

C.Φ.R.D. Biquarterly

Connexus Of Reformed Druids

A publication for the Reformed Druids of North America – RDNA

June 20, 2024
51 Samradh, 62 Y.R.
Volume 4
Issue 7
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Midsummer 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.

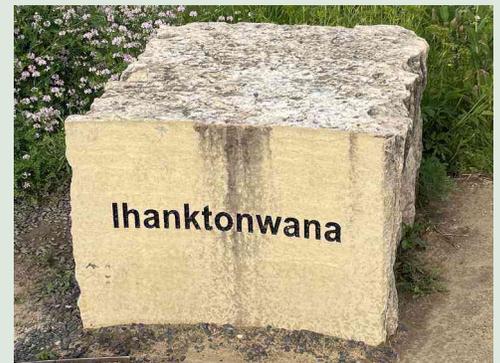
The Dakota people *want* more people to learn about this place, about their history, about their voices. From our perspective as druids, we understand the importance of sacred landscapes. We have our own ways of expressing reverence for the land, and particularly places of power. As a druid however, 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: Ihanktonwana

At a glance, the Ihanktonwana looks just like the Ihanktonwan (or Yankton) tribe that was shared in the previous newsletter. The Ihanktonwana is anglicized as Yanktonai, with a subtle difference in meaning of *The People Scattered At The Edge Of The Forest*. The Yanktonai lived to the north of the Yankton, together making up the westernmost tribes of the Oceti Sakowin. Their dialect of the spoken language is Nakota, indicated by a slight consonant shift from D to N in their speech.



Meanwhile, the Eastern Tribes Were At War With the US

The western tribes of the Ihanktonwana, Ihanktonwan, and Tetonwan had little involvement in the Dakota War of 1862, but were treated like the rest of the Oceti Sakowin because of their intertribal unity. After the hostage settlers were freed at Camp Release, hundreds of Dakota warriors were arrested, put on trial without due process, and 303 of them were sentenced to death. The Dakota War had such a large impact, that president Abraham Lincoln got involved and reviewed the cases. With his background as an astute lawyer and as someone who understood the misdeeds that the Native Americans had been put through, he intervened and commuted the death sentences of 264 warriors.

This left 39 still sentenced to die, mostly in instances where the warriors understood that they had been committing specific war crimes. The condemned were then moved to Mankato, Minnesota to await execution. One more warrior was granted a last minute commutation, but 38 Oceti Sakowin warriors were put to death the day after Christmas of 1862, in what is still the largest mass-execution in US history. Today, Reconciliation Park in Mankato is near the site of the execution. In it stands a larger-than-life bison carved from white limestone, and a sign bears the names of the 38 warriors.

The rest of the warriors were sent to a prison camp in Davenport, Iowa. There, over 120 died from

disease and poor living conditions. Lincoln granted pardons to a few dozen more, and Andrew Johnson would later pardon the rest in 1866. Back in late 1862, nearly 1,700 women, children, elderly, and noncombatants of the eastern tribes of the Oceti Sakowin were also rounded up. Although they were regarded as friendly by the US government, they were still taken to a concentration camp at Fort Snelling, and were held there through the winter of 1862-1863.

On their way to their internment, these friendly noncombatants were assaulted by angry settlers. There was a riotous crowd in Henderson who attacked the Dakota being marched through town, Lt. Colonel William Marshall on horseback had to use his saber to knock a rifle out of a settler's aiming grip. A Dakota infant was murdered, having been taken from its mother's arms and thrown to the ground by a woman in the angry mob. Despite being regarded as friendlies, the living conditions in the concentration camp was wholly inhumane. Up to 300 people died over the winter from disease, malnourishment, and poor living conditions. In the following spring, the remaining survivors of the internment were sent off to reservations in Nebraska and South Dakota. The warriors released from Davenport in 1866 were also sent to the reservations.

Sources:

- [Mni Sota Makoce – The Land of the Dakota](#), Westerman & White, 2012
- [Minnesota Historical Society](#)
- [The Dakota Prisoner of War Letters](#) by Clifford Canku and Michael Simon, 2013

News of the Groves

News from Carleton Grove (Minnesota)

Carleton Grove's Beltane came after last season's issue of the newsletter, but so much happened right after its publishing! It was a chilly and overcast afternoon on the Hill of Three Oaks. Austin, the Provisional Arch-Druid of Carleton Grove, had reached out to the UU church in Northfield, because they allegedly had a maypole. Rumors shifted back and forth that the pole was lost or misplaced, but in the end, it was found again, and they graciously let the Druids borrow it for Beltane. The sacrifice was well accepted, and the strong Waters-of-Life were consecrated and shared among those who had gathered.



Photo courtesy Jax K.

After the ceremony had concluded, the fire was extinguished and the Hill of Three Oaks was cleaned up to look better than it had before the Druids were even there. The Provisional Arch-Druid then had time to prepare for the All-Night-Vigil to enter the Third Order. The rite of passage was overseen by Vigil Wardens from Oakdale Grove. Much of the firewood was wet, but we started with the driest logs first, and baked the wet ones in a Lincoln-log ring around the fire pit. The night was clear, chilly, and damp. The stars were out, and you could see our galactic arm spreading across the sky. At dawn, the Vigil had been successful, and Austin was ordained to the Third Order, and became the 62nd Arch-Druid of Carleton Grove!



The annual alumni reunion at Carleton College coincides with the week of the midsummer solstice, which provides an opportunity for visiting alumni Druids to reconnect. Oakdale Grove usually goes down for the event and leads a Druid service in the arboretum, so we get to meet a lot of alumni and learn about their druidic experiences in the days of yore. This year there was a welcome twist; Mike the Fool (30th Arch-Druid of Carleton Grove, emeritus) was present for his class reunion, and managed to get the Druid service to be an official event for the reunion!



We didn't have any current Carleton students in attendance, but we had a combined turnout of 14 attendees between alumni, their family members, and members of Oakdale Grove present. It was a cool overcast day; it had rained in the morning and would rain again later in the day. We all made introductions at the bottom of the Hill of Three Oaks, then processed to the top and encircled the oak with the forked trunk. Colorful ribbons tied to one of the other oaks danced in the breeze. We had a brave volunteer climb the big oak and cut a

sacrifice, which was dropped into a white cloth being held by four other volunteers on the ground below.

Mike had prepared in advance for anyone who didn't bring a ceremonial cup; he had a tray of half-shot glasses, some of which were tiny stemware glasses. There were more than enough for everyone, and we were invited to keep our mini glass to commemorate the occasion. It began to sprinkle light rain at the end of the service. At the conclusion, we socialized and roasted marshmallows for s'mores. The sprinkles evolved into a steady rain, and the graham crackers started to fall apart. We helped the rain extinguish the fire, and retreated to the vacant event tent pitched on the soccer fields, and continued socializing for an hour as waves of pouring rain came and went.



News from Starved Rock Grove (Illinois)

Achievement unlocked! Starved Rock Protogrove has gained full autonomy when their provisional Arch-Druid, Sunshine (along with two other members) were ordained to the Third Order at the beginning of this month! Their protogrove had been in development for a long time, quickly becoming self-propelled and rather active. This spring, the appointed place and the appointed time had come to a realization. A spiritual retreat was planned in Illinois, and two other candidates from nearby environs were contacted and invited to vigil for the Third Order.



Unfortunately only the members of Starved Rock protogrove were able to attend, but we are certain that future opportunities will arise for the other candidates. After the spiritual retreat had motioned to adjourn, the newly ordained Third Orders proceeded on their plans to reorganize as a formal Grove, which they just met for recently. And thus, the fellowship at Starved Rock now has Grove status!

News from Tucson Grove (Arizona)

Report on Tucson Grove RDNA, Midsummer 2024

Tucson Grove gathered to celebrate Midsummer on Saturday, June 22nd. We had two Grove members and three guests present. This ritual was a slightly modified version of the Midsummer ritual from the Black Book of Liturgy, Oakdale Grove Edition. As is the tradition, our newly ordained Third Order Priest (better known as David, our Grove Preceptor) led this as his first ritual after ordination. He did a fantastic job! Two of our guests have already reached out to us for more information. Hopefully they will keep coming back.



We also created a business card for the Grove that we can hand to someone who expresses interest in Druidry or in the Grove (please see the image below). These are handy if we only have a few minutes to talk to someone (this actually happens a lot). We can just give them an “elevator pitch,” give them the card and invite them to check out the website. We also do let them know that if they have any questions, they are more than welcome to reach out to us. They can do this either through the *contact us* page on the website, or by emailing us directly. That’s about it for this time. Blessings to all.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Grose (Meirneal), ODAL
Archdruid, Tucson Grove, RDNA

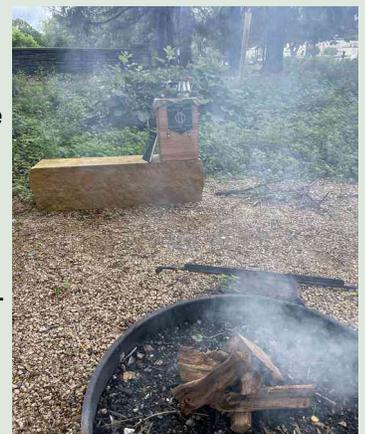


News from Oakdale Grove (Minnesota)



On a pleasant mid-May afternoon, Oakdale Grove got together at a park to paint another set of rocks to give to the Anoka Kindness Rock Garden, where people can take or give a decorated rock that inspires them. It was an enjoyable afternoon of painting and socializing. Once the paint had dried, they were coated with a sealant, and later deposited directly into the rock garden behind Anoka City Hall.

We had our Midsummer Solstice service at a park that we hadn't been to before: the Big Rivers Regional Trail in Mendota Heights. The park is well manicured, has a nice fire pit, and also has several interpretive installations that highlight the sacredness of this area to the Dakota nations. We had a new visitor come and stay with us for the duration of the service. Right as we were packing up, it began to rain gently. Shortly after we got back on the road to go our separate ways, Taranis opened up every cloud as if he was patiently holding it back for us.



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Bardic Column

Alban Hefin by Sunshine's Ephemeral Flourish

A poem in celebration of the Midsummer Solstice and what it inspires in me.

*The sun's fire is ablaze
With life's necessary haze
As we join, lives entwined
Find relaxation and unwind*

*We are here in community
Finding trust and unity
In nature expressing love
Harmony reigning from above*

*May the fires keep us warm
May the air always storm
May the waters forever flow
May the earth let life grow*

*May love and empathy be our guide
May our learning take full stride
May our essence breathe full
May we forever push and pull*

*May we grow and learn the divine
May our souls somewhat align
May our love for knowledge never cease
May we win the fight for peace*

Firewall by Sarah Taylor

*Seeking solace in the shade as a balmy breeze lands on my breasts,
I stand on the thin blades of grass that cool my toes and lead me
One step closer to the cold frost, when embers beg to be touched.*

Sarah Taylor uses her art to teach, shock, and inspire, and draws on the diversity of her international experience in her poetry. She can be found on Instagram or YouTube @sarahtaylorwriter

Season of the Mother Grove: Spring of Summer Clouds by Edward Wellspring of Northfield

Spring broke forth in a burst of heat and light. Summer's clouds at once proceeded across shocking cerulean skies: tall clouds that rode like mounted lords, shapely clouds that sashayed with grace, shadowed clouds that elicit painters' sighs. Silently and stately they sailed the skies as signs of summer come too soon. In consequence, the squill cropped up a month early and bedecked yards with nodding blue devoid already of snow. The groves broke out with buds long before last snow should bury the earth again, and armored buds hung frozen fast in time for weeks after waxing warmth, awaiting spring's actual arrival. Indeed, all snow oddly disappeared right at the season's start. Though the skies shone radiant, the ground retrenched. The restless sleeping Mother protested this disturbance and stubbornly kept robes of long slow brown, clinging to mud untouched by bloom.

Under prompt of frigid rain, dark swards filled in first. Lawns lurched green while nothing bloomed, and precipitation prompted fogs that cast the Mother Grove in eerie role. Such a lump of grey weather and mood lingered when Ostara came and promised a turning that seemed stagnant. Within the lull huddled birds, confusedly lifting songs that felt ill-timed. Even then, in the early grey of feeble frosts, flowers broke forth unusually early to raise pale heads in heaven's praise. One by one each flower took up its spotlight alone in cautious cabaret, a spring weirdly long and pleasant. Shadows played about their petals, for cotton clouds and cirrus sweeps varied heavens clear and vibrant. Sunlight swelled to Beltane, and the winds at last whipped up a rapid change to summer swelter and storms.

Hérons heralded this season of water and slow wonder, hastening all along the river's track. The resident roosts brought forth more white ducks, an omen of peace and stability. Along the blooming banks, throngs of geese with huge families easily fed fat, and daily I witnessed in wonder the parental pattern of eagles' nest! Fleet finches and occupied crows sped in skies hung with hazy clouds that blocked out all celestial sights. This spring, deer cannot be found, though coyote song stirs vociferously at sunset. Hasty agricultural action advanced on above-average warmth, and planting began earlier than I have seen here. Hay crops hang heavy and full by summer's first sortie of storms. Day after day storm battlements boisterously advanced across the continent, bringing burgeoning growth and green. Stunning sunset displays promise a long season of life – lift your heart, for life!

**This Beltane blessed my consecration to the Order of Hephaestus with eager flames. It also brought the ordination of a new Archdruid at Carleton. Praise be for Austin!*



Edward's Ordeal for Order of Hephaestus, courtesy of Jax K.

Campfire Colloquy

Overview

An open forum for news of solo druids, letters to the editor, druidic gossip, philosophical thoughts, etc.

***PRIDE Reformed Druid Article* by Thomas Lee Harris, Jr., AKA Myrddin A Maeglin**

Introduction

We ought to approach Reformed Druidism as a living and evolving movement just as much as we view it as the spiritual manifestation of common vision and spiritual protest in a positive way. As it is evolving, we must from time to time take the opportunity to look into the nuts and bolts of what makes the movement a spiritual engine, see if it needs fine-tuning, and see if we can update it for the benefit of everyone that participates. It's not that challenging, but it is such simple everyday maintenance that every organization should take into consideration.

Hypothesis

It is my hope that we Reformed Druids, our descendant organizations, and organizations similar to us, are creating safe spaces for LGBT/BIPOC parts of our demographic on a regular basis. Some of us think in terms of Reformed Druidism being a very liberal movement. Indeed, looking into our history, it is not that difficult to see where that idea came from. It's also not that much of a stretch of the imagination for us to generally buy into that idea if it just suddenly gets sprung on us. The soil in which the seed of the RDNA was planted as early as the 1960s was fertile ground for progressive thought. It's not an exaggeration to say that we maintain that kind of trajectory in our current practice.

Process

To be honest, we need to be clear that this questionnaire cannot accurately represent the whole of Reformed Druidism. Ten people responded so the sample size is too small to touch on the subject matter enough to make this an accurate sampling. What we are most likely looking at is that there are several people who have relatively strong ideas and opinions on the subject, who felt that their story needed to be told, and these few took the time to fill out the questionnaire as a matter of politeness. Keep that in mind as we go through the rest of this article.

Every organization goes through alternating periods of growth and letting go, and in so doing, we unavoidably experience changes in group philosophy over the years. This is a normal part of any organization, especially in our relatively eclectic field. The last time we looked at questions of diversity within the membership was sometime between 2015 to 2017. It didn't happen all at once in the way that this questionnaire does. It was more or less a series of posts addressing what was included in our online discussions and what was not included. We came to a series of unofficial agreements throughout the body. (More on those in upcoming articles.) Whether or not those decisions were binding at the local level would be always subject to the leadership immediately present. As such it was not something that was uniform everywhere even if we appeared to have a good deal of

consensus. At that time the conclusions were that we were quite open in our membership, quite diverse, and were willing to bring in a broad set of experiences into our midst. It can be said that history was being battered in the broader society. Philosophies were tossing concepts of diversity and Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) policy around in what became a hotly contested back and forth political battle for diversity across the board.

Given the date that the discussion which we are discussing happened among us of the RDNA family, it was reasonable to ask a few questions to see if it needed to be updated, or if the agreed upon stance we had been keeping as custom was still functional.

The Questionnaire (initially informally labeled Druid 20 Questions) was divided into specific categories:

- Demographic information. The respondents, while few, very clearly fit mostly into heteronormative and LGBT+ spectrums, with the majority falling into the LGBT+camp. One was possibly from another planet. They were broadly representative of what we know our history to really bring out, including the alien.
- Safe spaces. The discussion of which follows, but I'll follow up on this.
- Gender issues. The discussion of which follows. In the demographic portion, it was revealed that over 50% of the respondents were cis-male.
- Teachers and leaders. The discussion of which follows:

One of the things that the demographic section revealed was that we were overwhelmingly derived from Caucasian stock. As the compiler, I have to remind myself that I am of mixed heritage. I am Native American, but my skin can make people snow blind the majority of the year. We are in a mindset where we are convinced that color does not matter. That's both a good thing and a bad thing. It's a good thing that our intention of inclusiveness goes as far as it does because it seeks to broaden our experience and interaction with people of other ethnicities. What is not so good is that the BIPOC among us honestly see color when we profess to be self-identifying as color blind. It is a reminder that our experience can be tinged with class privilege.

Another thing that was revealed was that the respondents were mostly in the LGBTQ+ spectrum. The need for that voice came through spectacularly, and I hope that that opportunity for expression made the questionnaire's results all the more valuable to our group.

The overwhelming maleness of the respondents is not something that we like to admit of these things, but when we look into the Mysteries, meaning the Men's Mysteries and the Women's Mysteries, the lack of experience with what those Mysteries mean at the nuts and bolts level reminds me of the proverbial blind man feeling the elephant and trying to say what an elephant is. Just like hypothetically not seeing skin color, gender tends to either make us want to be blind to what those Mysteries experience is. It might be that we are fooling ourselves when it comes to providing and benefiting from

these Mysteries. At least, that is, when we do so.

The Need For Safe Space?

I located an entry in one of my notebooks from a few years ago in which I mentioned “The circle is not always a safe space. Sometimes we deal with Shadow work, sometimes we deal with anger, and sometimes we deal with sorrow and fear.” Really, it is all part of the human experience. We cannot completely separate ourselves from the aspects of spirituality and community that we really don't like. Real life does not work like that. We have to come to terms with those issues, but in doing so, we also have to respect that we set a hedge about ourselves while tending to those subjects so that we are not damaged in the act of wrestling with them.

Going back to the very beginning of the RDNA, our Order was fashioned as a place of refuge as much as it was a place of protest; that protest being that we were making our own worship area, our own sacred space. So, when we look at whether or not we seek to establish a safe place, our hallowed hall, we cannot help but understand that what we regularly do is continuing that first tradition of being a rethought and revisioned sacred environment. It is not a new concept to us. We have an undeniably distinct spiritual ecology.

If we are this safe and sacred space, can we be such with a sense of openness and inclusion? If we are not, we should correspondingly ask why we are not doing that. Sometimes those questions reveal answers that are as deep as the questions which gave rise to those questions themselves. Introspection is not a bad thing.

Indeed, some years back we saw many Druid groups accosted with people wanting us to take on a more exclusive frame of reference. I'm glad to say that Reformed Druidism seems to have weathered the storm successfully, and with a good deal of steadfastness to the principles under which we were founded.

Although we participate fully in the world around us, and that is something that a Druid is supposed to do by the very essence of what Druidism is, when we gather together we have a natural tendency to create an ecosystem of spirit set apart from the hubbub of the world; space that is conducive to the edification of both Nature and Spirit.

Intersectionality

Druidism is a diverse Path. This has been a constant throughout the history of the RDNA. We are not known as a group that does not embrace the concept of welcoming and accepting people that are different from ourselves. It is required of us that we be able to accept ourselves. Sometimes that is more difficult than we like to admit.

Druidism can be imagined as a Venn diagram. This applies not only to Druidism's three fields of Ovate, Bard, and Druid; it also applies to many other aspects, including how we interact ourselves has an order, and how we interact between our order and the remainder of the community. There is a lot of crossover. Sometimes, there is more crossover than the literature is ready to deal with. If Druidism and Druidry encompass both Society and Nature, topics in the LGBT and BIPOC fields of experience are unavoidably part of the corpus of what Druidism and Druidry should include.

The questionnaire did not reflect that we have usually had a degree of intersectionality with the counterculture around us early on, but it did reflect that respondents have increasingly been more reflective of the culture in general over the years. The idea that within our membership there is a degree of intersectionality has somewhat lessened, though it does not seem to have been by design so much as it has been due to simple cultural circumstances. The degree to which we will continue to be a bastion free thought will be seen in the degree by which we invite others to be part of the discussion.

Gender and Mysteries

In the RDNA we do not usually recognize a clear distinction and function in what are essentially leadership or quasi-clergy roles in the group. So, when we got around to asking the questions dealing with gender, it took us aback because it is not something we generally deal with amongst ourselves. We inherently recognize equality between the sexes and more or less equal function. At least, that is, in spiritual community rules.

The Elf Queen's Daughters said: "We look for courage, self-reliance and dynamism in women and we admire men who can be gentle, sensitive and modest... We have no interest in or use for the simpering, masochistic female nor the arrogant, inflexible man. There is a perfect balance, a "Golden Mean" to which we aspire." (EQD, 2014)

One of the things that became obvious as I received these responses to the diversity questionnaire is that the majority of respondents knew the terms of Women's Mysteries and Men's Mysteries, but when it came to actually being able to define what these Mysteries were, it was much harder to pinpoint what one thought those Mysteries comprised. Whether it was to include certain people in Men's and Women's Mysteries, or to exclude them, it remained constant that the respondents didn't really know what they wanted to include in a setting which they did not know what it consisted of.

For us to benefit everyone, we really need to define what gendered Mysteries are, and what they involve. Definition will inevitably determine interest. If we do not do so, it is easy to separate people from what they genuinely need to pursue as part of their own spiritual good: an environment that is conducive to both spiritual expiration and spiritual manifestation. Let's face it, we are spiritual beings, and that is one of the things that our Order really gives us some focus on. It's sad that we, when asked

what these Mysteries are, do not have a sufficient answer for it yet. This needs to be remedied.

What are these Mysteries? In the context of a Mystery Religion, it is a rite, discussion, philosophy, theology, or thealogy, sometimes based upon the context and contents of a myth or myth cycle, for the generation of a shared experience within a body of Initiates. We can, for instance, come to some agreement on Women's Mysteries involving Rites of Passage that include menarche, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause just to name a few. Authors have mentioned for years that these body changes are things that need to be celebrated. They deserve their own observances.

Does Druidism constitute a Mystery Religion? In years past, it would have been a stretch to say that it was. It is certainly a Wisdom Tradition with a nod towards the eternal quest for excellence, but whether Druidism as a whole constitutes a Mystery Religion is a good question, and not easily resolved. The degree to which we bring about Men's and Women's Mysteries is going to reflect that.

Our DEI, LGBT+, and BIPOC Leaders

One of the things that was brought up by respondents was the fact that one of the things that a good community is lacking is a very clear voice from the LGBT community when it comes to teachers, leaders, and ceremonial leaders. These exist, of course, but when I asked if they had mentors and teachers in the LGBT and BIPOC community, the answer essentially was that we used to, but especially since the last several years in the secular world and due to COVID-19 restrictions, it is harder to identify current teachers and ceremonial leaders who are in that community. Not so with our history in which we had such persons as Emmon Bodfish, Whitehaven Dragonwolf, and others... even myself. Whereas in the past it was not considered anything extra special to see people such as this taking on roles of visibility and leadership and group, these days it is sometimes lacking, either in that visibility or in presence of leadership. Especially in the roles of mentors, and this not just by us in our membership, but by society-at-large. This creates a problem for those who are LGBT and BIPOC coming into Reformed Druid settings. There are not as many current leaders with whom they can interact, at least with the understanding that they are part of the LGBT community, and our elders who do have experience with the topic are not exercising the opportunity to mentor others in a significant way. That is an issue, and we should make room to address it.

Conclusion

I hope that everyone who responded to the questionnaire has seen elements of their responses reflected herein. If not, I'll be delving into it in future articles. We really are an insightful bunch, and if I put everything in here I would be riding a book rather than an article. Put succinctly, "We see that a person's attitude and manner have more to do with one's sex in reality than do the shape of their genitals." (EQD, 2014).

Sources

The Silver Elves. "Elf Magic Mail: Book 1: The Original Letters Of The Elf Queen's Daughters With Commentary By The Silver Elves". The Silver Elves. (Printed via CreateSpace.) Love, Michael J. And Martha C. Love. 2014.

Carnes, Robin Deen and Sally Craig. Sacred Circles: A Guide To Creating Your Own Women's Spirituality Group. New York: Harper SanFrancisco, 1998.

Herbs for Summer Solstice wreath making by Ellen Evert Hopman

From "[Once Around the Sun – Stories, Crafts and Recipes to Celebrate the Sacred earth Year](#)"

Bittersweet this plant is very protective. Hang a bunch upside down by the entrances of your home to protect your home and yourself from harmful Spirits and people.

Boxwood brings courage and enhances magical power. Increases energy, strength and determination. Use it for cleansing and purification in times of change. Inside your home, place it by a window or on the mantle to drive Spirits out of the room. Boxwood is poisonous to dogs, cats and other small mammals. It will kill your pets if they eat it, so be very careful!

Eucalyptus creates a protective shield around the user when carried or placed in the home. Brings fresh energy to a situation. Soothes regrets, worries, mental exhaustion, physical or emotional concerns. Place some next to a picture of someone who is sick, or next to their jewelry box.

Ivy is considered a feminine herb. It brings protection, healing and luck. Ivy wards against negativity and disaster and helps to bind people together. A wreath made with ivy, blackberry and rowan (mountain ash) will be a powerful shield against all evil.

Pine signifies willingness to bend, healing and purification. The tree of family ties and loving touch. The tree of peace. Gather some pine needles and cones. Tie a small bundle of needles together and burn them in your cauldron. Pass the cones through the smoke while thinking of all the good things in your life. Place the cones where you will pass by frequently and be reminded of your blessings. Use a large pine branch to ritually sweep an area. It will drive away bad energies and bring in peace.

Rosemary cleansing and purifying, it is associated with Aphrodite/Venus (Rosemary's name means "dew of the sea" in Latin) and the Virgin Mary. "Where Rosemary grows, the woman rules." When burned it repels all negative energies.

Willow the tree of gentle touch and willingness to bend, of healing, poetic genius, New Moon magic, female rites of passage, inspiration, love, love divination, and creativity in general. In ancient times Bardic harps were made of willow wood; "the tree sacred to poets."

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](mailto: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 Johanno Sycamore Bear



Contributions from John the Verbose



Butterfly Milkweed flowers, Oheyawahi



Raspberries among the Crown Vetch, Oheyawahi



Mni Owe Sni, a spring sacred to the Dakota



Lance-Leaved Coreopsis, Mni Owe Sni



Yarrow flowers, Mni Owe Sni



Monarch chrysalises, Eastman Nature Center

Augur's Intuition

Overview

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

Submission by John the Verbose

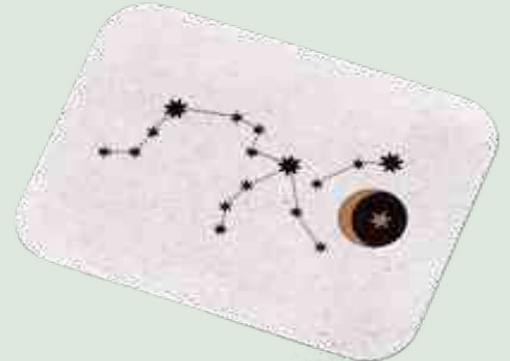
Methodology: Lorraine Anderson's Gratitude Deck of Appreciation

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

- Celebrate milestones. Don't skip over your chances to make happy memories.
- Take it easy. Gratitude is a marathon, not a sprint. It takes practice.
- Give compliments. It reminds people of their sacredness.



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.						
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

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



(707) 407-8488 • POTTERY@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!



Towering storm clouds at sunset.