave it to Sean who held a flashlight up to it.

"Well, I've heard people talk about them, for example the number of arrows or steps on the pyramid, the slogan, the eye on the Great Seal is for the... wait a second... the rising Dog Star, Sirius in Latin, the brightest star in the sky, that coincided with the Founding of America and some higher degree in Masonry is associated with it, I think. Here's Orion on the ceiling--the great hunter/searcher--so his belt points to this big one up here..." Sean quickly stabbed the star over his head with his finger and the floor suddenly fell away, and he was kicking in free-fall before he knew it. In a mind-splitting painful jolt his arm was nearly pulled out of socket as Matt swiped out to grab his hand, and Sean swung with a thud to the side of the pit. Matt grabbed his other hand and pulled him out.

Matt said disapprovingly, "Sean, you just weren't paying attention to those movies I loaned to you, were you? There's always a second catch to the tricky bastard's clues. I don't know about Masonry, but Druidry says that having second thoughts (or rather THIRD thoughts) is the key to solving life's dilemmas."

Sean rubbed his shoulder looking over the edge with his flashlight. "Um, thanks, Matt. By the way, who has the time and money to put in death-traps in the real world, anyway?"



"Hard to tell, few of the other puzzles were as maliciously dangerous as that one. They seem to be getting more dangerous."

Sean shone his flashlight down the hold and spat in disgust, "Damn it, that pit is about 20 feet deep, but I'm glad there are no skeletons down there!"

"Maybe the rats already ate them for the calcium?" Matt suggested warmly and re-read the poem.

In good times heed the big brother, Bill
When the way is clear, try to be humorous,
In hard times heed the white dwarf's dog, Will
When it's uncertain try to be serious."

Sean grimaced, "Well I don't find that humorous at all."

"Not all lessons in life are humorous or fondly viewed at the time," Matt pulled out his little Palm computer, "Let me check my portable astrology chart for a minute. Useful thing to have, glad I ordered one." He clicked a few buttons for a while, flashed it for a minute to Sean, closed it and stated confidently. "As I suspected, Sirius is actually a binary star. For centuries, people in sophisticated star-gazing cultures have noticed a secondary light by it of 'Sirius B', which is, guess it?, Yes, a white-dwarf star." With a long screwdriver, taped onto a pole with duct tape, and tied himself to Matt by a rope, Sean prodded the small dot next to Sirius. There was a dull rumbling and a dull click, and the obstructing wall slid open about an inch on the left side, and they were able to wrench it open together.



Sean propped his fists on his hips looking at Matt suspiciously, "So when did you get so bloody clever all of a sudden?"

"You just underestimated me before, Sean, I know my Internet." Matt shrugged, "Maybe the Goddess likes me, now. I wonder what's on the other side?"

"Won't know until we look, 'Will' we?"

Chapter Twenty-Six: The Presidential Puzzle



Beyond the withdrawn wall-door was a short section of corridor, with five doors along one wall. Each door was painted with a president from the 1950-1974 period, each door was nearly rusted off. Matt pulled on one and it fell off easily. Opening each one, they found that each small room had four walls literally covered with graffiti, painted with posters of long-gone bands, and disturbing large dioramas of mushroom clouds.

"Whoa man, what are we looking for down here, Sean?" Matt asked looking at the piles of forgotten tinned biscuits and rusted-out barrels of emergency water, woefully inadequate for 1,500 students from the period, a mere token gesture in a real disaster that seemed so imminent in that age. Matt could almost imagine the fear of students waiting down here, ears perked for a heavy boom that spelled the end of their civilization. He smiled, not much had changed, except we didn't know who the enemy exactly was anymore, or when they would strike, and there wouldn't be time to make even a pretense of hiding, or collecting duct tape and plastic sheeting.

"Let's read that clue again from the master riddle found on the RDNA constitution." Sean read out the

verse.

Deep in the earth, her tunnel will twist
When all seems done our leader has been missed.
One bard has a harp, the rest but a lyre,
Which of them built the Wonder of Wiltshire?

"Okay, Sean, we're getting pretty good at this, so I'm guessing the 'leader' is one of the presidents on the doors to indicate a room."

"Yeah, probably," Sean nodded and read them off, "Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon; the first five presidents of the nuclear age. This Fisher guy sure likes working in five."



Matt piped in, "Perhaps he is a Discordian anarchist? They started about the same time as the RDNA. He's certainly made a chaos of our lives so far."

"Nah, I doubt it, Druids seem more disorganized, than anarchist." Sean looked at the five propped-up doors. "Matt, do you remember the Green Book of various meditations and sermons the founders put together? I believe Fisher mostly worked with Vedic and Hindu sources, but perhaps he added the one from the section called 'Saying from the Buddhist Sutra' called 'The Four Noble Truths' which I happened to be reviewing last week, you remember the second verse in that memory of yours?"

"Sure," Matt concentrated, as if reading a floating book in front of him, "And this, monks, is the Middle Path, of which the Tathagata has gained enlightenment, which produces insight and knowledge, and tends to calm, to higher knowledge, enlightenment, Nirvana? This is the Eightfold Way: namely, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration."

Sean tapped Matt in the middle of his chest, happy to one-up him, "Thus, I think it's the middle one, the Druids being so intent on moderation in all things, and besides Kennedy had a great impact on the early Grove due to their assumed prophetic prediction of his assassination at Samhain 1963, just weeks before the fact."

"That is very reasonable." Matt paused and looked through a mental databank, "And I remembered another verse from the Green Book that is from the Rig-Veda, undoubtedly by Fisher, which he later used in the ordination of his 4th Order Druids. It begins, 'Forth from the middle of the flood, the waters their chief, the sea flow cleansing, never sleeping.' And most of the water is coming from the third door, from a crack in the wall of that room."



"Door number three, it is then Matt, and that's a very Druidic number too, regardless from which end you start the counting, eh?" Sean said, mentally patting himself on the back. "Let's concentrate on the graffiti inside that room, maybe one of them was drawn by Fisher himself?"

They looked about the small chamber, pushed aside the old containers, and after a few minutes, Sean said. "The verse refers to some musical themes, and there are six prominent bands on the wall; 'The Supremes, the Rolling stones, the Beatles, the Searchers and the Four Seasons' I think it's got to be one of these, one's true 'a harp', that's a bardic reference, right?, the 'lyre' might be a pun on 'liar', indicating some fakes, like a red herring."

"Maybe," Matt opined, "Well, Four Seasons would be an obvious pick for Druidical reasons, they did a song called, 'Dawn' in the Top 10 that year, I remember. The Searchers, you know who did, 'Love Potion No. 9', which has a magical ring to it, so that would be a good choice too as we're searching for treasure."

Sean had a pained look on his face, coughed a little, and leaned against an old barrel, "Yeah, I'd think so too, but think about it, they have nothing to do with England, like the last line implies, nor do the Supremes, although that has a few Masonic implications. How's your English geography, I know the other two bands are from England, right?"

Deep in thought, he hesitantly held up a hand to quiet Sean's muttering, "I know a little about Wiltshire, I believe from a few of the Druidical essays in ARDA, it is the home to Shakespeare, the great spa of Bath, the Avebury Circle, a few giant hillside chalk carvings, and of course, Stonehenge."

That got Sean's attention, "Stonehenge, that was built by Druids! And it is one of the seven wonders of the world!"



"Well technically, no, it was built by a pre-Celtic tribe between 3200-1600 BCE, the Celts first arrived in 500 BCE, then the Romans, the Saxons, the Normans, the Vikings..."

"Yeah, yeah. Got it, got it. Well, if it is Stonehenge, then it's just so obvious, the band has to be the 'Rolling Stones'." They went over to the group's section and peered closely at it for any type of clue. It was just the band's name in large letters. Sean took out a

pocket tool and began hacking at the wall, knocking off big chips of paint a little under the group's name that was slightly raised. A dull metal panel soon began to appear, and it had a keyhole in it. He fished out the lock-pick tools and soon he had conquered the simple lock. Inside was a fuse-box and a small note card, wrapped in a plastic bag. He read the card out to Matt, who was crowding him.

Long have you searched, many obstacles you've bested
Perhaps it's time that you stopped and maybe rested
Through St. Olaf's bosom is where your path now lies
To the martyr's cold grave, under the mourning skies.

Sean copied the phrase down and returned the card to the panel and locked it. "I think that's all we need to do down here, let's put the doors back on and get out of here."

"Sean, we must be getting pretty close to the end of the verses in the master riddle, only two more verses are left out of the original ten. So, are we going to St. Olaf tonight?"

"After our last two run-ins with Denmad, I'm a bit worried, about openly going there. Those folks really have it in for us." Sean raised a finger, loosened his collar, and said, "No, we'd better wait until Thursday, since everyone will be busy writing papers for Friday classes. And there's something we need to do first."

"What's that?" Matt asked as they put the doors back into their frames as they found them.

"First, we should return that blasted book back to the Denmads, or it won't be safe to set foot on their campus. Or they'll come looking for us here and try to curse us again. I mean, I know that all Christians aren't whacko, but these Denmad guys have really gone off the deep end, and seem real dangerous." Suddenly his flashlight went off.

In the pitch dark, Matt casually asked with a tinge of worry, "Sean, what's wrong?"

"The batteries died. Do you remember the way out?"

"I think so, here hold my hand. Good! Your hand is awful clammy... Now come this way, Sean."

"Um, Matt," palpable concern trembled in Sean's voice.

"What, Sean?"

"Matt, both of my hands are on the flashlight... I'm not holding your hand..."

"AAAAAAAAGHHH!" Matt jumped, slipped and fell with a slimy splash somewhere in the dark.

Sean whispered venomously in the darkness, "Oh, sorry, just kidding, that was me. No hard feelings about creepy corridors, right? Come on, let's get outta here, naturally, watching out for that pit."



Chapter Twenty-Seven: On Matters of the Heart

They promptly mailed the Book of the Tree Vigil back to Jared on Monday, with no return address, of course, and for good measure, they charitably returned the original past treasure clues to their original position, to be fair to possible future explorers, in the morbid event that they died in a future death-trap. Thus, Matt volunteered to return the Druid pole to the oak tree, and Sean brought the cross back to the chapel, and the key to the crypt. There were only a few weeks left before the summer, and the college was beginning to press students to pay for their fall trimester already, much to Sean's obvious distress and discomfort.



Matt went off into the woods on a late afternoon to the Hill of Three Oaks, and then went off into the sedge grass meadow that was slowly beginning to fill in with oaks and maples, through reforestation. There in the middle of the savannah was Iain with his long blond hair tinged with red from the setting sun behind him. When Iain saw Matt his arm parted his cloak and waved to him.

"Iain, thanks for seeing me."

Iain smiled as only a sophomore could, "What can I do for you, Matt? Always glad to help out. Nice sunset, eh? Belenos tirelessly rises and set, and there was never a day he didn't return to do his job all over again. I wish people were so reliable."

"Yeah... Um, it's about my vigil..." Matt began.

Iain held up a finger, "What happens on your vigil is a mystery for you alone to contemplate, and

perhaps, comprehend."

Matt nodded, "Well, it's actually more guy-talk, on an issue of the heart, I've heard you're good on these matters."

Iain smiled, and touched the grass of the meadow around him, "I guess you could say I'm out standing in the field."

Matt chuckled with him for a moment, "There's this young lady I was seeing."

"A huh, a lady," Iain's face became unusually serious.

Matt searched for the right words, "Well she's just not who I thought she was."



"People rarely are, you know," Iain observed, and started walking in the tall grass. Matt followed.

"After what I know now, I can't look on her the same anymore."

A hint of nostalgic smile came to Iain's face, "A person often blossoms in college. She's still the same person she was before, you're just seeing more clearly some aspects of her. Is it something disturbing or wrong?"

Matt shook his head, "No, it's really quite magical. Divinely beautiful."

Iain stopped and clapped his thin arm around Matt's meaty shoulders, "Then this is a reason to rejoice, not regret!"

"But, I'm not sure I can ever express it to her now, or that she even knows it herself."



"What's the hurry?" Patting him on the back, and gazing at the sun, which had nearly passed out of view, Iain confided, "We rarely know or can admit the wonders in ourselves. It sometimes takes our friends to see that, since they often have a more objective and clear view of our many facets, and they believe in us, because of what they see, and help us to better self-awareness. By ourselves, we are a pale shadow of our potentiality, although there are moments when only we can be sure of our proper destiny. The greatest poets and lovers agree that they have never fully captured their feelings for their love in a single poem or statement, or even a volume of poems, but they do not cease to try. An unending process, love is."

A watery sad tear glistened on Matt's cheek, but he gallantly blurted, "But, I'm afraid that I'll pass on long before she will, and don't wish to inflict the pain of parting on her someday."

"I'm still young myself, Matt" Iain began, "But from many years of watching sitcoms and romantic movies, I can assure you that none of us knows how long we'll be in this world. There are no guarantees, my brother. None at all. You could die of an aneurysm or be hit by a bus tomorrow." He shook Matt by his shoulders, "Everyone who begins a romance knows that it will end someday in this

world, and we have little certainty about it continuing in another one. You must accept the possibility of sorrow when you go to seek joy, and you know not which will be in greater amount at the end."

Matt nodded, murmuring, "I guess we can treasure even the sad moments together."

"Yes, moments are moments," He handed a prairie flower to Matt, "You have to plan for the future, but experience each day as if it was your last, and if your heart has the luck to find a companion, take the chance you are offered, now, or it will be you with the heartbreak, for who knows how long! Both to stay or to leave has heartbreak eventually. You should consider which has hope of perhaps more significant pockets of happiness."



"That is good advice." Matt raised an arched eyebrow, "How come you don't have a significant other, now?"

"It's easier to dish out advice, than it is to follow it." Iain chuckled rising on his heels, "Ah, Matt, I'm still recovering from my own wounds on the battlefield of love. You know, we're not all as lucky as you, some of us have to wait a long time to find the right person again."

Matt volunteered, "I don't think there is a single soul mate out there for me, you know, that would be rotten odds of finding her. I think I could get along with most people, naturally, some more than others."

"I think so too, you have to choose dinner from the fish you catch, not the ones that swim by the boat." The sky was darkening to an imperial deep purple. "But I spend my time in preparation, not despair. Besides, with all these Druids to occupy my affections as an Archdruid, I have little time nowadays to go hunting for that type of friend."

"Married to your work, eh?" Matt poked him in the ribs.



"I guess so, it's the test of a vocation, you know, how much you love the drudgery of helping others." Iain looked deeply into Matt's eyes, "And I think you, Matt, are bound for great things in your own way, whether it be aiding a grove or a few individuals. Never forget to follow your heart, wherever it leads you."

Matt nodded and the two watched as the stars slowly appeared in the heavens over the next hour, then they turned back and went to write a paper. Iain turned, "Race you back? Loser buys Pizza!" without waiting for agreement, he was off on a great head-start, his cloak billowing behind him horizontally as he ungracefully pumped his arms in full speed towards Goodhue. Matt cursed and ran laughing behind him, protesting vehemently. Their cloaks acted amusingly like parachutes on drag-racers, slower the all out race to a turtle's pace as they churned into a strong nose-wind.

Chapter Twenty-Eight: The Bosom of the Earth Mother

A few days later on Thursday evening, Sean and Matt arrived at the St. Olaf campus on the other side of Northfield and parked the car. They were wearing cheap suits, sunglasses, a tie, a name tag: "Prospective Student, 2004" on their left breast, and a forced bewildered look on their face. Their hands were filled with brochures and a big campus map.

Sean pulled down his sunglasses, Miami Vice style, and looked at his companion, "Right listen up, Matt, I mean, John, here's a review of the clues to something hidden here on campus from the 10-verse master riddle from the constitution;"



Great are the Earthmother's charms to be sure
White, firm and round and full of allure.
Seek the middle path and where it will lead
Look under the stone of the zealot's last deed.

Then he looked up, removing his sunglasses to see better, "And there's that verse we discovered in the tunnels:"

Long have you searched, many obstacles you've bested
Perhaps it's time that you stopped and maybe rested
Through St. Olaf's bosom is where your path now lies
To the martyr's cold grave, under the mourning skies.

Matt whispered behind a hand to Sean, "Got it. Oh, and great idea, 'Alex', no one will ever guess our real identities. One problem we have is that we're on a Lutheran campus, it's probably full of references to martyrs." A small clutch of students suddenly walked by, and Matt blurted in pubescent voice, "Wow, the buildings are so really, European style, huh Alex?!"

"Great, 'John', good one. Just stay in character. Now I got this 3-D map at St. Olaf's website, so we're going to walk around this campus until we see some 'big bosom' here, all right?"

Matt wasn't really paying attention to him, and mumbled, "No problem, Alex, I think I've seen some already!"

Sean sighed and whacked him smartly over the head with a thick rolled-up course catalog for the stupid joke. They walked around for hours, inspecting a few busty nude statues, a bit too closely, thus drawing some curious stares from some whispering students. They had to turn down several helpful offers to guide them to the visitor's center, on the pretext that they wanted to see the 'real Olaf'. It was nearly six o'clock and all the hills, statues and dormitories were not giving them any indication of bosom-iness.



Addressing Sean, "You know, Alex, I'm beginning to feel like a big booby," Matt grouched, earning another whack from the catalog.

"That's the problem, stop looking at the women! We've looked everywhere here. Maybe we're going about this the wrong way. Where would a Druid turn to find the bosom of the Earth Mother?"

"Perhaps in the forest? We're rather partial to trees, after all, like squirrels. Perhaps some suggestive boles or galls on a tree trunk? We've already checked out all the buildings, anyway." Matt suggested, stretching a sore back.

"Okay, we have a few hours of daylight left, let's start in the largest forested areas, sticking close to established paths, suggested in the poems." They went over to Larson Hall by the big forest on the edge of the campus, thinking there might be a connection to one of the founders, Robert Larson, a bit set off from the bulk of the campus, and entered the forest and did a few turns and twists and broke



into a large clearing.

Matt's eyes widened and he nudged Sean. "Oh my Lord, look at the size of them!"

Indeed, before them two enormous silo-like white fuel or water tanks jutted up from the ground, both coming to a dome almost reaching the height of the enormous surrounding trees, that camouflaged them from all but the highest levels of the twin dormitory towers on campus. A well-worn path went right down the center gap of the two tanks. They both knew this had to be it, and they were not far from the final part of this clue. As they quickly strode towards the tanks, five figures stepped forward into the gap and seemed none to eager to step aside.

"Jared," Sean said despairingly, "How did you know we'd be here?"

Jared laughed, "I have my sources of divine inspiration too, you know, although yours of course are infernal and inferior. After that, it was easy to find you stumbling about our campus. This time you won't get away, 'third time's the charm' they say in your Pagan Ireland."

Sean parried back, "Looks like a few more have lost the faith since our last meeting."

"I can always recruit more, but let me introduce my 'staff' members." Jared waved and four members stepped forward tapping large oaken clubs into their other hands. "I 'hate' to remind you that the scriptures state, 'spare the rod, spoil the child,' so dear Brothers, we're here to teach you about the 'staff of life'... and 'death'. This time, running is futile, as we're on home turf this time, and I have more in the woods behind you."



"Actually, the whole Earth is our home and mother, we can never be far from either, merely out of sight of where we'd wish to be. We're always home," Matt lectured.

Sean poked him in the ribs, "Now is not a good time to be preaching Pagan doctrine."

Matt looked offended, "It isn't Pagan, it's more like generic worldly wisdom."

Jared chuckled, "It doesn't matter, none at all, for I've come up with a plan to wipe out all the Pagans in the world! Bwa ha haha ha!" Jared had obviously been taking laughing lessons from James Bond super-villains.

"Oh great, does every cult leader have a plan to take over the world?" Sean muttered. "I suppose we're going to have to hear it."

"Yes, of course, and mine is clever, we will go to the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean on summer break and bless their waters, and the rain cycle will carry the baptizing water all over the world, and Sister Gadala will back-mask the words of blessing into a Britney Spear's album during her summer internship at a record company, and we'll sublimate a message into the World Cup finals.."

"That's your plan? It sucks." Sean smirked. "Technically, you'd have to have them simultaneously occur to count officially, besides, not all Pagans understand English, what's to stop them being non-

Christian again, huh?"

"Silence, evil doers!" Jared was turning purple. "Ok, we're still working out the details. If English was good enough for Jesus and his disciples, then it is good enough for us!"

Sean gaped at that. Matt turned to his friend, "Sorry, do you have a better idea, Sean, than arguing with a maniac? We're in a right pickle here, huh? There might be more waiting in ambush in the woods, and my aikido is not Bruce-Lee-good."



Sean wiggled his fingers at Matt, "Can't you use some powerful Druid voodoo on them? I thought you Druid priests had the full power of nature at your command?"

Matt sighed, "Sean, once you realize how delicately balanced the forces of Nature are, you hesitate to disturb it, as the ramifications are unpredictable, like a butterfly in Mexico causing a tornado in South Carolina."

Despite the imminent danger, Sean was intrigued, "So you're saying that the safest person to give absolute

power to is..."

Matt smiled, "Yes, the one with absolutely no intention to use it. Sorry, Sean, do you have another idea?"

"No, just this," Sean yelled throwing up his arm in a Masonic wave, "Is there no help for uh, ... um ... a widower's son?!"

Most of them looked confused at the outburst. One of the Jared's staff members, Gestalt, rubbed his forehead and looked like he was about to say something, but was silenced by a stern look of Jared.

"What was that, Sean, that doesn't sound helpful?" Matt looked at him in a confused way, as the sun was setting on the western horizon.

Matt shrugged, "It was worth a shot. Can't you remember it?"

"Beats me, I've only got a photographic memory not a tape-recording ear."

Jared interrupted their bickering, "Well, Druids, it seems your hope sets with the sun, how fitting. Get them!"

The pair of Druids crouched, and the five Denmads sprang and came down the hill swinging their cudgels, and had made up half the distance when a powerful blast of light appeared halfway between the two parties, in the dusty gloom. A blond woman draped in blue and white robes hovered in the air, dazzling light radiating from her, a beatific visage looking down at the Denmads. Their jaws dropped, and the five beefy mob members fell to their knees, Gestalt in particular crying "Mary!" Jared pushed them half-heartedly, saying, "All right, maybe it is Mary, but only the Episcopalians and Catholics believe in her interventional divine ability, get up you backsliding heathens, we only answer to. . ."



Mary casually reached into her robes and pulled out a baby, and with a smirk held him out in both arms. Three Denmads cried out, "Oh, God! It's Jesus!" Blithely, the baby Jesus held an orb and scepter, acting quite regal for a nursing child. Gestalt plaintively cried out, "Are we groveling enough?!"

The baby turned his eyes to them saying disdainfully, "No, a little bit lower." Which they complied with zest, writhing deeper into the mud. Sean smirked thinking, this is what happens when you recruit gullible followers.



"Now, wait a minute," Jared accused, slapping his prostrate friends, trying to rescue the situation, "How do we know you're the real Jesus? We can't accept this apparition without calling to the National Convention of Real Miracles, headed by... " The baby reached into its robes and tossed out gently a scroll that floated to Gestalt who looked at it, and said; "signed by Jerry Falwell himself. It checks out, Brother Jared." Looking like he was having indigestion, Jared held up an accusing hand, and the baby threw his arms open, speaking in measured tones, turning his halo up a few notches brighter.

"Dear blessed children," Jesus said, "your leader is possessed by a vexious spirit for how else could he hate me, for I am without sin? He is obviously in urgent need of a new baptism," Jared's eyes widened, "Bind his mouth that he may not put poison in your ears, and take ye him away to the River Jordan on the other side of campus and cure him several times, just to be sure," and he brought his hands together and dropped his eyes in benediction, "Be at peace, for I will conclusively deal with the two hateful ones. Be quick! lest the afflicted one lose his very soul, from your slow action! I will wait for your return and reward you with special passes to the afterlife!" The five Denmads jumped up, sacked a struggling and sputtering Jared and gagged him with his own necktie, and forcefully dragged him kicking off into the forest, his eyes furious. The floating figures smiled and bobbed once, twice and dissolved into a mist, that in turn disappeared in a puff in the near-darkness of post-dusk. Matt thought he saw the quickest of winks as she departed, taking the angelic musical chorus with her.

Sean looked up at a bemused Matt, "What the hell was that wink? What's that look on your face?"

Matt said dreamily, "Mary thinks I'm hot!"

Sean gaped and yelled at him, "What?! Has your ego no limits? I don't even want to contemplate the theological problems implicit in that statement?" He glared suspiciously at Matt who was chuckling, "Hey.... What do you know? You're not going to tell me that was some type of hologram, it looked pretty real!"

"That would be telling." Matt put on a pouty face, "Now, I can't go revealing all the secrets of the Druids can I? Perhaps your faith evoked a response to your Mason's distress call? Besides, I'm not a Christian Druid, so it must have been you, Sean, you backsliding atheist, you. I'm quite impressed, I didn't know you had it in you, Sean!" Matt patted him loudly on the back, while Sean looked at his own hands, as if expecting to find a stigmata or a call-button for God, with a quizzical expression plastered on his face. Matt distracted him, "Perhaps it's just the poppy flowers all around this field?" he said pointing at the various blooming plants around them. "Or some swampgas, ergot poisoning, or alien brain implants? Besides, who cares, we're alive, now we have to



go find a martyr's grave and a treasure, don't we? I'm glad the grave didn't turn out to be ours!" Sean was pulled staggering with indecision by a chuckling Matt along the trail between the tanks, his mind unable to accept that something potentially supernatural had just happened there.



After cautiously turning a few twists of the trail, they saw a large stone set beside the trail. Matt bent down and pushed off a pile of dirt and leaves and read, "Here fell the body of Jeremiah Henderson, servant of God, of the Lutheran Faith, who died of cold and exposure here January 18, 1859 on the way to a parishioner. Rest in Peace." They nodded at each other and Matt dropped his gear bag and began rummaging and found a collapsible crowbar and made a fulcrum from a nearby piece of deadwood. Sean inserted more logs to prop it up as the stone was slowly lifted.

"You know," grunted, Matt, "I knew we were going to be eventually desecrating somebody's grave by the time this was over. What the heck is Fisher trying to teach us, by all these puzzles and breaking of the law?"

"Technically, this is just a memorial, not a grave," Sean said, loosening his tie and holding the rock, "Pretty amazing the kind of dedication some people have for their brothers in faith, huh?" Meanwhile Matt sought another good position. Eventually the stone was off on the side, propped up on two rolling logs, and the hot and profusely sweaty pair were digging in the dirt underneath. The little shovel soon hit something metallic and Matt soon pulled a little cash-box, handed it to Sean, who picked the lock in seconds and opened it. Another plastic-coated notecard was inside with another cryptic verse.

"Here we go again, another cryptic message, I'll bet you Matt, we're down to the final stretch." He read it out.

To catch the keeper, know ye thy plants and nations
With quick words you'll stop his sly incantations.
So seek he who resides at the end of the speckled span.
Bring the four neighbour's herbs to bind the flight of Man

An owl hooted in the dark woods and the wind picked up. "Hoo boy, Sean, wouldn't you know it, it's another brain buster!" Matt said in good humor, returning the card to the box. He reburied it, and rolled the stone over the hole, and then rolled the supports out of the way, as the stone fell more or less into place, adjusting it afterwards a little with the crowbar. They tidied up, and then furtively snuck back to the car, without incident, and made it back across the city to Carleton's campus; ready to embark on the last stage of their adventure.

END OF PART SEVEN OF EIGHT

Tune in the next issue at Spring Equinox, for the long-awaited final adventures of Sean and Matt.





Realtor Receives Credit Card Issued To a Tree

From NBC4 TV News, December 13, 2005
<http://www.nbc4.tv/news/5529720/detail?subid=10101581>

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif. EGary More, a realtor from West Hollywood, was fed up and furious at receiving so many unwanted credit card applications, NBC4's Doug Kriegel reported.

He tried calling Visa and Mastercard, but when that failed, he finally wrote on a credit card application the words: "Never Waste A Tree" and mailed it back to Chase credit cards.

That's when things got strange.

Chase Visa actually sent him a credit card with the name "Never Waste Tree" imprinted on it."

As More was trying to tell Chase to stop wasting trees by sending out so many unsolicited credit card applications, he was surprised to receive the legitimate credit card.

But could he use it?

"I guess so," More said. "I wouldn't personally do it, but yes, I guess I could."

Chase Visa declined to talk to NBC4 about the card they issued to Mr., or was it Ms., Don't Waste Tree, but consumer advocates were not surprised.

"They will give a card basically to anyone and everyone who sends an application in," CALPIRG director Steve Blackledge said. "There's very little risk with new bankruptcy laws at the federal level. Consumers are at risk. They're not.

Finally Tuesday, More did what he said was the only sensible thing.

He cut up the card.



Pantheacon 2006: February 17-20



Welcome to the twelfth annual PantheaCon, our wonderful gathering of the tribes. We are the only annual pagan convention in the western US. The Bay Area is the mother lode for pagans and nature religion ideas. Again we have the best events and most knowledgeable speakers that the West and beyond has to offer. We have many well-known published authors along with unpublished local talent.

Programming starts Friday afternoon at 2:00 pm and continues through Monday afternoon till 5:30 pm. We will have up to 13 different simultaneous workshops going on during the day. At night we will have up to six different programs plus postings for parties and possibly some discussion groups that can reconvene at night in some "extra" rooms.

\$75. This includes all events for the entire conference. \$35 for a full day, \$20 for an evening only. Double Tree Hotel 2050 Gateway Place, San Jose, CA. The schedule of events hasn't been posted yet but will be on their web site at <http://www.ancientways.com/pantheacon/>

Pantheacon Art Show

Pantheacon, Northern California's premiere indoor gathering for Alternative Religions, is expanding display and sales opportunities for Pagan artists by adding an Art Show this coming year (2006)! The purpose of the PantheaCon Art Show will be to exhibit and sell one-of-a-kind works of art dealing with or depicting Pagan, Heathen, Wiccan, or Mythological themes. Here is a brief description of the Art Show and how it works:

What is Art?

The PantheaCon art show is not juried. All manner of works of art are acceptable. This could include paintings, sketches, drawings, etchings, jewelry, decorated clothing, sculpture, etc. All Art must be original and one-of-a-kind.

Displaying/Entering artwork

Every artist displaying in the Art Show must be a member of the convention, or be represented by an agent that is an attending member. Each artist (or her or his agent) is responsible for bringing their Art piece(s) to the convention, unpacking, and hanging the piece(s) (or arranging their table display) and packing and removing their Art after the end of the Show. Please note: We will *not* accept mail-in art.

Actual panel and table space locations are not preassigned. Space will be assigned on a first-arrival basis. Our panels are pegboard. Artwork is hung by pegboard hooks and bulldog clips (which we provide), unless the piece has attached hangers which will fit the hooks. Two-dimensional works must have surfaces that are not easily damaged by hanging. This means pieces should be mounted and matted. If you feel your work is valued at more than \$100.00, we strongly recommend you frame or shrink-wrap each piece for protection. If you intend to hang a business card holder, it should not interfere with bid sheets. Three-dimensional pieces: Display cases for jewelry recommended; every piece should be shown in a protective display case if at all possible.

Once a piece is entered into the show, you cannot change its conditions of sale such as minimum bid price or NOT FOR SALE status. A piece is considered to be entered when the Art Show staff signs the control sheet at-con, accepting the work.

Spaces & fees

The fee for each exhibition panel space (4'x4') is \$10.00. Table space (3'x4') or 1/2 panel space (2'x4') is \$5.00. Space is reserved on a first come, first reserved basis, and is limited. We won't reserve it

until we've received the signed/dated entry form and payment. (Reserved means that we're expecting your artwork, not that a specific location has been assigned. We don't do that.)

This year is our first for offering Art Show space so the space available is very limited until we see what kind of response we get. Reservations will be accepted until Monday, February 6, 2006, or until we run out of available display space. After that, artists will be placed on a waiting list, notified, and any fees will be returned to them with that notification.

Reserved panel or display space that has not been claimed at the con by 12 Noon on Saturday February 18, 2006 will be made available to any waiting artists, and fees from them will be due at that time. We do not make refunds for unclaimed space.

Every artist who is exhibiting within the Art Show must sign/date and return the entry form with all fees; this includes artists who share display space. Artists residing in the State of California must list their Taxpayer ID number (usually your Social Security Number) on both the entry form and control sheets. We can't distribute money to artists from any at-con sales without this.

Payment for sales

Artists will be paid within six (6) weeks after the Convention for art that was sold. No payments will be made at the convention. To assist artists in safeguarding their legal rights as creators of their works, Pantheacon will provide each artist or exhibitor with a record of all purchaser's names and addresses. No payments will be made without a Taxpayer ID number on file. Checks are to the Artist's legal name as shown on the control sheet, unless directed otherwise in writing.

Pantheacon collects 10% of the total sales of each artist as its commission for the display and sales of the work. Pantheacon also collects the required sales tax.

Abandoned art

At the end of the show, any artwork not claimed by the artist or the bidder will be considered to be abandoned. We will attempt to contact the artist or buyer, however if we are unsuccessful it will be disposed of at the discretion of the Art Show Director.

Other stuff

To protect artists' copyrights, no photography of any type will be allowed in the Art Show without prior approval of the Art Show Director; and a written release of responsibility for Pantheacon from each artist whose work may be seen must be obtained and on file in the Art show.

Entering the show

To apply for entry in the Pantheacon Art Show, contact Kitty VonBraskat-Crowe, Art Show Director, via either electronic [kittycrowe at aol.com] or postal mail [Pantheacon Art Show Director, c/o Ancient Ways Store, 4075 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94609], with your postal address. You will be sent a packet containing the full Art Show Rules, an entry/membership form, control sheet(s), bid sheets, etc., and your artist number. Complete the entry form and mail it, along with payment, to the address on the form.

If you have any questions about the rules, or have any special requirements, please contact the Art Show Director (me) as directed above.

We hope that many of our excellent Pagan artists will take advantage of this new opportunity to display and sell their original artwork.

BB

Kitty VonBraskat-Crowe



Journey to Avalon: An Introduction to the Celtic Spiritual Mysteries

Led by Sharynne NicMhacha
Saturday February 11th, 2:00-4:00 pm
\$25- 35 sliding scale registration
Unicorn Books, 1971 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA, (617) 876-4448

In this workshop we will learn about the Celtic Spiritual realms or "Otherworld" (known in Britain as Avalon to Annwfn), and in Ireland as Tir nanOg. The otherworld was a place of great beauty and power, and was considered the source of healing, skill and knowledge. Learn about the Aes Sidhe, the original spiritual inhabitants of the Otherworld, and how to develop right relationship with them. We will also explore ancient texts describing these divine realms and participate in a guided meditation to the Well of Wisdom.

Sharynne NicMhacha is a Celtic priestess, scholar and bard of Scottish and Irish Ancestry, a direct descendant of "Fairy Clan" MacLeod. She has studied Celtic languages and mythology through Harvard University, and has presented work in Scotland, Ireland and the U.S.
www.mobiusbandwidth.com/dns.html



The Celtic Fairy Tradition

Led by Sharynne NicMhacha
Saturday April 15th, 3:00-5:00 pm
\$35
Circles of Wisdom 90 Main Street, Andover, MA, (978) 474-8010

Join us for this inspiring workshop as we learn about the Celtic Fairy Faith, the location and nature of the 'Sidhe' or Fairy Folk, fairy power and etiquette, and ways to develop and deepen our relationship with the inhabitants of the fairy mounds. We will participate in a ceremony to honour the Sidhe and journey into a fairy mound.

The Celtic peoples had a very complex relationship with the spirits of the Otherworld, originally known as the Aes Side, the 'People of the Fairy Mounds.' These spirits could grant blessings or provide obstacles, and folk accounts clearly demonstrate that they desire harmonious, respectful relationships with the world of humans. We will learn about their dwelling places, their likes and dislikes, their code of ethics, and explore ways to understand their culture and live in harmony with the Spirit World.



Queen of the Night: Intensive on the Power of the Celtic Moon Goddess

Led by Sharynne NicMhacha
Nine Wednesdays, 7-9:30 pm, 3/22 and 29, 4/5,
19 and 26, and 5/3, 10, 17 and 24

Unicorn Books, Cambridge, MA

Nine fold intensive workshop on the myths, symbols and transformative energies of the moon and the Moon Goddess in Celtic and other spiritual traditions. From stone sanctuaries and shamanic rituals, to druidic lore and Arthurian priestesses, the moon plays a powerful role in the spiritual traditions of Ireland and Britain. Required text: Queen of the Night: Rediscovering the Celtic Moon Goddess by Sharynne NicMhacha.



A Druid Missal-Any

Oimelc, when the Sun is half way between the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox will occur on Feb. 3rd at 3:28 p.m. Pacific Standard Time when the Sun will reach 15 degrees of Aquarius, or by the alternative calculation when the Sun will reach 16 degrees 18 minutes declination on Feb. 3rd at 6:28 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. It is said that on the eve of Oimelc if you leave out strips of cloth of ribbons tied to a tree or to the door Bride will bless them as She passes by, giving it healing properties. Try doing that and using the cloth as a compress next time you have a headache or a cold and write in with your results.

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This is the end of the Oimlec issue



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Webmastered by Mike Scharding

