

C.Φ.R.D. Biquarterly

Connexus Of Reformed Druids

A publication for the Reformed Druids of North America – RDNA

Dimelc

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John the Verbose, editor
MNdruids@gmail.com



Photo: Standing stones at Muriel Sahlin Arboretum at Roseville Central Park, Roseville, Minnesota.

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News of the Groves

News from Oakdale Grove (Minnesota)

Based on some conversations that Grove members had in December, our January casual hangout acquired not just a theme, but a whole presentation. We met up at one of the area Caribou Coffee locations that is inside an old Hardee's restaurant. Those locations have meeting rooms that we like to reserve and talk about Druidry. January's event featured a presentation that compares the ritual structures of five different Druid orders.

With seven people in attendance we started out with the skeleton of the original Common Order of Worship. We pointed out that it is merely a basic framework that was intended to be expanded upon, rather than being viewed as *the whole ritual* in Reformed Druidism. We also covered the duotheistic NRDNA ritual styles with the Wiccan flavor, and showed that Oakdale Grove uses much of the NRDNA structure, albeit "de-Wiccanized" to bring it back to a more universalist appeal. Technically the NRDNA should be considered a sixth ritual format in the presentation, but we lumped it in with the RDNA due to the hierarchical crossover.

We then examined the liturgical styles of Ár nDraíocht Féin, the Henge of Keltria, the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids, and lastly the Ancient Order of Druids in America. The Henge of Keltria took the most time to discuss, due to the elaborate nature of their ceremonies, and the specific details they are required to touch on. It also happened to be an organization of interest with one of our Grove members, and we have a wealth of knowledge on how a Keltrian ritual is run.



The PowerPoint presentation of this "seminar" was taken right out of Unit 3 (Clergy Prep Course and Grove Governance Guide) of the *Order of Bradan Feasa* Druidry training program. It inspired us to continue with a series of presentations on other content from the OBF program. Our February casual hangout on Valentines Day will be our annual stroll through the Como Park Conservatory, but our March hangout will have a slideshow presentation on why *chalices* have become important in Druidry. It will be an engaging seminar, exploring origins deep into the Bronze Age.

Oakdale Grove held our Oimelc ritual on Saturday, January 31 at our usual winter venue. Nine attendees gathered around a particularly smoky bonfire on a much warmer day than recent. This was actually a nice break from the Polar Vortex we'd been experiencing (the same system that sent blizzards and ice storms down south and to the east coast). Our sacrifice was a bit slow to burn, which was a solid reminder that winter is not quite over yet, and that locally our first signs of spring must still wait.

Campfire Colloquy

Overview

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

A Contribution From Ellen Evert Hopman

Gromnica, Festival of the Thunder Candles, (February 2) (Poland)

Gromnica is a festival of Fire and candle blessing that takes place at Midwinter. Bonfires are lit for protection, to encourage the strengthening Sun and to ensure a good harvest. Special candles called “gromnice” are made of bee’s wax with Mullein (*Verbascum spp.*) wicks, to protect against floods, hail, and lightning. The candles are also carried on trips to the forest, as protection from wolves. A bright day on Gromnica means more frost and storms are coming. A wet day means a long winter ahead. Frosty weather predicts a good harvest, while cloudy skies mean an early summer is on its way.

In Ireland, this is the festival known as “Imbolc” *, a celebration of candles, the lactation of the ewes, and the return of the sunlight in early spring. In Romania, the day is called “Bear Day”, the day of the Bear Goddess. If the bear comes out of her den and sees her shadow there will be six more weeks of winter. In America the day became “Groundhog Day”, because groundhog is a “little bear”.

Make Gromnica Candles

The candles can be made of pure beeswax, which would be traditional, paraffin wax, soy wax, or even melted left over wax from old candles. Golden beeswax holds the energy of honey, the Sun and flowers. The most important thing is the *timing* of when they are made, which should be only once a year, during the first quarter Moon of February.

After they are finished, the candles are decorated with evergreens such as Juniper or Fir, tied on with a blue ribbon, in honor of the Goddess Devana’s cloak; blue cloaks were once the sign of a healer. The Fir and Evergreens that decorate the Gromnica candles are “ever” green and so always hold the energy of life, even in the depths of winter. Bless the candles in a ritual after they are done. Candle wicks can be purchased or made. A really traditional method of making the wicks is to strip thin strands of bark from dried Mullein stalks (*Verbascum spp.*) and braid them into a three-part braid. Old glass jars from the kitchen, old tins and milk cartons can be used as containers to hold the wax.

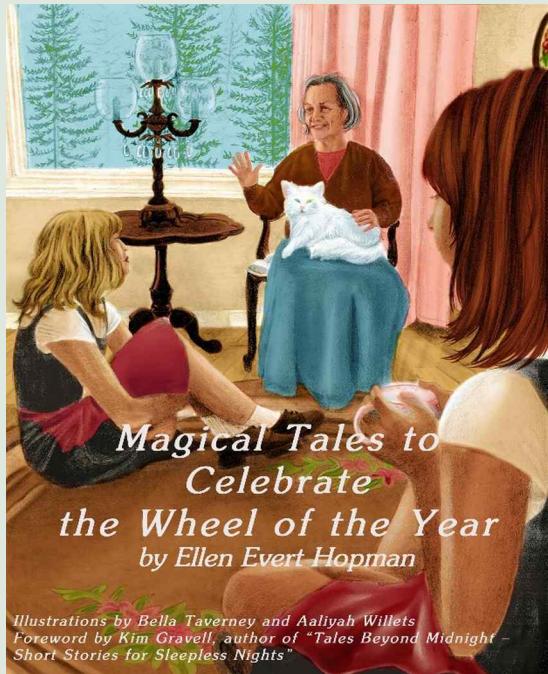
Method

1. Cut wax chunks into 1-inch pieces.
2. Lay down newspaper, wax paper, or old towels and rags on the surface you will be working on, to catch any spills.
3. Heat the wax chunks in a double boiler until the wax is completely melted (don’t put a pot of wax directly on the flame or it could catch fire!).
4. If you are using old candle stubs, now is the time to fish out any leftover wicks.

5. Position the new wick in the center of a heat-proof container. A good way to do this is to wrap the end of the wick around a pen, pencil or dowel, tape it securely, and allow the rest of the wick to hang down into the container.
6. Pour the melted wax into the container, leaving about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of space at the top.
7. Cool the candle for 24 hours (or until completely hardened) before use.
8. Trim the wick to about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch before lighting.

A book excerpt from Ellen Evert Hopman's Magical Tales to Celebrate the Wheel of the Year

"A rare blend of folklore, culture, and hands-on experience: By weaving together traditional stories from different cultures with recipes, crafts, and sensory activities, transforms reading into a full-bodied experience. Taste, smell, touch, sight, and sound all come together—making learning memorable and meaningful for both children and adults." – P. T. Benefield



Find my books at www.elleneverthopman.com. My new children's books are "[Once Around the Sun – Stories, Crafts and Recipes to Celebrate the Sacred Earth Year](#)" and "[Magical Tales to Celebrate the Wheel of the Year](#)" My newest herbal is "[The Sacred Herbs of Yule and Christmas – Remedies, Recipes, Magic, and Brews for the Winter Season](#)" You can learn about Druids in "[Celtic Druidry: Rituals, Techniques & Magical Practices](#)"

"Rage in America 2026" by Johano Sycamore Bear

Up front, I'm a 53 year old mixed race (white passing) male (appearing, actually non-binary) Druid/Shaman in a quad-poly relationship. For the record, my pronouns are he/they but I'll answer to anything so long as you aren't an @\$\$hole. One of my partners is half Mexican and so their family lives in fear of being caught up in current affairs in spite of being multigenerational American citizens.

I look back to my preteen years and into my early teens when Ronald Reagan was President. Or was he? I think his second term was all prop-up jobs and Nancy and the Cabinet were running things behind the scenes... but I digress.

We all knew that Trump II would be a \$hit\$how and sadly, we underestimated it.

I remember many of the "awful" things that the government was doing: AIDS denial and lack of funding for research and care, as well as cutting the EPA to shreds so that big industry could mine, drill, and pollute as they saw fit. Taxes were slashed on the rich and that sent the national debt skyrocketing along with a mind-blowing increase in "Defense" spending. Yet here we are forty years later, and we are seeing things that make the 80s seem downright quaint.

We have ICE/DHS thugs roaming the streets of American cities ostensibly to find and deport "illegal aliens" (I fecking hate that phrase!). Okay, tracking down people who have overstayed their visas and those who have active deportation orders due to criminal offenses, overstays, etc. I can see that being done. It's part of a normal functioning society even though I personally would like to see an amnesty path for people who are working/paying taxes with clean records to become citizens.

What we have now is an authoritarian government bound and determined to destroy the country from within by stalking schools trying to find the parents who are "brown," kidnapping their children so the parents come after the child and get arrested as well, arresting people as they come in to appointments as they work for legal status, and now murdering people, SAY THEIR NAMES OUT LOUD AND OFTEN! Renee Good and Alex Petti. Also, two journalists were arrested based on what the (mis)Administration calls a "coordinated attack" on a St. Paul church, claiming they were domestic terrorists. Don Lemon and Georgia Fort should not be in detention!

Living in the Minneapolis area, I am so proud of all the rapid-response teams, community organizing, and all of the assistance being given to family and people who are terrified to step outside their home. I was horrified to learn that ICE was leaving groceries outside the doors of people they wanted to arrest so that the people inside would step out to get the groceries and could be arrested.

There have been times when I have said I was uncomfortable saying I was an American because of what our government was doing. If I wasn't disabled and tied to three lovely partners, I'd be out of the

country in a heartbeat.

I have complex medical needs, so the risk of arrest/detention terrifies me (it should terrify anyone honestly!). I am getting closer each day to walking a few blocks to join the people protesting at one of the major intersections in my suburb in solidarity. I don't have the financial ability to finance mutual aid, mobility/transportation issues keep me from helping behind the scenes ... but I'm mentally pacing my cage wondering how I can be of assistance but also looking long term to question if we can save the America that we knew. It was flawed as f*ck but NOTHING like what we see now.

This administration has ripped the curtains off the "off camera" abuses that have been happening. Yes, DHS and ICE are focusing on "brown" people now but our black neighbors have been dealing with systemic racism for decades in ways that I can't wrap my head around.

Native Americans are being swept up in this as well, another group that has been absolutely sh!t on since the beginning of this American experiment. So many despicable acts, broken treaties, lies and systemic lack of funding that only reinforces the plight of and the stereotypes of Native communities.

I know it is scary to step up for those of us who haven't been involved in action like this before, but if there has ever been a time to step up, my brothers and sisters under the oaks, **NOW IS THAT TIME.**

Help out where you can and how you can: even helping stock food baskets for people is a great help, marching on the streets, harassing ICE with whistles and shouts as well.

When I think about just hiding in my apartment, I remind myself of the famous poem "First They Come" by Martin Niemöller who was a complicated figure. A Lutheran minister initially an antisemitic Nazi supporter, his views changed when he was imprisoned in a concentration camp for speaking out against Nazi control of churches.

For more of his life and his "seeing the light" after being in a concentration camp, I will point out Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has a good read about his life and what did after the war to own up to his mistakes and failures.

The groups are not the same as they were under the Nazis in World War II Germany but the sentiment is still valid and true.



"First They Came" by Pastor Martin Niemöller

*First they came for the Communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Communist
Then they came for the Socialists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Socialist
Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist
Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew
Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me*

John "Johano Sycamore Bear" Lamb, ODAL

3rd Order RDNA Priest

Preceptor, Oakdale Grove RDNA

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

Germany: Bavaria: Munich: from Clelia-Maria

I'm a First Order Druid looking for like-minded folks around Munich, Germany. I'm solo and I also haven't been practicing for too long, but I think it'd be great to meet up with others and study and just enjoy Nature together. I know the chances are pretty low, but it's worth a shot, right? Email dobre029&umn.edu

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!

USA: Massachusetts: Central MA: from Avery Vreeland

Looking for others interested in establishing a RDNA/General Reformed Druidism study group in the central Massachusetts/Wider New England area, with eventual aspirations of forming a Grove. Please reach out to gremilkin&proton/me.

Vivid Visions Gallery

"Lone Rock, Vermillion Highlands Scientific Natural Area" from John the Verbose



Videos of Interest

What Fantasy Gets Wrong About Sacred Groves



Fantasy loves sacred groves as untouched relics of a lost world. This video shows what scholars actually find on the ground, and why sacred groves thrive not through isolation, but through human care, ritual, and community life.

The Right Rites For Rampant Ritualists

Overview

This section is for sharing rituals, devotionals, meditations, or other liturgical contributions.

A Basic Ritual/Meditation for Imbolc/Oimelc

by Johano Sycamore Bear

Set aside time to quietly be with yourself with as few distractions as possible. (I know you can't control everything)

Make yourself comfortable and take a walk through Nature.

Focus on what you hear.

Do you hear birds or animals? Try to identify them and seek out any special meaning attached to them.

Do you hear the wind in the trees? Listen to it and try to understand what it is telling you.

If you are doing this more as a mindfulness exercise, take note of any trees or places and thing that catch your attention.

Think about the recent weather in your location? Have signs of the upcoming season started to appear?

As you complete your walk/hike: if conditions allow, stop for a few moments and reflect on all that has happened.

As you return to your normal routine: what did you learn today that could be used in your daily life? What did the Earth Mother tell you?

We are still deep in the Season of Sleep and the Earth Mother may be sleeping as well, but she still whispers and gives guidance.

Augur's Intuition

Overview

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

Submission by Jax K.

Methodology: Astragalomantic Bibliomancy, in ARDA

About this method

A *Reformed Druid Anthology* (ARDA) second edition is 951 pages long. This makes it close enough to 1000 to use three 10-sided dice (astragalomancy) to determine a randomized page number of ARDA to pull a line from. Whatever the verse, line, or sentence is in the book that the dice count points to, that is what we will search for a mystical meaning in: *that* is bibliomancy.



The Roll

Page number: 807

Specific point, line, or verse within section: Line 10

Text of the Verse, Sentence, Phrase, or Line

“While the world is full of troubles”

The wider context of the bibliomantic verse (to inspire further reading!)

This line is from W.B. Yeats' poem "Stolen Child," which was submitted alongside other Druidically-inclined poems to ARDA by Brad Norris. Yeats' poem details the Fair Folk stealing a child away from the physical world. There are many interpretations for this poem, but I think that some of the many feelings captured in this poem are ones of grief, fear, and longing for escape from a "weeping world." The final stanza of the poem says this: "Away with us he's going / The solemn-eyed / He'll hear no more the lowing / Of the calves on the long hillside." The stolen child will lose out on the beauty that exists in the world in spite of all its troubles.

There is a great collection of both original and famous poetry included within ARDA – appropriate, given the timing of Imbolc and Brigid's connection to the flame of inspiration for bards. How might this time of year and the troubles of the world move you to creativity instead of escape?

Other Blogs & Social Media Links

Blogs Curated By Druids (accumulative each issue)

- Jax K's [Tumblr Blog](#)
- *I Talk To The Trees*'s blog [Corey Adventures](#)
- Ellen Evert Hopman's blog [A Druid's Blog](#)
- John the Verbose's [Tumblr](#) (not updated as much, but still a repository of druidic content)
- TheMageiboLine's [Tumblr](#)

Social Media and Links

- RDNA on [Discord](#)
- The *Order of Bradán Feasa* (OBF) RDNA Druid Training Program [workbook](#)
- Oakdale Grove's [BlueSky](#)
- Oakdale Grove's [Facebook page](#)
- Tucson Grove's [website](#)
- Tribe of the Oak Celtic Reconstructionist (non-RDNA) Druid Grove [website](#)
- White Rabbit Grove's [Facebook page](#)
- Oakdale Grove's [Instagram](#)
- Ron Stonemage's [Instagram](#)

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, but 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 Listing](#) on Oakdale Grove's website. 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 2024, the 62nd Year of the Reform (Y.R.) began on the first day of Samradh, which is one day after the 90th day of Earrach. It simply counts the days of each season as well.

- [RDNA Gregorian/Year of the Reform Conversion spreadsheet](#) can be a helpful tool.

Oakdale Grove's RDNA Druid Training Program

We've created a [free training program](#) for the RDNA, and for those who complete the program, an honor society within the RDNA called the *Order of Bradán Feasa* (pronounced *bra-DON FOSS-ah*), named after the Salmon of Knowledge in Irish mythology.

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

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 it was difficult to communicate with the Council 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 developing the new RDNA style Druid training program, and established an honor society for those who complete it called the Order of Bradán Feasa.

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.



Photo courtesy
of I Talk To The Trees.

Peace, peace, peace! ☺

Contribute Content to the Next Issue!

Submission Process

Issues will be released on the day 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.

Send your content to the Gmail account "MNdruids" and include **CORD** in the subject bar. Separate the content you want in the newsletter with a line as a string of underscores (if there are parts of your email you don't want to share). Please especially include the name you wish to be credited with, or your first name will be used from the email address (or "Anonymous" if your name isn't in the address).

Example:

From: sender@snailmail.com
To: MNdruids@gmail.com
Subject: Submission for CORD

Hi, this is my submission to the newsletter. **Credit me as Jitterix the Caffeinated.**

[use a string of underscores to separate unwanted content]

"A Cosmic Haiku"

Sun shines on all things,

Yet some things still can't be seen,

Dark matter floats by.

PS: See also my attached photos for the Vivid Visions gallery.

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
- Propose a topic; you can help make this newsletter be a success!

The *Thank You* Photo!

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



Atop Lone Rock, a sandstone spire in Vermillion Highlands WMA, Rosemount, MN