

C.Φ.R.D. Biquarterly

Connexus Of Reformed Druids

A publication for the Reformed Druids of North America – RDNA

December 21, 2023

51 Geimredh, 61 Y.R.

Volume 4

Issue 3

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Midwinter Solstice



Photo: Council Fires Overlook at Oheyawahi, a very sacred place in Mendota Heights, Minnesota that translates to "A Hill Much Visited" in the Dakota language. In volume four of this newsletter we will gain Awareness of seven tribes who were here before us to honor their legacy.

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The Seven Council Fires of the Dakota

Honoring those who were here before us.

This section of the newsletter was added after great deliberation. In the previous three volumes of this newsletter, three different stone circles have featured on the front cover: The Druid's Circle at Carleton College, the Meditation Garden at Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley, and a stone circle in dedication to Oak Savanna Park in Elk River – all in Minnesota where the newsletter editor lives. My greatest concern was cultural appropriation of a modern Native American stone circle for use as a cover image on a *druidic* publication.

I am in fact, part Native American. It shows rather prominently in my multiethnic appearance, but my indigenous ancestry does not include any local tribes, and I'm positively certain of that. A key factor is that my family is disconnected from their ancestral traditions, which are still living traditions today. Therefore I can't just start exploring or practicing them unless I was first invited to do so from within those communities. My ancestors had their indigenous identity stripped away when they assimilated into American culture and religion generations ago. Their cultural erasure was likely the only way to survive, but I digress.

The stone circle on the newsletter cover page is located in Mendota Heights at a sacred place called *Oheyawahi*, meaning "A Hill Much Visited" in the Dakota language. It overlooks the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, which they call *Bdote*. In their oral traditions, that is at the tip of *Wita Tanka*, or "Big Island" (which is marked as Pike Island on our maps) where the ancestors of the Dakota descended from the sky. Bdote and Mendota both linguistically refer to the confluence of the rivers, with Mendota either as a dialectical difference or a spelling variation that stuck after it was first transcribed into writing.

Over four months of meditating on *not* choosing that site as a cover feature, I sought out the input of local indigenous voices. I also found various resources provided from their perspective. I learned more about my own state's history, including re-learning about the Dakota War of 1862, which I never would have learned about *at all* except after taking an elective course on Minnesota history back when I was in college. In the end, I decided there *is* a culturally sensitive way to include this stone circle as a feature of volume four of this newsletter.

The Dakota people *want* more people to learn about this place, about their history, about their voices. From our perspective as druids, we understand the importance of sacred landscapes. We have our own ways of expressing reverence for the land, and particularly places of power. As a druid however, I am **not** going to perform druid rituals at their stone circle. That *would* be culturally appropriative. It is far better to show you this sacred space so that it can be inwardly appreciated, so that we can all learn something from it, even if we are thousands of miles apart, and so that we can therefore honor the

legacy of those who have called this land their ancestral home, long before us. The Seven Council Fires stone circle is actually a ring of limestone benches. All are invited to sit there when they are not in use. All are invited to Oheyawahi for reflection and learning.

One other note of importance is some terminology worth learning. This sentence is the only place you will see me use the word *Sioux* to refer to these tribal nations. Most people aren't aware that it is a disparaging term, and not even a word in the Dakota language. It is an Ojibwe word meaning *Snakes*. Dakota, and the dialectical variations Lakota and Nakota mean *Friends* or *Allies*. This section of the newsletter may sometimes collectively use Dakota since it is the most common dialectical variation, though there is another term that some of today's tribal nations are pushing for people to learn and use: *Oceti Sakowin Oyate*, or *Seven Council Fires People*. (Source: [Lakota Times](#))

This article's featured Oceti Sakowin Nation: Mdewakantonwan

The most well-known indigenous nation around what is today the Twin Cities area of Minnesota are the Mdewakanton oyate (People of the Spiritual Water). The area they called home overlapped with neighboring allies of the Seven Council Fires, but extended up into central Minnesota including Lake Mille Lacs. Mille Lacs is also called Bde Wakan, or Spirit Lake, from which flows the "spirit river," Wakan Wakpe, which was insensitively mistranslated into English as the Rum River.



In 1851 the Treaty of Traverse Des Sioux was signed, which everyone knew was a very bad deal for the Dakota nations. The terms of the treaty covered almost half of Minnesota (in terms of today's state borders), and forced all natives (who hadn't assimilated) into narrow strips of reservations along the Minnesota River in western Minnesota. The treaty detailed funds for adapting to an American way of living, including allocations for homes, farm equipment, schools, and other annuity payments which would continue for 50 years.

One very critical problem with the treaty, is that there was a third document that the Dakota, the Missionaries, and interpreters thought was just another copy of the treaty to sign, but was actually an illegal proviso to benefit white traders. There was zero conversation about this third document, now called the Trader's Papers. It allowed any white traders who had claims on unpaid Dakota debts to intercept the annuity payments directly. Thus, when the Dakota went to the Agency office of their reservation to collect annuity payments or promised provisions, many of them were turned away empty handed. The treaty itself was a bad deal to begin with, and it was an even worse deal because the Dakota were tricked into signing the Trader's Papers. Of all the treaties that stole land from the natives in Minnesota Territory, this one was the worst. This would quickly cause tensions to rise...

[Source: *Mni Sota Makoce – The Land of the Dakota*, Westerman & White, 2012]

News of the Groves

News from Carleton Grove (Minnesota)

Autumn of Lingering Remembrances by Edward of Northfield

Dramatic portents opened a season worth remembering: a huge orange blue moon that dwarfed the backlit peaks of human works and a blessed meeting with a river otter one moony night (so cute in its galumphing gallop!). A winding way of days doubled this season with false starts and stops along its length. The lingering heat of summer was broken by the descent of cool clouds that collected and hovered. For weeks they graced us with steady, pleasant conditions and dispensed sighing showers that slowly restored the forests and refilled the streams to their neglected course.

Too late to retrieve the health of stunted crops, however, the sudden end of airborne vapors led to hasty harvests. Grains rattled pitifully in hollow husks under the irony of laughing winds and lusty light. Vegetables swelled to ripeness simultaneously in a surge of lush leavings as assenting trees coincided in their turn to slumber. Locust and walnut, becoming bizarre brown against breadths of green, raced to be the first yellowed and the first bared; impatient maples their colors blared. Under the warmth of slanting sun, diva birches donned their gilded garb alone. As weeks wore on, the chestnut and elm eventually tarnished, leaving oak and larch the last to complete the coppery change.

Slow life's longevity detailed this season's refusal to surrender, a set of alterations so lethargic that we savored its every flavor. Perpetual birdsong greeted glowing grenadine dawns. Dancing winds swirled through nostalgic sleeveless honeyed afternoons, and swift citrus sunsets shone in shimmering waters. Buzzing insects traced the scented garnish of lingering wildflowers until Samhain. Shocking November mowing sheared short mint-dark grass. And in the garden, lingering vines' feeble fruits I found ripening until at last, the frost broke forth halfway through the season.

Likewise defying this year's rondo of grief repeated and remembered, abounding life bounded abundantly through brush. Herds of uncounted deer made roads unsafe at dusk, and silly squirrels never ceased their playful spats. Indolent owls stalked carefree rodents, and restless raccoons rustled leaves. The Grove resounded with their thrashing steps. True to tradition, the Mother Grove received one snowfall before students departed for their long break, but this year only one. They were left a portrait of a British autumn: glassy gray skies, brown bare branches, and vivid, verdant turf below. As laden clouds lower, lazy squirrels and sloppy nests signal their belief in a light winter coming.

*This 60th Anniversary Samhain was a raucous affair with a huge crowd following a coincidental "Spirit of the Prairie" procession to discover active Druids. We received a whopping 15 initiates professing the Tenets of First and Second Orders. The spirit festival also came timely for grief near the Mother Grove. This year has brought persistent partings from friends and relatives and colleagues and loves returning to Earth Mother's embrace with the silent suddenness of falling leaves. May all wounded hearts find rest and solace this Season of Sleep. Peace.

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News from Oakdale Grove (Minnesota)

Our December casual meetup was pointed and productive. We gathered at a Caribou Coffee and discussed the **Order of Bradán Feasa (OBF)** a non-clergy side order for the RDNA in development, and Oakdale Grove's training program being written to offer guidance in the ways of *general* and *Reformed* Druidry. Read more about the OBF program further ahead in the newsletter!

Oakdale Grove held our Midwinter Solstice ritual on a nice warm day. It felt like late October, March, or early April rather than December. With the strong El Niño weather patterns we're in, the lakes have tentatively iced over, but geese, ducks, and migratory birds are still here. We had some snow in October, a little in November, and it's all gone already. We've had plenty of rain though. We had a lovely ceremony together, and we had one of our Second Orders practice the liturgy which went very well.



After the ceremony, we stayed and chatted rather *at length* compared to other winter ceremonies. The colder the weather, the shorter the ritual has been a bit of an unspoken tradition. I distributed some Solstice greeting cards to the attendees made from hand-pressed lokta paper, embedded with flower petals and mugwort leaves. The envelopes were closed with wax seals bearing Oakdale Grove's first great seal, with the embossing touched up with silver ink. When we were all packed up and ready to depart, *Tree Woman* bestowed us all with produce from the back of her car. It was like an impromptu mini farmers' market, but they're *giving* the food away!

News from Bun an Locha Protogrove (Wisconsin)

We are pleased to announce the foundation of a new protogrove in eastern Wisconsin! Bun an Locha Protogrove is in the process of establishing itself in the vicinity of Fond du Lac, currently with two members since its founding date on Samhain! The protogrove has already established a constitution on the simplified form of the Two Basic Tenets (Nature is good!). Druids of eastern Wisconsin, unite!

When the Morrigan Calls an Atheist

By Jax K. – Oakdale Grove

I consider myself an atheist druid. I do not believe in the existence of any gods, and I have a strong aversion to organized religion in the face of cultural Christianity and the US's modern political climate regarding the separation of church and state, or lack thereof. I won't lie about my still holding those aversions, including to those who consider themselves Christian druids—identities that seem at odds, given Christianity's historic colonialism and its methodical destruction of indigenous cultures worldwide. But I have Reformed Druidry to thank for my efforts at pluralistic acceptance. I thank, too, my involvement in the LGBTQ+ community. A quote within the *Bisexual Manifesto* from *Anything That Moves: Beyond the Myths of Bisexuality* (1990) sticks with me: "There are as many definitions of bisexuality as there are bisexuals." For the bisexual community, this frame of mind is an important one in the face of historical, systemic, and even internalized biphobia, where one is continually told to "prove" their bi-ness, that having preferences means they aren't "actually" bi, or that marrying someone who isn't the same gender as you means it's a "straight-passing" relationship. Using this understanding, I am able to move much more quickly past questioning one's labels and into acceptance of and trust for the ways one understands themselves. If a druid can be a Christian, then maybe an atheist can devote themselves to a god...



And so what does an atheist druid do when The Morrigan calls? What does the call of The Morrigan sound like to someone who wants absolutely nothing to do with gods, nor to be associated with theolatriy, even if the gods invoked in the RDNA can be interpreted as aspects of nature or Jungian archetypes in the collective unconscious of humanity? Can the gods call to an atheist in the first place? These are questions I ask even myself after having been initiated as an Acolyte of the Order of The Morrigan this past October.

I knew very firmly when I began my druidic studies in May of 2022 that I would be approaching my practice as an atheist. I sought plainly to learn about druidry, celebrate the High Days, and enjoy nature in ways that I used to growing up. Studying druidry, like some study Buddhist philosophy, was a way for me to integrate my desire for intellectual growth, my care for my health, and my political activism. Intertwining all three helps me to live my life holistically and intentionally. My druidic practice consists of learning about plants, animals, and various religions and their gods not as a way to collect knowledge, but to understand the worldviews and lessons that cultures both living and dead have to

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teach. As a result, I deepen my empathy for others and for myself. I find studying divination to be especially enjoyable, and I even find it useful as an atheist. I think that suspending disbelief is a healthy practice, if not a pleasant diversion. I also see it as an aid to a busy mind. Divination can be helpful in not only listening to one's intuition, but finding focus where there is chaos. When I am feeling emotionally distraught or when I am struggling to make a choice, I love doing Ogham readings. Whether picking a singular stave or placing a full spread, my divinations help me surrender decision fatigue and cold logic in favor of the imagination, creativity, and serendipity.



Thus, I believe The Morrigan first began “calling” me when my Elder Ogham stave fell off my altar in October 2022. Without noticing, it snapped beneath my boot in my rush out the door. I struggled to attach meaning to what had happened – a fun exercise I set upon myself. Elder is associated with protection, healing, cycles of death and rebirth, and even sacrifice. Had my Elder stave “protected” me from something? Had I or would I sleight someone, causing the “death” of a relationship? What else might be dying and be reborn, or even interrupted in that process, as symbolized by the break? Was there a sacrifice I was being asked to make? I did not know, and no answer came. I replaced the stave in my collection and burned the broken, unfixable stave as part of my sacrifice later that Samhain. Things were quiet in the months ahead, but then over and over again, the names and their various spellings associated with The Morrigan would appear before me in reading, in

passing, in meeting people. And in my nature walks, I kept spying plants that I would later discover to be associated The Morrigan, often in unexpected places or forms I did not immediately recognize until using an identification app. Chiefly among those was Elder, both red and black varieties native to the US, as well as hawthorns and nightshades.

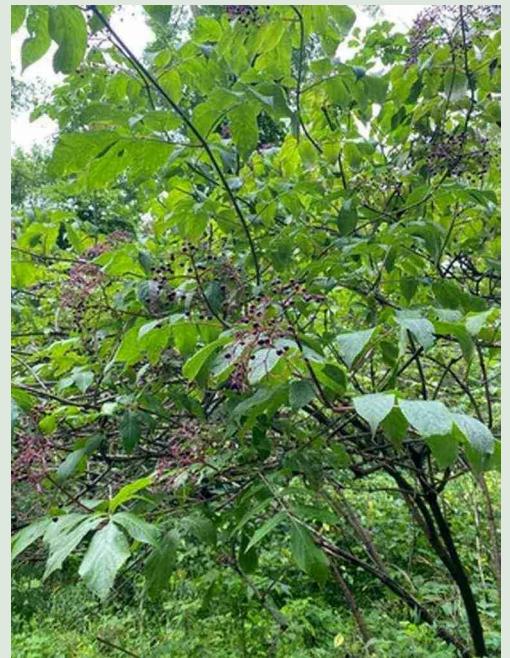
All the while, and since beginning my druidic studies in May 2022, I was dealing very strongly with some grief. I'd hit the point where existing in my grief was beginning to weigh on me and frustrate me. I did not know how to move on. I did not know how to stop wallowing or what actions to take to make a difference. I was ready to enter that big “acceptance” stage that everyone talked about, but which I'd only experienced fleetingly or only logically but not emotionally. Studying druidry was one of the ways I hoped to find some method of managing my grief and finding joy again. It was working, but the grief still held me quite tightly moving into 2023.

When I finally caught the pattern of The Morrigan's names and plants appearing in my life, I began my

research. What could those appearances mean? Why was my brain picking up on those patterns? What tied them together?

In the three dark moons since donning my devotional pendant, I am, naturally, still seeking the answers to those questions. I find these exercises of logic and imagination more entertaining than anything serious to pursue, but I can at least describe what I've gotten out of the experience thus far. A simple start to an answer might be that I relate to the ideas, the images, the lore, and the messages of The Morrigan. She is a peacemaker as much as She is a warmaker. Through Her many incarnations, She has survived and overcome adversity and grief of all kinds. She knows what it means to be more than how others perceive you. I can appreciate what She has come to mean for women, queer individuals, and survivors of all kinds in the modern era, and it is that mutability of Her image between the past and in the present that also draws me to Her. Transformation and change, including to those of the current times, seems right up Her alley. Hers are qualities I would like to see in myself.

When Elder appeared to me on my walks for the third time earlier this year, that's when I decided I would do something out of character for how I viewed myself as an atheist druid – I would join The Order of the Morrigan. I was already familiar with the liturgy John the Verbose had composed a few years prior, and with that third, final sign, I felt that it was the push towards the threshold of change I was looking for in my grief. I would use my initiation as a rite of passage beyond my grief, to work to make change, to fight to pull myself out of where I had been wallowing so I could move on. As serendipity would have it, the day of October's new moon was also the day of the partial annular eclipse for Minnesota, and John the Verbose was kind enough to allow the ritual he planned to simply be my initiation that day. All around, it felt not only appropriate but auspicious to have my initiation take place during a time of introspection and new beginnings. I went into it not just hoping it would be the hallmark of change in my life, but with the intention of making it the moment of change.



I'd spent the month prior making my preparations. I strung my devotional pendant, I wove my sling from hemp, I collected three black sling stones from the orange agate-speckled shores of the Mississippi near my apartment, and collected the Waters of Death there, too. I procured some of my second-favorite elderberry wine that John would consecrate as the Waters of Life. And I fashioned the first iteration (of three – I'm bad at sewing) of my vestments if The Morrigan accepted me. I awoke the morning of the ritual to the calls of the crow family that had moved into the forest across the street, and it was taken to be a sign.

The day was a little chilly and overcast, occluding our views of the eclipse for a majority of the time, but it meant more to me that the grove officers were all there, standing in solidarity with me. But as serious as the mood of the ritual is meant to be, it is difficult not to laugh as you crush a tomato in your fist with your grovemates in the splash zone...

When John asked for a sign of the Morrigan's acceptance, he made an acorn divination while the calls of bluejays (my favorite corvid) rang out in the distance, heralding new beginnings, commitments, and the responsibilities therein.

And I did, indeed, feel a renewed sense of purpose, per the liturgy's closing admonitions. I can say with certainty that while I still have good and bad days with my grief, I feel resolute in efforts to curate a more hopeful future for myself in spite of my grief.

My first few months as an Acolyte have been devoted to my research of The Morrigan. As an Acolyte, I am seeking to deepen my relationship with Her and what She represents. I have learned a lot. Studying what She means to peoples of the past and present has allowed me to learn about myself, too. "Shadow work" or self-reflexivity seems to be an important part of devotion to The Morrigan. It is something that comes naturally to me, which doesn't mean it's easy, but it's affirming to know that something I work hard to practice is also something well-practiced by The Morrigan's devotees.

And to be sure, I am still an atheist. However, I would be remiss not to treat my studies and engagement with The Morrigan's lore and community with the same level of respect and seriousness that Her believers do. As an Acolyte of The Morrigan, I see myself as a student to Her teachings, rather than a worshiper. And if I were to become a Priest to Her Order someday, I might be more likely to consider myself a representative of Her interests and values.

I'm certain that as I continue my studies and deepen my relationship with The Morrigan that I may come to new realizations, and they are something I welcome. I am in a continual state of learning and becoming. I think atheists get a bad rep for being killjoy skeptics, but I see myself as just being deeply rooted in reality, working to keep an open mind for things that cannot or have yet to be explained, and trying to have more than a little fun while I'm at it.

Peace to the heavens!

Update on the Order of Bradán Feasa Training Program

The Druid Training Program being developed by members of Oakdale Grove (and friends beyond) is something that the newsletter last discussed in detail way back in *C.O.R.D. Biquarterly* volume & issue 1.1 on the Autumnal Equinox of 2020. The program draft has been referenced in the links page ever since, but I only realized now that there has been no meaningful update on our progress in the newsletter itself. Fast forward to over three years later, it's time for an update!

Lots of people come to the RDNA asking if we have a study program like most other modern Druid orders do. We tell them to go talk to a tree, which sends them away. Yes there's a little hyperbole in that cynical sentiment, but we might also tell them that in the RDNA, each Druid's path to Awareness is their own responsibility, seeking learning where *they* deem fit. We might tell them some book recommendations and send them a link to the 900 page PDF of *A Reformed Druid Anthology*. They might be looking for something more affordable than the Druid orders that have a paywall which isn't always feasible for the prospective student of Druidism.

Another issue is that much of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu perceives itself to be out of bounds in legislative authority to vote on establishing an official training program. Even if the Council were to decide to vote on *developing* such a program, it would certainly be even harder to get a consensus on which content would go into it to make it a comprehensive or meaningful program. However, as of 1971, the council *interpreted* a general understanding that individual Groves have the autonomy to decide how their fellowships would operate, which would include establishing their own training program. So that's what Oakdale Grove decided to establish: a training program that could be opted into by other Groves in the RDNA. By extension, the training program embraces distance learning as well, intended to cater to solo Druids as well as to local mentees.

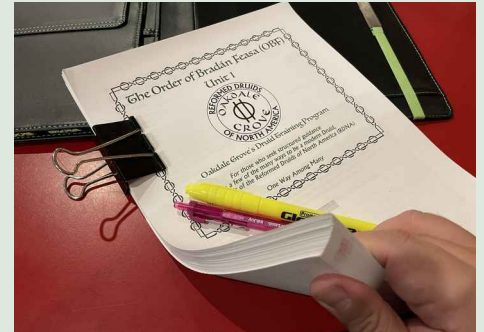
In the RDNA even at the *Grove* level, a formal training program is still a bit antithetical to the spirit of the Reformed Druid movement. Its mere existence would undoubtedly give the false impression that "*we're telling you to learn it this way,*" which is an unfortunate paradox. Knowing that the *printed word* can have a fossilizing affect on druidic knowledge, the study program draft emphasizes that we do not wish for the program to become dogma, and states with the motto that it is but *one way among many* to reflect the First Tenet of Reformed Druidism. We encourage all program participants to keep learning on their own, as well as to learn from other Druid orders if they like. The APA citations and references should also be able to serve as a recommended reading list (though we point out the questionable Victorian writings cited when prudent). We're hoping this program will provide enough information to give someone a good sense of direction in their own Druid path, and to inspire them to seek further Druidisms on their own.

The Order of Bradán Feasa

Bradán Feasa in Irish mythology was the Salmon of Knowledge who had eaten the three hazelnuts that contained all the knowledge of the universe. Finn McCool had burned his thumb while cooking the fish. By soothing his thumb in his mouth, he instantly gained all that knowledge. Thus to inspire a quest for knowledge, we have established the Order of Bradán Feasa (OBF for short) in the RDNA for those who complete the training program, regardless of the students' existing level of initiation.

The OBF training program will be in three units. Unit 1 is the coursework on Druidry. Oakdale Grove members are copyediting the Unit 1 workbook *this month*, which is now in its 174 page *second draft*.

Unit 2 is Mike's 2014 ARDA Study Course, which will have an exam. Upon completion of Units 1 & 2 with a 90% passing score or higher on the exam, the participants will be *inducted* into the Order of Bradán Feasa and will receive a digital certificate. Since it is a side-order of the RDNA, there is no need for a ceremony of consecration. The OBF does not constitute any level of ordination, but Oakdale Grove would have [local] candidates for Second Order complete the program prior to consecration to that rank.



Unit 3 would be an *optional* clergy prep course and Grove Governance Guide (GGG). Many students, especially distance learners, might not want to learn how to *run a Grove* if they prefer to be a solo Druid, or if they are solo by circumstance. It makes sense to set Unit 3 aside as an optional resource provided to those who *want* to establish a Grove or Protogrove. No part of Unit 3 has been drafted yet. The goal for Unit 1 is to be ready *before* Beltane 2024, for Unit 2 to be ready by the Autumnal Equinox 2024, and as a stretch goal, we're hoping to have Unit 3 live by the end of 2024. Though mind you, Unit 1 has been a draft since March 2020... but collectively I think the clergy prep course and the GGG combined will be much smaller than Unit 1. Oakdale Grove will reconvene in January to discuss any additional revisions, and we might move some Unit 1 content into Unit 3, because there are numerous sections that already discuss various Grove dynamics.

The workbooks will be entirely digital, in fillable PDF form with sections that have attestation check boxes, short answer fields, and essay text boxes. The intent is to go 100% paperless. However, there is a print copy in the photo above. It is for editing with red ink that stands out better. For me at least, maybe because I'm an older millennial, I spot typos and grammatical errors in print better than I spot them on a screen. Spell check doesn't find all the wrong-word typos, either. Knowing that I still like printed works in some situations, I understand others (regardless of their social generation) might like this workbook to be in print as well. Thus I plan on having it available on Lulu Press as a coil-bound book. They can snail-mail it back to our Grove's PO Box and we'll count it as a valid submission, but primarily we'll be pushing for everyone to complete it digitally. The digital version will be free, of course.

The Seeker's Corkboard

Overview

This is the place where you can state that you are seeking other druids to form a protogrove. Long has it been said, something to the tune of *in the proper way, at the proper time, at the proper place, may another druid cross your path*. Well, here is a little nudge to help this happen sooner! These bulletins will be cumulative on each issue of C.O.R.D. until you send a stop request. They will be arranged alphabetically by country, then by state/province/region, then by town name.

To submit a Seeker's Corkboard request, email the editor and **provide your preferred name, location, and an email address** that you check at least weekly. Just remember that any contact information you submit to this section does become public. Your email address in the newsletter will be split apart and we will use different characters (& and /) instead of @ and '.' to prevent or mitigate roving address harvester bots from scanning them for spam.

Standard Safety Disclaimer

I advise Googling *safety tips for meeting people from the Internet* or something to that effect. Furthermore, this is not intended as a section for personals ads or soliciting hookups.

Bulletins

USA: District of Columbia: Tyler Vanice on behalf of *Potomac Protogrove* in Washington DC. If interested, please reach out. Email tyler.vanice&gmail/com.

USA: Georgia: Savannah: Hey this is a PSA. There are druids in your area seeking other druids (like, at least three, and I don't think it's the same person), we just don't have names or contact info. I can't even remember where I've been seeing references to this (Probably somewhere on Discord), but hey, reach out to us if you wanna put in a bulletin here. Contact the newsletter editor!

Vivid Visions Gallery

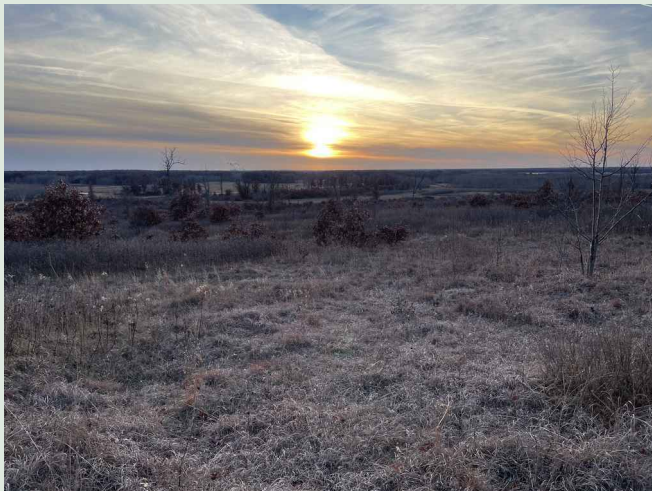
Contributions from John the Verbose



Light pollution, night hike, Maple Grove, MN



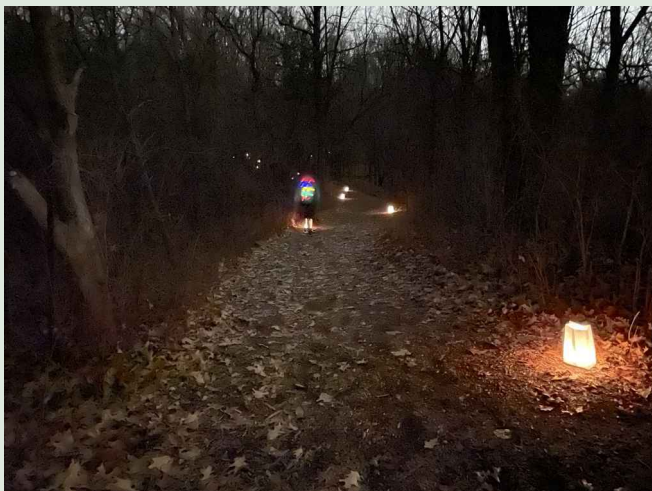
Blue Hill overlook, Zimmerman, MN



Sunset from atop Blue Hill, Zimmerman, MN



Siberian Crab Apple, Roseville Central Park



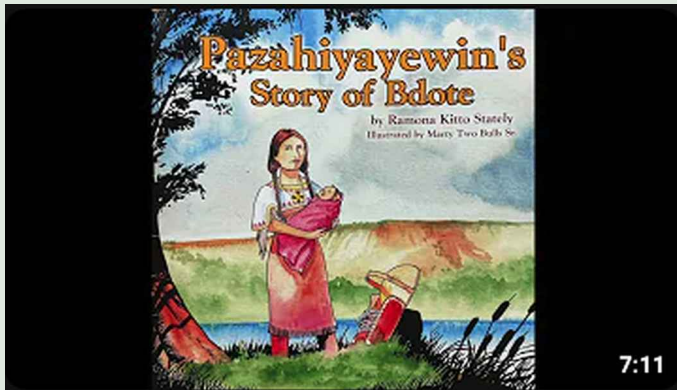
Winter Solstice Luminary Trail, Elm Creek Park



Bench with luminaries, Elm Creek Park

Videos of Interest

Pazahiyayewin's Story of Bdote



A children's story, but of true events at Mendota, Minnesota: the ancestral place of origin of the Oceti Sakowin, by Ramona Kitto Stately

The Sacred Herbs of Yule



Ellen Hopman shares lore, recipes, rituals, and crafts to enliven your Yuletide observance.

Ellen Evert Hopman The Sacred Herbs of Yule & Christmas



Ellen Evert Hopman shares folklore, recipes, rituals, and crafts to enliven your Yuletide observance.

End of Year Video 2023



I've had so much fun filming videos for you this year — Joanna van der Hoeven

Be Present: The Diane Ray Show (audio podcast)



Conscious Conversations on Mind, Body and Spirit

Augur's Intuition

Overview

Reader-submitted divinations, premonitions, soothsaying, prophecies, omens, etc.

Submission by John the Verbose

Methodology: Lorraine Anderson's Gratitude Deck of Appreciation

About this deck

Lorraine asks that you allow this deck to shift your perspective. This isn't an oracle deck, nor a form of divination. Nevertheless, meditate on these cards as a form of guidance. Do they feel intuitively relevant? Are you experiencing any synchronicity regarding what the cards say? Above all, are they helping you and/or others to have a more fulfilling life? Each card has unique imagery on the back. The text from each one will be transcribed here, with the imagery shown on the right.

Cards drawn

- Reflect on the bad. Then be grateful that it's over.
- Everything has value. Nothing is too small to be appreciated.
- Smile at others. People will appreciate being seen.



The "Carletongny" Calendar

Overview

Did you know Reformed Druidism has its own calendar system? There are different ways of calculating RDNA time, but here is the method that this newsletter uses. Carleton Grove called 1963 the *First Year of the Reform* (Y.R.) which for them began at Beltane. They had no year zero. That's why 2023 was Y.R. 61 at Beltane for the 60th anniversary, not year 60. Beltane (May 1) is when **summer** begins, or **Samradh** (SAU-rah) which lasts 92 days. Lughnasadh (August 1) is when **autumn** begins, or **Foghamhar** (FOE-war), lasting 92 days. Samhain (November 1) is when **winter** begins, or **Geimredh** (GEV-rah), lasting 92 days. Oimelc (February 1) is when **spring** begins, or **Earrach** (ARE-rock), lasting 89-90 days. The term "Carletongny" Calendar is merely a play on words from the *Coligny* Calendar, an archaeological discovery of a fragmented Celtic calendar.

C.E. (Beltane)	Y.R.	C.E. (Beltane)	Y.R.	C.E. (Beltane)	Y.R.	C.E. (Beltane)	Y.R.
1963	1	1993	31	2023	61	2053	91
1964	2	1994	32	2024	62	2054	92
1965	3	1995	33	2025	63	2055	93
1966	4	1996	34	2026	64	2056	94
1967	5	1997	35	2027	65	2057	95
1968	6	1998	36	2028	66	2058	96
1969	7	1999	37	2029	67	2059	97
1970	8	2000	38	2030	68	2060	98
1971	9	2001	39	2031	69	2061	99
1972	10	2002	40	2032	70	2062	100
1973	11	2003	41	2033	71	2063	101
1974	12	2004	42	2034	72	2064	102
1975	13	2005	43	2035	73	2065	103
1976	14	2006	44	2036	74	2066	104
1977	15	2007	45	2037	75	2067	105
1978	16	2008	46	2038	76	2068	106
1979	17	2009	47	2039	77	2069	107
1980	18	2010	48	2040	78	2070	108
1981	19	2011	49	2041	79	2071	109
1982	20	2012	50	2042	80	2072	110
1983	21	2013	51	2043	81	2073	111
1984	22	2014	52	2044	82	2074	112
1985	23	2015	53	2045	83	2075	113
1986	24	2016	54	2046	84	2076	114
1987	25	2017	55	2047	85	2077	115
1988	26	2018	56	2048	86	2078	116
1989	27	2019	57	2049	87	2079	117
1990	28	2020	58	2050	88	2080	118
1991	29	2021	59	2051	89	2081	119
1992	30	2022	60	2052	90	2082	120

Foghamhar Y.R. 61 Date Conversion Chart

Geimredh	Winter	Geimredh	Winter
1	Wed, Nov 1, 2023	47	Sun, Dec 17, 2023
2	Thu, Nov 2, 2023	48	Mon, Dec 18, 2023
3	Fri, Nov 3, 2023	49	Tue, Dec 19, 2023
4	Sat, Nov 4, 2023	50	Wed, Dec 20, 2023
5	Sun, Nov 5, 2023	51	Thu, Dec 21, 2023
6	Mon, Nov 6, 2023	52	Fri, Dec 22, 2023
7	Tue, Nov 7, 2023	53	Sat, Dec 23, 2023
8	Wed, Nov 8, 2023	54	Sun, Dec 24, 2023
9	Thu, Nov 9, 2023	55	Mon, Dec 25, 2023
10	Fri, Nov 10, 2023	56	Tue, Dec 26, 2023
11	Sat, Nov 11, 2023	57	Wed, Dec 27, 2023
12	Sun, Nov 12, 2023	58	Thu, Dec 28, 2023
13	Mon, Nov 13, 2023	59	Fri, Dec 29, 2023
14	Tue, Nov 14, 2023	60	Sat, Dec 30, 2023
15	Wed, Nov 15, 2023	61	Sun, Dec 31, 2023
16	Thu, Nov 16, 2023	62	Mon, Jan 1, 2024
17	Fri, Nov 17, 2023	63	Tue, Jan 2, 2024
18	Sat, Nov 18, 2023	64	Wed, Jan 3, 2024
19	Sun, Nov 19, 2023	65	Thu, Jan 4, 2024
20	Mon, Nov 20, 2023	66	Fri, Jan 5, 2024
21	Tue, Nov 21, 2023	67	Sat, Jan 6, 2024
22	Wed, Nov 22, 2023	68	Sun, Jan 7, 2024
23	Thu, Nov 23, 2023	69	Mon, Jan 8, 2024
24	Fri, Nov 24, 2023	70	Tue, Jan 9, 2024
25	Sat, Nov 25, 2023	71	Wed, Jan 10, 2024
26	Sun, Nov 26, 2023	72	Thu, Jan 11, 2024
27	Mon, Nov 27, 2023	73	Fri, Jan 12, 2024
28	Tue, Nov 28, 2023	74	Sat, Jan 13, 2024
29	Wed, Nov 29, 2023	75	Sun, Jan 14, 2024
30	Thu, Nov 30, 2023	76	Mon, Jan 15, 2024
31	Fri, Dec 1, 2023	77	Tue, Jan 16, 2024
32	Sat, Dec 2, 2023	78	Wed, Jan 17, 2024
33	Sun, Dec 3, 2023	79	Thu, Jan 18, 2024
34	Mon, Dec 4, 2023	80	Fri, Jan 19, 2024
35	Tue, Dec 5, 2023	81	Sat, Jan 20, 2024
36	Wed, Dec 6, 2023	82	Sun, Jan 21, 2024
37	Thu, Dec 7, 2023	83	Mon, Jan 22, 2024
38	Fri, Dec 8, 2023	84	Tue, Jan 23, 2024
39	Sat, Dec 9, 2023	85	Wed, Jan 24, 2024
40	Sun, Dec 10, 2023	86	Thu, Jan 25, 2024
41	Mon, Dec 11, 2023	87	Fri, Jan 26, 2024
42	Tue, Dec 12, 2023	88	Sat, Jan 27, 2024
43	Wed, Dec 13, 2023	89	Sun, Jan 28, 2024
44	Thu, Dec 14, 2023	90	Mon, Jan 29, 2024
45	Fri, Dec 15, 2023	91	Tue, Jan 30, 2024
46	Sat, Dec 16, 2023	92	Wed, Jan 31, 2024

Blogs & Social Media Links

Blogs Curated By Druids (accumulative each issue)

- *I Talk To The Trees*'s blog [Corey Adventures](#)
- Ellen Evert Hopman's blog [A Druid's Blog](#)
- John the Verbose's [Tumblr](#)
- TheMageiboLine's [Tumblr](#)
- Druid Dad's blog [A Modern Druid Journey](#)

Social Media

- C.O.R.D. Biquarterly's [Facebook page](#)
- "Official" Reformed Druids of North America (RDNA) [Facebook group](#)
- [*Editor's note: if you request to join there are four vetting questions. Please answer all four; they're really easy.*]
- New Reformed Druids of North America (NRDNA) [Facebook group](#)
- Ron Stonemage's [Instagram](#)
- Oakdale Grove's [Twitter](#)
- Oakdale Grove's [Facebook page](#)
- Oakdale Grove's RDNA Druid Training Program Development [Facebook page](#)
- Tribe of the Oak Celtic Reconstructionist (non-RDNA) Druid Grove [website](#)
- White Rabbit Grove's [Facebook page](#)
- Oakdale Grove's [Instagram](#)
- [Druid Dad Discord Server](#)

Other Media

- Podcast: [Druid Dad Podcast](#)

Artisan Promo Page

Overview

Each article of *C.O.R.D.* will contain up to two pages of featured artists, craftspersons, or small online storefronts that may be of interest to the druid community in some way. There is no cost involved; anyone can request that their content be promoted here on a first-come-first-served basis.

Hazel Oak and Yew Handcrafted Spiritual Goods

Hello and welcome to Hazel Oak and Yew, my space to share my love of witchcraft and my pagan practice with you all. Here I share my handcrafted goods for practicing along with sets of things for you to learn to practice on your own, in your own way. This Etsy shop offers altar supplies, handmade décor, divination tools, and grimoire materials. Custom orders are available!



Ron Stonemage's wire art and wrapped stones

I think we originally discovered each other's Tumblr blogs about a year and a half ago. Not only is the wearable artwork intricate and beautiful, but Ron often has a lot of thought provoking questions that really invoke critical thinking in my responses that keeps me on my toes!



Reannag Teine Pottery

Historically Inspired Pottery: Islamic, Greek, or Italian Renaissance... skulls, squashed fairies, or Viking kitties, we are devoted to creating unique pieces of historically inspired ceramic art--a touch of the unique you can use all the time. Hand-thrown and hand-painted yet safe for food, dishwasher, microwave, and oven. Reannag Teine, Gaelic for "star fire," is a mother-daughter team with six degrees and a myriad of art awards between them... and a healthy amount of humor to bring it all together. Find us on Facebook, YouTube, Twitch, Instagram—and of course at www.ReannagTeine.com!



Book Reviews for Works by Author Ellen Evert Hopman

Once Around the Sun at [The Hearth & Hedge](#) and at [Pagan Pages](#)

Priestess of the Forest at [Portland Jones](#)

Reformed Druid Resources

Overview

The Reformed Druids of North America is probably one of the few major druid orders that provides all resources for learning about our style of druidism at no cost. We might not have all the answers, and unfortunately we don't have a mentorship or official training program (yet), however there is something major in the works on an unofficial capacity. For now, here is a list of resources we *do* have.

Grove Finder

Everyone wants to know: is there an RDNA or NRDNA Grove in _____? Well, the most current source of truth is the [Grove Listings](#) on Oakdale Grove's website. It's been updated *en masse* in January 2019 & 2020, but it can be updated any time on an ad-hoc basis. It tracks Reformed Druid, New Reformed Druid, and Reformed Druidic Wicca (MOCC) Groves & Protogroves.

RDNA Year Conversion Chart & Calendar

The RDNA Calendar began at Year of the Reform 1 on Beltane (May 1) 1963. It's unapologetically half a year off from the Celtic New Year. As of Beltane 2021, the 59th Year of the Reform (Y.R.) began.

- [RDNA Gregorian/Year of the Reform Conversion spreadsheet](#) can be a helpful tool.
- [RDNA calendar \(FREE PDF\)](#) current through April 30, 2024 can help you learn what day of the four seasons it is, because you'll see the RDNA calendar system is all over this publication.

Oakdale Grove's RDNA Druid Training Program

This is a work in progress. So far the draft is 114 pages long, and I'm only half way into adding the *basic* content I want to put in it. I am not an educator, so I'm concerned about its flow and efficacy. If anyone wants to help develop it with me, I would greatly appreciate the assistance.

Books From the Reformed Druids of North America

- [A Reformed Druid Anthology](#), 2nd ed (also known as ARDA-2) – this is a monumental collection (almost a thousand pages long), and it comes in various forms and formats due to its sheer size. **The PDF versions are always FREE**, but hardcover prints are available from Lulu Print-On-Demand.
 - [ARDA-2](#) complete (**FREE PDF**) (Volumes 0-10, excluding vol 6)
 - [ARDA-2](#) complete ePub format from Lulu (99¢)
 - [ARDA-2 Volumes 0, 1, & 2](#) in one tome (hardcover purchase from Lulu)
 - [ARDA-2 Volume 3](#) in one tome (hardcover purchase from Lulu)
 - [ARDA-2 Volumes 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, & 10](#) in one tome (hardcover purchase from Lulu)
 - [ARDA-2 Volume 6: Green Books of Meditation \(FREE PDF\)](#) – this alone is almost a thousand pages long and intentionally set apart from the other volumes. The Green Books are only available in PDF and contain inspirational writings from all religions.

ARDA Derivative, Condensed, or Adapted Works

- [Unofficial Welcome Pamphlet \(FREE PDF\)](#) is the original 22 pages of the main written works plus introductory info on the RDNA and how to start your own protogrove
- [Black Book of Liturgy \(FREE PDF\)](#) is Oakdale Grove's recommended readings from [ARDA-2](#) plus many scripts of RDNA ritual variations and rites of passage)
 - [Black Book of Liturgy](#) (hardcover purchase from Lulu)

Top recommended books by authors in other druid orders

- [The Druidry Handbook: Spiritual Practice Rooted in the Living Earth](#) by John Michael Greer (Ancient Order of Druids in America – AODA)
- [The Rebirth of Druidry](#) by Philip Carr-Gomm (Order of Bards, Ovates, & Druids – OBOD)
- [A Legacy of Druids: Conversations With Druid Leaders Of Britain, The USA And Canada, Past And Present](#) by Ellen Evert Hopman (Tribe of the Oak)

Books on ancient druids (scholarly quality)

- [Druids: A Very Short Introduction](#) by Barry Cunliffe
- [The Druids](#) by Stuart Piggott
- [The Druids](#) by Peter Berresford Ellis
- [The World of the Druids](#) by Miranda J. Green

Books to Avoid

- [The 21 Lessons of Merlyn: A Study in Druid Magic and Lore](#) by Douglas Monroe (fraudulent sources, numerous inaccuracies passed off as historical facts, and other junk wrapped in a shiny literary bowtie)

Newsletter Info

About *C.O.R.D.*

Connexus of Reformed Druids – C.O.R.D. Biquarterly is a free and publicly available newsletter for the Reformed Druids of North America, its branches, and for anyone else who might be interested. It follows in the footsteps of prior publications such as *A Druid Missal-Any* and *Druid Inquirer*. *Connexus* is an homage to the late Emmon Bodfish, who petitioned the Council of Dalon Ap Landu to update RDNA liturgical nomenclature to make it less churchlike and more unique. *Connexus* is Latin for *connection* (not exactly druidic, but I'm not complaining). Emmon's petition never gained traction (plus the Council had lost its ability to gain a voting quorum and it had no chairperson at the time) but it seemed fitting to adopt this word for a publication that connects druids around the world.

Past Articles

[Click here](#) to access all prior *C.O.R.D. Biquarterly* articles and the content contribution forms.

Meet the Editor

Greetings! I'm John "The Verbose." I've practiced generic forms of druidry since I spent a semester in Ireland in 2004. I began interacting with the RDNA in 2011, and in 2013 I was ordained as a priest of Dalon Ap Landu and formed Oakdale Grove in Minnesota with 5 other grovemates. In 2015 I had the rare opportunity to become a priest of Belenos and in 2017 the even rarer honor of becoming a priest of Sirona, as well as the new curator of her Order. In January 2020 I began work on developing an RDNA style druid training program, and as of now that is still a work in progress.

I am absolutely committed to my oath of Service and wish to help others explore Reformed Druidry by a diverse array of means. That includes assembling and issuing these newsletters. Anything in this publication that doesn't have an attribution and is written in the first person is pretty much me sharing my opinions and experiences. That's where your help and contributions are so helpful; we have a newsletter with crowd-sourced content to appeal to a broader druidic audience. I sincerely hope you find this periodical to be a worthwhile investment of your time. I always welcome constructive criticism and suggestions or other feedback.



Peace, peace, peace! ☸

Contribute Content to the Next Issue!

Submission Process

Issues will be released within a day or two of the RDNA Wheel of the Year high days. That's more or less the deadline if you wanted to submit any content for the forthcoming article. Anything received a bit late might end up on the draft of the next article thereafter.

Gmail Users Can Use Our Full-Feature Google Form to Contribute!

We have a [convenient form](#) that allows Gmail users to enter text-based contribs as well as attach files or photos! A Google account is only required for sending attachments through the form.

Non-Gmail Users Have Two Ways to Contribute

There is a [lite version of the same form](#) for those who don't have a Gmail account, which allows anyone to submit text-based contributions only.

What Does C.O.R.D. Look For? Content that is PG-13 or tamer in the following categories:

- News of Reformed Druidry Groves, Protogroves, & Solo Druids
- Poetry and Short Stories
- Druidic projects, tutorials, arts, crafts you are making
- Personal milestones, editorials, druidic book or product reviews, critiques
- Seeker Bulletins like "Solo druid looking for other druids in _____"
- Your own photography
- Links to videos of druidic interest (need not be your own) or druidry-related memes
- Links to your druid blogs or social media
- Divinations and their summaries
- Events you're willing to announce publicly
- Do you have a druid-oriented Etsy shop or similar online store? One page of the newsletter will be reserved for artisan promo space
- Propose a topic; you can help make this newsletter be a success!

Thank You!

A very special *thank you* photograph dedicated to everyone who contributed to this article!



Winter Solstice Luminary Trail, Elm Creek Park Reserve, Maple Grove, Minnesota