



Fall Equinox Y.R. XLVI

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A temporary publication until A Druid Missal-Any magazine resumes.

For Submissions: Send to mikerdna@hotmail.com

Editor's Notes

This issue's 32 pages, quite a lot of stuff here. As in the last one, the general theme is "rocks" and "grove selection". I've gathered an article on the spiritual and practical usage of fire. The section on RDNA altars might clarify long tracts of stories in the Druid Chronicles from 1963. Some stories and songs about rocks are also thrown in for good measure. I did a major call-up of RDNA groves to see if we'd lost a few more, and we had lost quite a few, and although I hope to find them later, such is the ebb and flow of Druidism.

Feel free to send your essays, songs, stories, news articles from media, grove news, pass on names of "celtic-oriented" computer games, and do book or movie reviews for me. Send it all to mikerdna@hotmail.com The next issue will address Ogham (more rocks!) and review a few books. They'll be a story contest of meeting the grim reaper. We'll discuss 21 Lessons of Staying Healthy (and not dying). I will also discuss international funerary practices.

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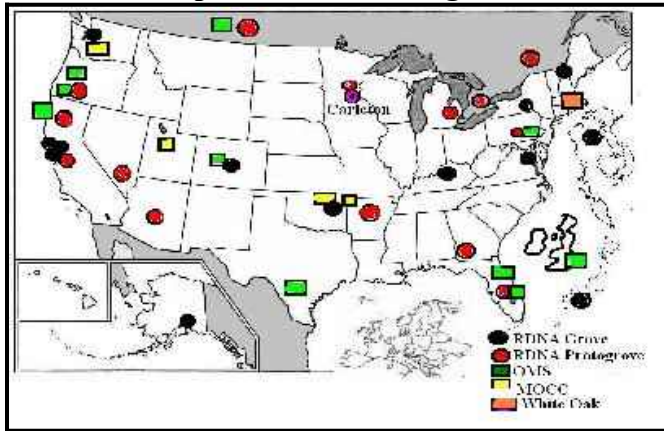
News of the Groves

Submit your RDNA grove or protogrove news 2 weeks before the eight Druid festivals to mikerdna@hotmail.com

Check your grove listing data at <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/wheregroves.html>

The annual grove check-in was performed in August to decide which groves had either closed up shop or had changed their contact information. The groves below are the only ones that we are certain are still in operation. I will update the wheregroves.html page soon to reflect this.

Nov. 2008 Map of Groves, Protogroves



Mango Mission: News from South-East Asia

Life here became interesting in August. The mighty Mekong river went from 5 meters in depth to 30 meters, due to enormous rains in Northern Laos from a hurricane that hit Hanoi and then crossed the mountains. We were naturally so bored here, that we kind of hoped it would flood, and it came within 2 inches of reaching a few million sandbags around the city of Vientiane. Then, possibly at the bequest of the Patriarch of Taranis (Celtic god of weather), the rains stopped during the rainy season for about a week, and the waters receded. Whew!

Location: South East Asia, public e-mail:
mikerdna@hotmail.com, 3 members (family).

(Proto-)Grove of the Order of the Mists: News from Arizona

All is the same for Winslow;

RDNA Grove of the Order of the Mists
(Winslow, AZ)
Protogrove Sept 2005
3 members
contact: myrddynemrys at gmail dot com

Tully

Port Huron Protogrove: News from Canada

Blessings Mike,

This is kirk from the Port Huron protogrove 'Spirit of the Earth Mother' I just noticed on the grove list Spirit is misspelled as Sprit, please fix if you have time, thanks for listing us and thanks for your help,

Hope all is well with thee,
kirk (hunger3377@yahoo.com)

Cat in the Corner Hermitage: News from Colorado

Cat-In-The-Corner Hermitage still here. All information still current. :) (I've been way out of touch because I work double shifts at night, so I have no life. *g*)
-Alyx

RDNA Cat-in-the-Corner Hermitage

a.k.a. Pinata grove
(Denver, CO) September, 2001 a few
MauKatt at aol.com
Confirmed 8/1/06
Currently not taking new members

Nine Oaks and Sacred Well Protogrove: News from Nevada

The Nine Oaks N Mystic Well Protogrove is still as such, a Protogrove.
We are located in Las Vegas, Nevada. We have approximately 16 members (comes and goes).
We are both Celtic and Asatru affiliated (more NRDNA actually)
Our contact information:
NineOaksMysticWell@gmail.com
ShadowDragon999@gmail.com

Whitehorse Protogrove: News from Florida

Ann Feather (shadostr13@yahoo.com)
White Horse Proto-Grove
Sebring, FL 33870
Website: MySpace.com/whitehorseprotogrove

Triplehorse Protogrove: News from Oregon

Aigeann Lus (aigeann@earthlink.net)
The Protogrove is correct
Change MY contact to aigeann@gmail.com
OR
the same as the PG triplehorses@gmail.com

Elder-Linden Protogrove: News from France

Hey Mike? how's life? Hope you're having a good time working for Uncle Sam in Asia.

Here's my update (well, you gave us until the 10th of August, so I'm not too late):

I've been playing with the thought to keep Linden-Elder Grove alive - as a Deep Ecological Grove. It would be a sort of Deep Ecological Reformed Druid ministry - but I've left the idea. Just don't have the time to work on it - though it is a good idea. Perhaps later.

So please take the Elder-Linden Grove off the list.

Greetings from Europe,
Willem Hartman
My site: <http://willemhartman.weebly.com/>

Rockspray Grove: News from Arkansas

Location: Fort Wayne, IN
Public mail: mightywetfoot@yahoo.com
Contact info: Matt
Name of grove: Rockspray
Number of members 10
And web address
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RocksprayGrove/>

Matt

Grove of Branwyn: News from Georgia

sean storm (balin42632003@yahoo.com)

Hi Mike

Our email address is still the same -

balin42632003@yahoo.com

We have now 12 members, including kids.

Yours in Branwyn and Rhiannon,

Sean - Grove of Branwyn

Monument Grove: News from Washington D.C.

Mike,

I'm still just north of D.C. - I see I'm listed as a branch of the Mango Mission :-D which suits me fine. But maybe you should specifically say that there's a branch in Maryland (don't state that it's affiliated with UMD; they might get testy about that).

Peace,

Azeem (gopalani@umd.edu)

Sunset Grove: News from California

Mike, Im here, and all my information is still correct...sorry I havent been on the list much lately, so I mised the cut off date.

Orianna

Shikoku Grove: News from Japan

Hope that you are doing well. It's extremely hot summer as always in Japan. I will be going to Osaka tomorrow - then to Nagato and to Tokyo. My aim is to meet my Witch friends and healer friends, as well as to receive some further trainings in Reiki (even though it's not my prime method of healing).

I'm not active in RDNA but I haven't moved, so you can keep my listing as it is on the website.

I'm still a Pagan/Witch/Druid/Isian and but I'm slightly drifting away from Witchcraft, ironically after my initiation as a Witch last December. I am beginning to look for more powerful magic.

Anyway- I think that's all for now.

Take care!

Ikari

libran@y2.dion.ne.jp

Hazelnut MotherGrove (Online Branch-Look at all the Puns!) NRDNA: News from Online

Location:Internet, Worldwide Web, whatever you want to call it. On Instant Messenger

Meets on the high holy days.

Duir De Danu Grove NRDNA: News from San Jose, CA

Meets sporadically Has Co-ArchDruids, lost its Preceptor, anyone who is at least a 2nd Order, lives in the Silicon Valley and wants the job can apply.

Grove of the Sacred Cats NRDNA: News from Redding, CA

Meets sporadically. If I move there, it'll meet more often. Has an ArchDruid, lost its Preceptor, if there is a 2nd Order in the Shasta County area who wants the job, s/he can apply.

Protogrove of the Local Woodlands Druids: News from Quebec

Name of grove of protogrove: Grove of the Local Woodland Druids.

Location : Campbell's Bay, Quebec- Canada - Ottawa-area

Contact info : Sébastien Beaudoin – Second Order Druid, Potter and Artist

Number of members : 8 +members

Public e-mail : Celticoak@persona.ca

Website address : www.AtelierduDruide.com

Thanx!

Hazelnut Grove: News from California

I (Stephen Abbott) have returned. I'm so sorry I've been gone so long. As many of you know I was sick for a long time. Now I'm on vitamin therapy so I have in fact recovered. I haven't had a severe asthma attack in a very long time. Health is now not a major issue. The other major issue that many of you know about was for almost a year since last August I have had a very shitty computer. I now have a new computer so this is no longer an issue. The other reason why I stopped posting to this group was because of an asshole on this group that constantly attacked me everytime I posted to this group. I hope this person is no longer here.

Now for some very sad news. Two Thursdays ago we lost one of our own. TegweddShadowDancer's SO died of a massive coronary. He was Richard Fulton who most of us knew as Doc. Tegwedd is my "Partner in Crime" here on the Internet. They were together for 16 years. He will be sadly missed. Tegwedd and I will be creating a new ning.com network in his memory. It will be called "Griffin Network.ning.com". I will do a special post here on RDNA talk after it is created. This group will be dedicated to Mythical-Magickal Beast, Animal Magick and Shannaism. The Griffin was Doc's favorite critter. I hope after we get this new network up and running that many of you will join it and celebrate and honor Doc's memory. I hope many people attended the memorial service today. Doc would deserve to have had a large turnout. He was very well loved and respected in the Pagan-Magickal community. For many years Doc was my Preceptor of myHazelnut Mother Grove in all of it's many locations from Berkeley Ca to Sacramento Ca. Tegwedd was my co-AD (arch-druid). He shared this post with one of his best friends Richard Segal. Richard Segal was Tegwedd's ex. Both had attained 3rd Order in the NRDNA (New Reformed Druids of North America). They could have started their own Groves but they decided to remain in Hazelnut Mother Grove as rotating Preceptors. If you want to know more about Doc you can reach me http://Abbotts_inn@yahoo.com

Here is some more facts about Doc. He was a 32nd degree Mason, He was a member of the Scottish Games and the old Renaissance Fair in Novato Ca. I was a long term member of it as well. I was known as "The Wandering Druid". When I wasn't

wandering I did Divination- Tarot Readings at a booth space. Like myself Doc was a member of the "Celtic Clan" at that Renn Fair if my memory serves me right. I have no way of reaching any of those old members. Doc loved being a Preceptor and he played the role like all of his roles with gusto and pure pleasure. I will miss him dearly. "Doc! Enjoy your stay in the "Celtic Otherworld" till it is time for you to once again incarnate on this plane."Farewell My Druid-Brother. I will always be there for you if you need me on the "Spirit-Plane". Your AD(arch-druid) Stephen.

Now that I'm back I will be posting a great many new links in this group's link section. I'm very pleased how much this group has grown since I've been gone. I miss all of my friends here. I'm trying to get a hold of Stacey. Stacey if you see this post I don't have your number any more please contact me at my e-mail address. You can also use my hotmail address: http://Abbotts_Inn@hotmail.com Now I would like to turn you onto some of the work Tegwedd and I have been doing here on the internet. Some of you know that Abbott's inn has expanded. We are now Abbott's Inn International. When she and I create the new network for Doc this will give us 22 networks here on the internet. I have 35 blogs and she has 45. Here are our 2 geocities sites: http://www.geocities.com/Abbotts_inn/index.html and http://www.geocities.com/Abbotts_inn/clasic_blue.html These are works in progress. We need more graphics and music and URLS and Links. If you can help with this let me know. Here are a few great URLS for some equally great Pagan-Magickal networks. 1. <http://www.PaganSpace.net> Tegwedd and I have many Pagan-Magickal-Teaching Groups on this network and we each have a Page and a blog. This network is growing by leaps and bounds.

2. <http://WiccanTogether.ning.com> Tegwedd and I have many Pagan-Magickal-Teaching Groups here and a Page and we each have a blog. This network is growing like the previous one.
3. The next network is from the UK: <http://BlessedBeUKNetwork.ning.com> Tegwedd and I have many Pagan-Magickal Teaching Groups we each have a blog and a Page.
4. The final one I will give you at this time is also from the UK: <http://CeridwensCauldron.ning.com> Tegwedd and I have many Pagan-Magickal Teaching Groups 32 at last count a blog and a Page. Tegwedd and I have our own networks:
1. <http://Abbottsinn.ning.com>
2. <http://AbbottsinnInternational.ning.com>
3. <http://Abbottsinn93.ning.com>
and Tegwedd's is: <http://Dactylian.ning.com>

All of these networks of ours are works in progress. We need more warm bodies to join. New groups to be created. Music and graphics. If you can help let us know. I hope that RDNATalk will continue to grow. I will promote it on the other networks. There are many Druid and Celtic groups on these newer networks. I will end this post by extending to you all a Druidic Blessing"

May the Goddess Bridgit My Patron Goddess Bless You All with Peace, Wisdom, Knowledge and understanding". Your Druid Bud AD(arch-druid) Stephen also known as Stephen 1580 on www.CelebrityPsychics.com and Stephen6580 on

www.keen.com Peace!
Peace!Peace! Awen /I\

Acorn Protogrove: News from Canada

Acorn Protogrove
(Newmarket, Ontario) Protogrove Mar 2003
I r_h_knight@hotmail.com Ric
No Web site
Running silent. Running deep.
Cheers
Ric Knight odm

Rose Rock Grove: News from Oklahoma

The Lughnassadh picnic was a great success. Sandwiches, chips and chatter were had by all in Little River Park. We got to meet Chris's new girlfriend Megan. We also got to meet Stacey and Lila's new puppy Phoebe. Nobody thought to take pictures.

Stacey and Lila have their clean bills of health and are headed back on the road. Jeff continues along doing electric work. Crystal's beetle is assembled and ready for driving lessons. Hel the dog's obedience lessons got derailed and she's starting over in the middle of September. Red the cat keeps sleeping on our patio sofa. He's about to have a close encounter with a flea collar.

It looks like Mabon will be a small gathering instead of the massive harvest fest everyone's gotten accustomed to. Unless my parents are coming, then expect the usual spread. The date is set for September 21, my house.

Yours in the Mother,
Lydia (Mouse) Vandegrift
shadowmouse@sbcglobal.net
Location: Moore, Oklahoma
Public e-mail: shadowmouse@sbcglobal.net
Contact: Lydia (Mouse) Vandegrift
Grove name: Rose Rock Grove
Member numbers: 5 people, 3 dogs, 6 cats, and Fred the houseplant
Still no website address, but we're working on it.



How To Build a Proper Fire

by Saher

Vigilant Flame A vigil! Sure I can do that. So, I'm going to spend a night in the woods all by myself for the first time. All I'll have is a fire, my thoughts and whatever lurks in the shadows beyond my flame. Oh, oh, who's going to build and tend my fire? I've never done anything like this before. If I spend all my time worrying about the fire, can I really

achieve what I'm after during my vigil?

Fire as a partner on our journey As humans it is a fundamental part of our heritage to bring fire into being and receive its powerful gifts into our lives. We all know that there is something about a living flame that pulls the primal human to the surface. Once ancient humans accepted fire as their travelling companion, our evolutionary path was nudged onto a rapidly expanded road. A renewal of that ages old bond is rekindled with each fire we ignite. As a race we have learned a great deal through quiet contemplation or communal sharing around a fire. Traditionally a well balanced fire is the perfect companion for a night of introspection and growth. Unfortunately most people do not spend time with fire anymore. My intent for this class is to assist someone who has little to no experience with fire. Specifically we'll endeavor to provide a guide and perhaps a level of confidence for someone embarking on an overnight vigil. Human association with fire through the ages has given us a wealth of information about fire and how to use it. Reading is good. Doing is better. For each individual the best teacher is experience. I feel experience is best learned in a nurturing environment. I would encourage any novice fire builder to practice, if possible with someone experienced before they embark upon a solo event. Attaining a level of comfortable preparedness with fire allows you to concentrate of what is going on around you during your vigil rather than constantly fretting with a temperamental fire.

Fire is alive If we think of fire as a living being, we can readily describe what we are doing in terms already common to us. Fire must be conceived, born, live its life and ultimately pass on to another realm. If we tend our fires much like a child or pet, we'll soon learn to read the signs that tell us when to feed it, wake it up and get it to respond to our will.

Conception To bring forth a flame there must be a balance of three primal elements: AIR (sky), HEAT (sun) and FUEL (earth). As we begin to conceive our fire it is good to create an environment conducive to its birth as well as its growth and feeding through all the stages of life to include termination. There are many ways to lay a fire; today's method is called by many names but we'll refer to it as a stacked pyramid. Before you set it ablaze it will look something like a Mayan pyramid. It is adaptable for heating, cooking and prolonged light. It is also one of the easiest to build and successfully ignite.

Find a spot Sheltered from strong winds, no overhanging limbs and cleared of dry combustibles. Clear the earth in at least a six foot circle. A slight depression about the size of pie pan in the middle of the clearing would be helpful in controlling the air and later in extinguishing the fire. I do not advocate digging a pit unless you are cooking a pig. Scribe a circle about two feet across with the depression in its center. This will be the inner boundary of your stone corral. Find the direction the wind is blowing from. Just outside of your clearing on the upwind side will be your fuel area. Also upwind I place a bucket of water and a bucket of soil or damp sand with a shovel or scoop. If a spark gets away from you or you need to douse the fire in a hurry you don't want these tools on the downwind side. Many communities have specific safety and permit requirements pertaining to fire, it would be a good idea to discover what those requirements are and adhere to them.

Size matters I build small fires. I find I can do more with less; sustaining a small fire uses fewer resources, is less destructive and is safer and more adaptable than a large one. Those who know me will know that this fire we're building is large for my preference but I find it is a good size for teaching and fits well for our purpose of an all night vigil fire.

Place stones about the fire corral Caution, NEVER use wet rocks, they can become steam bombs. I even avoid any rounded rocks unless they are well above a flood plain. A perfectly “dry” round rock may have a saturated interior and propel a granitic sliver in the middle of the night. Now that you’ve dropped that wonderful rock you’ve hauled from the creek bed, confirm which way the wind is blowing. (It’ll change on you again, that’s what nature does ;) If you confirm the prevalent direction of the wind it will save some grief later. Keep in mind that in many areas the wind reverses direction after the setting of the Sun. Back to rocks... I have two key stones that I look for: At the upwind side I place a low alter or hearth, flat and broad at the line we scribed earlier. ‘Smooch’ it into the soil to insure it doesn’t move much or wiggle when you push it. It can be a workspace or table for you. I like it low to facilitate getting smoldering tender under the kindling and allow me to blow the fire to life. It is also helpful for placing implements and cups on. In windy areas I’ll have another stone to place on the hearth to regulate the wind once the fire is going. Opposite the hearth stone I try to have a reflector stone on the downwind side. For any dark or chilly times a reflective surface of even a foot or so square makes a massive difference in the subdued light and soft radiant heat you’ll have. Even better would be a large standing stone that you’ve built up against. Once these key stones are in place the remainder of the ring is to help you channel the heat and to block the wind, it’s also a way to corral and control the fire. Remember the fire will be living and will seek greener pastures if allowed. For that reason I place dirt at the base of and between the stones to make the fire corral more like a bowl. This negates the need for digging a pit. I like to keep the interior less than 2 feet across. Alright; beautiful corral; if I were a flame I would be ready to occupy. Oops, not so fast, there’s no fuel.

Gathering fuel

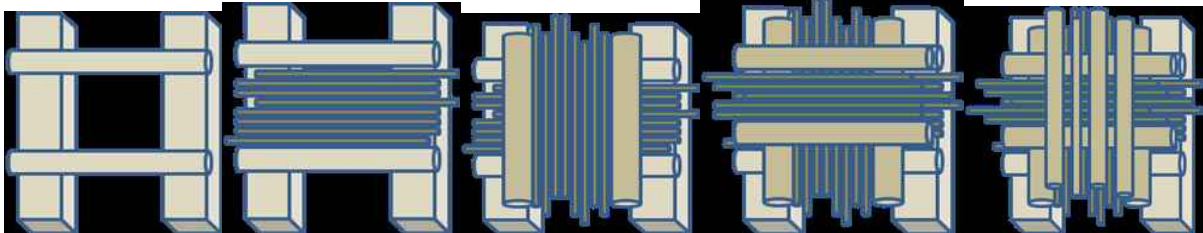
For simplicity and ease of understanding I will describe all fuel in common lumber dimensions with all lengths being about one (1) foot. Gather dry wood that has been seasoned and not recently deceased. Sticks that appear dead on standing trees are excellent kindling candidates. However, most places won’t allow this kind of harvest because unknowing folks will unwittingly damage the trees. Never pull down on these sticks, push up a few inches from their base. If they are good for your purpose they will snap off indicating that the tree has already sealed itself from the branch. If they don’t readily snap off, leave them alone, the top of the branch/tree union is still intact protecting the tree. Hardwoods burn longer and give a better bed of coals. Softwoods start faster, burn brighter and faster and don’t leave as nice a bed of coals for cooking as hardwoods. For an evening vigil a small fire means less fuel to be gathered for the evening. However, you always want to gather more than you think you’ll need. I generally bring firewood into an area where I’ll be spending time. The habitat you are occupying has need of all its resources. Besides, there is a great amount of usable wood going into landfills and this wood is gratefully made available by folks who don’t want to haul it off. Storm damaged trees and broken pallets are great sources. Processed away from your special spot, the sawdust and liter from the cutting doesn’t clutter up your site. That’s one less thing to distract you from your purpose. By the way, nails do not belong in a stack of wood that you’ll be reaching into and walking around at night. Cutting your wood ahead of time will also free you from the need for a cutting tool around the fire. Alone and in the dark is a bad time to swing an axe and it really disturbs the tranquility your seeking. You are here for contemplation, not an axemanship merit badge. Leave the axe and other cutting tools secured away from where you’ll be tempted to get them or perhaps stumble unto. Stack your fuel safely upwind from your fire, within easy reach so you don’t have to walk far and within the aurora of light from your fire so you can distinguish the wood from the raccoon that dropped by for a snack.

How much of what should I gather? This is hard to determine with precision. I’ll give you some guides and encourage you to practice on your own to get a more accurate feel for your own needs. I cut all of my wood about one foot in length for many reasons, (the throat of my bandsaw is 12 inches deep is the biggest one) for this effort I would encourage you to do so as well, as it will easily fit within the corral we’ve made. 4x4 logs, you’ll consume at least 2 per hour for base fuel. Slow steady burning. They mostly turn to coals and are used to maintain the coal bed. They will smolder when placed upon a bed of coals that is covered with ash. Place a few smaller sticks down first so they can get air and flame under them, then blow the flame to life. (I keep a plate sized piece of bark, wood or an actual metal plate for a fan close to me) 2x4 & 2x2 sticks as many as 10 an hour depending upon the amount of light and heat you desire. These are faster burning and produce brighter flames and are easier to catch fire on a bed of coals than a 4x4. These are your friends through the night if you want sustained light. Sticks or kindling are extremely small through thumb sized pieces. I gather a lot of these, you will need a milk crates worth or more. I always make sure that these are protected in case it rains and to avoid an errant spark from causing another fire at my back. They are critical in the birth of flames from the fuel. For quick light even on an ash covered bed of coals, small sticks will readily ignite and give you bright light. They will consume quickly, so place slightly larger pieces on to sustain.

Tinder will be discussed later.

Build the Fire Lay The stacked pyramid is really a wooden chimney that has as its base two logs of fuel. The pyramid will grow in decreasing sized tiers which outline the chimney to the top. I'm going to describe right angles, lengths and dimensions that are not nature's way. We all know that "Sticks" don't conform to the angular ideal. Our fuel will be a voluptuous Mother Nature showing her curvy diversity, my descriptions are designed only to paint a picture. In practice all you need to do is get a stable chimney; sticks of differing sizes and lengths are expected.

Base. Place two 4x4 logs so that they are parallel, at least 8 inches apart and running from the hearth area towards the reflector. They should have the 'slight depression' in the earth between them. If the ground is moist, a piece of flat bark in the depression will come in handy later. The idea is to have a cradle for the birth of the flame and a channel that the flame can pass through and under to reach the rest of the stack.



Tier 1. Next place two sticks, equivalent to 2x2 or 2x4 lumber about 8 inches apart centered across your base logs. You should now have a rough 8 inch square of space framed on your logs. Within this framed area, between the tier 1 sticks, place small pencil sized sticks and kindling, place a lot, leaving room for air to flow between them. The sticks can hang out of the end. With small sticks, choking the air is unlikely. As I mentioned, this framed area will be acting as the chimney drawing air and flame up to the higher tiers. A student of mine once placed a crumpled paper bag at this point thinking it would help, it actually was like a chimney damper and he had difficulty starting his fire.

Tier 2. Two more 2x2ish sticks will now be placed at right angles upon and across the Tier 1 Sticks. I move them closer together, about 6 inches apart. Within the framed area repeat; placing the kindling and small sticks as on tier 1.

Tier 3. Two more 2x2ish sticks will now be placed at right angles upon and across the Tier 2 Sticks. Space them about 6 inches apart like tier 2. Within the framed area repeat; placing the kindling and small sticks as on tier 2. Your stack should begin looking like a Mayan pyramid about now. I usually stop by adding a few more 2x2ish sticks across and on top of the tier 3 sticks.

The birth of a fire

I recommend building your fire during daylight. Safety, convenience and ease are the primary reasons. I also prefer using energy from the Sun to start my fires.

How Tender is Tinder? Tinder is the infant food for our newly born spark. I have a special class for gathering and blowing tinder to life using primitive techniques or sunlight. Most of what I share in that class about tinder is regional; based upon where we're at. For this class the description is generalized. Since a spark has a fragile heat, tinder must supply the fuel as well as allow air. Remember that fire is a balance, so a small spark must have small dimensioned fuel and be able to withstand a small blast of air. "Baby food for flames" Tinder should be absolutely dry; it must readily feed a spark and generate enough heat to ignite other fuel while protecting the spark from being blown out.

This next sentence hurts: **"For the purposes of this class we'll use a match and some torn crumpled paper."** Ouch!

Since we're using paper today, perhaps you could scribe some purposeful meditative thoughts upon the paper before we begin. Fires and strong desires always enjoy a focal point, I find a fire with purpose and a little human desire with the fuel is a friend from the start. Also use a piece of paper that would be waste if not used for this

noble birthing. A single 8.5"x 11" sheet or paper towel will be all you need. What about newspaper? I dislike every aspect of newspapers and magazines. Use them if you wish, but I will not. That's another story. Tear your paper into inch wide strips down the length of the sheet. Lightly crumple the strips together into a loose ball, plenty of airspace is needed. Place the crumpled paper ball upon the bark in the depression between your 4x4 base pieces. Lay a few VERY small sticks upon the paper. The intent is to loosely fill the gap between the paper and tier 1 with fuel that could easily be ignited by small flames from the paper strips. From the hearth side, strike a match and light a lower portion of the paper in several places. Leave your match upon the paper. The paper will accept the spark from the match and heat the small sticks. The sticks will respond by giving off gasses that will ignite and increase the flame. You should see the flames being drawn up the chimney and into the fuel. Soon the flames will be reaching through the top tiers and reducing those sticks into coals. The coals should be dropping into the spot where your paper once was. As the tier sticks begin to burn, add some fresh pieces onto the tiers to take advantage of the flames. Keep the chimney effect going; do not block the top with a huge chunk or a flat piece. With a stick, carefully guide any falling fuel and coals into the area between your base logs if possible. This area will hold your "bed" of coals and will sustain your fire's life through the night. The pyramid will soon be reduced to a glowing carpet of coals with a few burning brands between your logs. Your fire is born.

Adolescence and Adulthood You will want to sustain your fire for the entire evening. Most of the hard work was done as you gathered and stacked the fuel. Check your impulse to poke and manipulate in the fire more than is needful. The combining of elements does very well without much "help". Again, like a living being it doesn't like to be pestered while it goes about its business. For the remainder of the fire's life your job is to preserve the balance between air, heat and fuel. A mature fire will allow you to feed it at regular intervals and will provide you indications of its needs. Smoke is incomplete combustion and is your fire's way of saying "things are out of balance". For instance; when you first add a log to a bed of coals, the level of fuel energy locked within the log is greater than the heat and air. If you allow air to get underneath the log, the heat and air will adjust to compensate for the imbalance. When the flames begin, the gaseous energy of the log has been ignited and the smoke is greatly reduced. Spend time learning to read what your fire needs. Smaller sticks give quicker light and burn fast. Logs of greater size take longer to ignite yet have a more sustained effect. My fires spend most of their lives as a bed of coals. Less fuel is consumed, the glow allows me to see the world around me, I don't dodge clouds of smoke and the warmth is easier to regulate. I'm amazed at how many people cough their selves "cold" & "blind" around a roaring bonfire. The "cold" they feel, even on warm nights, is the sensation of relative difference of temperature. Around a hot fire your face, hands, chest and especially your legs feel massive amounts of radiant heat. Your backside is exposed to the air and is the same temperature as the rest of the world. The night sky is a wonderful heat sink and will draw off body heat rapidly without insulation. This great difference in relative temperature between the front and back of your body causes the "cold" sensation. You would be more comfortable without the fire. The bright flames will also cause your eyes to adjust to their intense light and make all else invisible. Countless times I've been around folks who insist on huge fires; complain that they just "can't stay warm", every time they get close the smoke "gets them", so they blindly cough, stumble and trip their way to their motor homes, incandescent lights and propane heat. For me the ideal environment is a wool blanket draped around my shoulders a glowing bed of coals and a sky alight with stars.

Passing on to the next realm Our fire can be sustained as long as you are willing to assist in feeding and nurturing it. At some point it must be extinguished. I generally let my fires die on their own, in balance 'till the end. Sitting there as your fire recedes is calming and usually enhances my mood and sense of wonder as the morning twilight brings the day to life. An hour or so before I need to insure it is out; I spread the coals and active embers apart so that they lose the communal heat we've allowed them to enjoy all night. Also, I turn any larger pieces so that their live coals are exposed to the air. The increased airflow will cool any smoldering pieces or cause them to consume themselves.

As time goes by you'll be tempted to assume the fire is "out". In fact this fire is probably just itching to flame again. I have had banked fires appear "out" all day and respond to a little TLC to cook my dinner that night. Never leave a fire unattended unless you KNOW it is out. About 30 minutes before it must be out I stir the bed again and pour in some water by sprinkling. The steam from the stored heat will rise. When the steam subsides, stir and sprinkle again until there is no more steam or smoke. I try not to make enough mud that it runs out the sides of the corral. The small depression you made at the beginning would be a good place to pour your water to insure you saturate the coals. The corral is now a bowl, another reason I tamped dirt around my rocks. 10 minutes later, to finish the extinguishing of your fire, wet and stir the ash again, look for any steam, smoke or signs of life. It should be cool enough now that a pass of your hand over the area would not feel any hot areas. Dowse the

whole area very well now. Pooled water on the surface of the ash and charcoal is good. Stir again as deeply as you can until you have a slurry of moist ash. Later, if I can, I scoop this slurry up and haul it out with me in my bucket (fits easily if you had a small fire). If I can't haul it out I then cover the slurry with a three inch layer of damp sand or earth and pour more water upon this mound. I attempt to leave my sites as close to the way I found them as possible, returning stones and raking the ground. My unused wood goes with me for next time or is given to others nearby to use.

Share your experience and skills with others It is my desire and the intent of this class that you have a successful relationship with the fires you bring into being. They can serve you well and enhance your special times in ways that only a fire can. Once you are comfortable with these skills, share. Far too many of us no longer possess even the simplest basic skills that were common just a few decades ago. Having an enjoyable time reacquainting ourselves with the fundamentals of building fire can only expand our understanding of what it means to be a member of humanity. As a human it is a fundamental part of your heritage to bring fire into being and receive its powerful gifts into your life. Such is my wish. Bruce O'Dell --- This is an original classroom outline that I have aligned to the purpose of helping folks prepare for a special event. I would be honored if you found it worthy to share with others. Please include the entire piece including this paragraph. Safety is always the responsibility of the individual; I encourage anyone building fires to acquaint themselves with local requirements and safety precautions.

May the warmth of a well balanced partnership with fire Assist you in your journey towards a well balanced life Copyright ©, 2008, Bruce O'Dell



The Creation of a Druid's Nemeton

(Republished from A Druid Missal-Any, Summer Solstice, 2002)

This is an article by Rhiannon Hawk Fugatt, of the Druid Heart Spirit Grove/Nemeton Awenyddion, on how she set up her Grove site. While Sister Rhiannon uses Welsh deities, the deities invoked can be adapted to the Celtic pantheon of your affinity and their attributes and roles.

Nemeton means "Sacred Space." The Druids of old and Druids of today prefer our sacred space outdoors in a place where we feel or sense Nature Spirit activity. Many Nemetons are located in a grove of trees. Natural places can add a lot to a ritual, especially if you can find a spot that exists along a ley-line or high energy center along the Earth's magnetic grid. Our Druid Grove's Nemeton is in the middle of a forest of silver-firs, oaks, pines, cedars, and dogwoods, twenty to thirty feet behind our home. Before we created the standing stones Nemeton I searched the property by spending time in different locations attuning to Earth's energy there and paid special care of natural vibrational frequencies.

The circle of our Grove is about twenty-five feet across, and around the edges stand twelve stones in the eight directions of the wheel of the year. We spent considerable time creating this sacred space, but it is nothing compared to the hard work that went into the ancient's creation of Stonehenge or other ancient sacred places. These stone monuments, or circles, express the way Druids perceive the universe and we connect with the universe in this circle that has no beginning and no end. These standing stones will stay here to remind future people of our existence and sacred connection with the land.

I found most of the stones in our stone circle by digging them out of the ground near the Nemeton's location. Some of them were very large, weighing up to two thousand pounds. For the larger and heaviest stones we used a come-along, a hand operated wench for pulling them. The largest stone that now stands in the East was the heaviest. I dug it out of the hard clay soil just fifteen feet away from the nemeton in the ground. After three days of cranking the come-along we finally had him close enough to the East so we started to prepare his spot in the Grove, next we stood him up and lodged him into the dig out. Now I'm sure it would have taken a lot less time if we had a tractor to move it, but we decided to do it by hand. The rest of the stones in our nemeton weighed less than a thousand pounds. I moved them by my self with a refrigerator dolly.



If you were to put as much effort into your sacred space, it might be good to get a work party together to help. While not all of us are blessed to have land, sometimes it is necessary to seek out Pagan friendly land owners. Druids who live in cities can create sacred space in your homes but, please be sure you have a fire source such as a candle, for that is where the spirits dance.

The Nemeton is circular, but Druids stand or sit in a horse shoe pattern during ritual. The opening in the horseshoe is where the spirits enter our Nemeton that is in the South. The South is also where we have our altar. The altar is used to create an open doorway for the kindred spirits to enter during ritual. The reason for the altar's location being in the South is that the South side of any clearing has the most sun through out the day. The alter I created in our Nemeton is a trithilian--three standing stones in close proximity capped with a flat sandstone. The altar is a bridge between the worlds. The lay out of the ritual tools on our altar are symbol. How they are placed on top of the altar stone reflects how we relate those symbols with our own inner spirit, and our connection with the world tree cosmology. On our alter we place the symbols of Land, Sea, and Sky, and of the balance between the moon and sun. During ritual we do not step behind the altar out of our deep respect for the Shining Ones or good spirits who may be passing through the opening into the Grove.



A Grove is what Druids call their act of gathering for rituals, magic and meditation. We are the Druid's Grove. We join with others and do the tree meditation at the beginning of our ritual to feel that the peace within trees, also exists within us, and to experience the interconnectedness of our roots growing together. The rituals take place in the Nemeton.

These rituals are celebrated during the solstices, the equinoxes, the four fire festivals, and the healing rites we do every month. The Nemeton has a fire pit dug out of its center. Before all rituals we prepare for the spirit fire by placing oak twigs and logs in a cone shape. Oak represents durability and strength and is associated with the Welsh sun god Llew. We light the spirit fire in ritual during the moment the god and goddess who preside over the ritual are arriving. When we are in the Nemeton all is quiet except for the sounds of nature, the four winds in the trees, and our voices raised in song. We keep a peace around us that allows our senses to awaken and our minds to be open for contact with the invisible world. The invisible world exists all through out this middle earthly plane.

When we had finished building our stone circle I did a ritual to welcome the new stones. This is done by consecrating the stones with offerings that have been blessed by the spirits. First we invite a patron god

and matron goddess from the Welsh pantheon into our Nemeton. We call on the goddess Brúd. She brings with her the flame of inspiration and the creation of fiery spirit energy that dances in the center fire. We call on the god Manawyddan, he is the voyager who sails on the ocean, and over the land. He goes between our world and the other worlds and assists us to lift the veils between the worlds. I invoke Brú and Manawyddan into two white candles. These represent the brightness of the god and goddess and reminds us to keep alive our own inner spark of the divine. The invocation is done with songs and poetry. Then we take the candles and we light the center fire to connect the spirits and us with the Celtic world tree.

The center fire of our Nemeton represents the center of the world tree and the center of the world tree is the Middleworld or Earth. We invite the god and goddess of the rite to dance there in the spirit fires. Then we call the Celtic triad spirits to bless us with their presence. The triad spirits are our Ancestors of the sea, the Nature Spirits of the earth, and the Shining Ones of the sky. The triad spirits we invite into the Grove each have an earthen bowl that contains an element that is attributed to the realm they come from. A bowl of water is placed to the left on the alter for the Underworld and the Ancestors. A bowl of earth for the Middleworld and the Nature Spirits is placed in the center. The Shining Ones have a feather and an incense bowl on the right side. We invoke these spirits with poetic verse to imbue their spirit into the water, the earth, and the incense.

The poetry we use is written by our Grove's Bard. Then we take the two candles around to each stone and pour a small amount of melted wax onto the ground in front of each stone. This is done to awaken each stone to the spirits of the god and goddess we have invoked into the candles, that their energy may vibrate from the Earth that is within the newly created Nemeton. A Druid then takes each bowl starting with the water of the Ancestors, and pours a small amount on top of each stone while invoking the energy of the Ancestor's realm of the Underworld to pulsate through all of the stones in the circle. The Underworld is more distant from our world than the Otherworld, and is usually found through water. The world tree's roots are in the Underworld, so are the past, our ancestors, and our minds. This the Druid says during invocation to each stone while pouring the waters, "May the vibrations of the Underworld, through this stone, pulsate with the luminous light of the Anwyn." The name for the Underworld in the Welsh lore is Anwyn. Then the Druid goes to each new stone member repeating this same process then returns the bowl to the alter giving thanks by words of prayer.

The same process is done to awaken the stones to the energetic activity of Nature Spirits, who's world comes next on the way up the world tree. Nature spirits are part of the creative energy flow in nature, they exist in plants, streams, mountains, trees, animals, and in this Middleworld earthly plane. They can be any size. They work together in a synchronized harmonious flow to keep balance present in the Nemeton. The trunk of the world tree exists on Earth. It is the Middleworld, it is our nature and earthly relations, our physical body's connection to Earth. The spirit fire in the center of our Nemeton is the very center of the world tree and is also in the trunk. To synchronize the stones with nature's energy a Druid takes the bowl of Earth and walks towards the first stone to the right of the altar and says,

"May the rhythmic vibrations of our Earth Mother pulsate with you, and through you, as it does in us. Help us amplify the healing powers of Abred in our Nemeton. Make this a place that will awaken our ability to be more attentive to the forces of Abred."

Abred is the Welsh name for this Middleworld. The Druid then pours a small amount of earth from the bowl over the stone, and repeats the same process with the other stones. The bowl then gets returned to the alter.

Next, we bring to the circle of stones the presence of the Otherworld. We do this by asking assistance from the Shining Ones who have come to us from the Otherworld. In The world tree cosmology, the Otherworld and the Underworld are not the same. The Otherworld is above and more celestial. It is the canopy of branches and leaves on the world tree. Access to the Otherworld is usually through portals on Middleworld (Earth) in areas where there is energy concentrated, such as ley-lines and power spots, sacred hills, stone circles and the like. The Shining Ones that live in the Otherworld are the gods and goddesses from old Celtic lore and legends. We honor them in our rituals with offerings of herbs, songs, and prayers. To merge the light energy of the Shining Ones with the stones, an active Druid takes the bowl of incense and feather and approaches the stone starting with the one to the right of the altar. Sain is the Gaelic term we use for wafting the smoke. The Druid starts to Sain the stone while saying,

"Oh Shining Ones, hear our prayers and accept our offerings. For today with your help, we consecrate our new stone members to make them wholly in the realms of Anwyn, Abred, and Gwynvyd at the edges of our Nemeton!
May the higher frequencies of Gwynvyd illuminate through you, within and without, let the messages of the Gods and Goddesses speak through you to us clearly, that we may hear the truth and feel their hearts nobility brought to this Nemeton."

The Welsh name for the Otherworld is Gwynvyd. When the Druid returns the bowl of Gwynvyd to the altar all raise their hands to the South, above the altar and say,

"Let the powers of Land, Sea, and Sky live within and on the edge of this Nemeton. Let the spirit fire and world tree connect the stones to the center of our Nemeton."

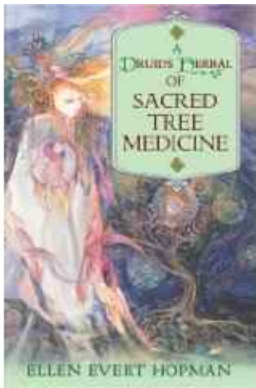
To end this rite a Druid approaches the fire and takes some ashes from the spirit fire and first enters the South saying,

"Voices from the ocean of the four winds! Come! Rush through the stones and spiral into the center of the world tree."

The Druid then sprinkles some ash on the ground in front of the stone, and on the stone, and does this for each of the stones in every direction. The Druid does this while chanting,

"Let the spirit fire and world tree connect the stone people to the center of our Nemeton. By the blessing of all spirits, dance together our ancestors, our nature spirits, and the Shining Ones, we welcome these new stone members into our Nemeton."

All say, "Gadael hi bhod!" Rituals are always followed by a song of peace, and a fellowship feast.



Using *Buad* and *Cles* in Site Selection

By Ellen Evert Hopman

Permitted Extract from “Druid’s Herbal of Sacred Tree Medicine”

The book to be reviewed in the Samhain Issue of *Druid Inquirer*

A Forest Druid should be able to read the landscape of his home territory and understand which natural forces shape the land and its inhabitants. There are two kinds of power inherent in any landscape. The Gaelic words for these two kinds of power are *buad* and *cleas*. *Buad* is the intrinsic or innate power that exists within the land, including natural geophysical and magnetic currents (ley lines), underground rivers and wells, huge forces like volcanic energies, and massive cleansing forces such as waterfalls and the like.

A Forest Druids should be able to “read” the contours of the topography and the vegetation like a book that reveals the hidden powers of the sacred land. For example, land that dips naturally to form a cauldron shape probably has inherent feminine energy. That land is receptive and will cradle those who go there. A glance at the surrounding, naturally occurring vegetation will confirm the reading. Are there flowering trees like cherry, elder, rowan, or crab apple in the vicinity? Are there birches or lindens nearby? These kinds of trees confirm feminine goddess energy.

Conversely, if the land is rugged with tall trees like ash, silver fir, hemlock, or oak, and if there are tall cliffs and rocky outcroppings, the evidence points to more masculine, godlike forces.

Look closely at the herbs growing in and around a landscape feature. Deep-rooted plants like dock point to grounding energy, as does the presence of yarrow. On the other hand, a preponderance of aromatic plants like thyme and bee balm points to energizing, active forces at work.

Thick barriers of raspberries, blackberries, wild rose, or furze are protective in the landscape. Ancient stone circles are often surrounded by natural fences of furze. These prickly plants are warriors who stand and defend a given area, protecting it from prying eyes and casual visitors.

A natural spring emerging from the earth or from a tree stump points to a place with inherent healing power. A swiftly running stream is energizing; a deep lake or river is meditative; a pond is an open gateway to underworld spirits. The presence of the mother ocean connects us with all being through the waters that wash all continents and shores.

A Forest Druid can work with the inherent energies of *buad* to perform healing work for the land and the people. The Forest Druid can channel these forces, trusting that the energies will remain essentially constant (unless devastating forces alter the landscape).

Cles is power that is built up or depleted in a given area by the activity of humans. It is an energy that is developed in the land through deliberate planning and effort, such as the construction of a stone circle or landscape temple. It can be developed in the land when animals congregate for eons in a certain area. When humans follow the animals the power intensifies, and when ceremonies are performed, portals open that send energy down to the underworld of the fairies or up to the Star Nations.

Cles can also be developed by deliberately planting herbs to alter the energy of a place. Try planting butterfly weed and bee balm to attract butterflies and humming birds, which will lighten an area by bringing playful and joyful energy into the landscape. Plant deep-rooted tubers to calm an area down. Large trees will bring peace to a frenetic landscape.



The History of RDNA Altars

By Mike the Fool

Stone altars are like little megalithic projects.

There are a lot of articles on the internet about how to build an altar, especially fancy schmancy indoor ones with candles, salt, mirrors, statues, etc. Although not exhaustive, I will discuss what I know about outdoor altars in the Reformed Druids.

In 1963 during the foundation year, there were a succession of altars, due to vandalism. The hardships and rebuilding evoke thoughts of the rebuilding of the temple of Solomon, but on a smaller scale, to be sure.

Most groves either don't have a rock altar, they use a stump, a portable box or some such thing. Large mainframes computers were used a

few times for Oimelc services at Carleton in the 1970s, with a cloth draped over them, while the computer emitted a special radio-wave producing program of punchcards that was picked up by a hand-held computer, innovative for its time, playing "Hymn of the Earth Mother". Thus, there are no standard models, so feel free to copy or improvise. Altars are basically a place to lay the sacrificial offering of a ceremony, and a place to set religious accoutrements. Some groves also store energy or tools in the altar. I like to lay offerings on the bare ground with a sigil inscribed on it or directly into a fire.

Although in later years, altars were not a very important issue to Druids, they were crucial drivers of early events at Carleton College, affecting liturgy, customs and the course of hierarchical development. I will walk you through the events pertaining to the altar in the Druid Chronicles, available at <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/arda.html> at <http://orgs.carleton.edu/Druids/ARDA2/doc/2part1.doc>

In April/May 1963 when they were planning the first ritual here is what happened:

Early Chronicles, Chapter the SECOND

1. And it came to pass that when the celebration of Beltane (which is the first day of the month of May) was held, there was not yet completed the altar which was to be built of stone, according to the plan which had been adopted by the faithful.*
2. And so it was that an altar which was small and portable and made out of steel came to be used for the service. And it was generally agreed that it was indeed an inferior type of altar.*
3. Thus, a group of disciples began to assemble the rough stones which were necessary to build the new altar. An although their numbers were small in the beginning, those who did lend their help did increase until their number was nearly doubled.*
4. Now when the last stones had been laid in the altar, the priest did step back from it, and did look upon it, and he said: "It is good.^a We shall hold services here around it today, after the noon" (for it was Saturday).
5. And the altar did measure about two cubits high, and about two cubits wide, and about three cubits long.*
6. And it came to pass that there were in number about a dozen people who did gather at the altar that day, and who did partake of the waters-of-life.*
7. After the waters of life had been passed, Howard who was called Cherniack, did rise up (for he was a Preceptor, and of the Second Order), and he did read to them from a paper.
8. The purpose of this paper was to establish for them a constitution;* so when the reading had been completed, the Arch-Druid (for such was the priest to be called) did ask those who were gathered if they did approve.
9. Now all who were present did give their assent, save one who was not yet of the First Order. And it came to pass that when the question was again asked on the week following, all did again approve, save one who did not disapprove of the paper, and so it was considered unanimous.
10. And so after the paper had been accepted in this manner, the congregation of the disciples was then known as the Reformed Druids.^b *



The first known altar was a metal-frame record stand with a cloth draped over it. The second one, the first of stone, was composed of hand-sized rocks taken from the foundation of the Gridley Hall demolition site.

The first four stone altars and most early services were held at Monument Hill, where a stone stele about 4 feet high commemorates the first Christian service, first baptism and first wedding on three sides, the fourth side is blank. That fourth side is ours and expresses the perpetual promethean possibilities of the uncarved block that is Reformed Druidism.

Nowadays, when we visit that site, now long disused, we walk around it one time for each year of the Reform, and then trace a sigil on its blank surface with our finger.

Sadly, there are no photos of the original four stone altars.

Above is a photo of that stone stele at Monument Hill. And this is the surviving copy of the ceremony that they possibly used at the original altar blessing:

Order of Consecration

By David Fisher, 1963

The Exorcism

(The Archdruid shall walk about the altar to be consecrated saying all the while "Dalon Ap Landu", three times)

The Invocation

Mighty and blessed, fertile and powerful, to thee, Earth Mother, we sing our praise, asking that what we offer up to thee will be accepted, and thy blessing of life granted to us.

The Petition

Mighty are thy works, O Our Mother. Mighty are the rocks which thou has turned out of thy side, and which we gather together here as a sacrifice of praise to thee.

X: Grant us thy blessing.

We, thy worshipers, have raised this altar that thy power might be praised.

X: Grant us thy blessing

Attend us now, o Spirits, as we lighteth this fire of consecration.

{Originally "as we offer this sacrifice"}

X: Grant us thy blessing

Here the fire shall be lit upon the altar

X: Grant us thy blessing

Accept this, consecrate it.

X: Grant us thy blessing

As we now hallow this altar with thy Water of Life, Thou, Dalon Ap Landu, descend and dwell within this altar. Sanctify it, protect it from the defilers and fill it with thy power.

(During the above, the Archdruid shall sprinkle the Water of Life on the four corners of the altars.)

The Chant (the Congregation)

Hallow this altar, Hallow this altar, Hallow this altar, Hallow this altar, Hallow this altar, Hallow this altar, Hallow this altar,

The Answer

I call upon the four Spirits to give answer if this sacrifice is not accepted in the Earth-Mother's sight. I call on the Spirit of the North, of the South, of the East, of the West.

Praise be, our sacrifice, dedicated to the renewal of life, has been accepted.

(Here the Catechism of the Waters and the Consecration of the Waters will be done)

The Benediction

Go forth into the world of men, secure in the knowledge that our sacrifice has found acceptance in the Earth-Mother's sight, that she has answered our prayers and that you go with her blessing. Peace. Peace. Peace.

Later in May 1963, the following dire events happened:

Chapter the THIRD*

1. Now after the paper had been read on the first Saturday after the celebration of Beltane, it was perceived that the sky was covered by clouds. And this was not good for a Saturday evening.
2. Thus did the Arch-Druid go and kneel before the altar and invoke the Earth-Mother asking for a clearing of the weather.
3. And the Earth-mother did look upon the congregation of the faithful, and did look upon the altar which had been built to her glory, and saw that it was good.
4. And, behold, there was a great wind in the sky, and it did blow from the sky in the space of less than two hours all of the clouds, yea, even the last vestige thereof. And the sun shone brightly in the sky.
5. And this was taken to be a sign.
6. But some there were those in the area who did scoff, for their hearts were hardened. And they did conspire, saying: "Let us tear down the stones from the altar which has been built on the hill."
7. And they did go in secret to the altar, and did tear at the altar, each with his bare hands, and did take therefrom the stones which had been set there, yea, even down to the foundation thereof.
8. And the Earth-mother did look upon this with disfavor, for it was the defilement of the altar which had been built to her glory.
9. And so it came to pass that in that same day, even as the last stones were being removed, a storm did gather, and there was thunder and lightning and rain;
10. and it was exceedingly cold, and the clouds did not leave the skies for a period of four days.
11. And this also was taken to be a sign.

The stones had been scattered about the site. Did the Druids give up? No, of course not. Keep reading.

Chapter the FOURTH

1. And it came to pass that when those of the faithful who had built the altar, each one with their bare hands, did find that the altar had been defiled, they did rend the air with their lamentations.
2. And they did set themselves there to the task of once again building the altar, that is, of rebuilding it; and they did set each stone in the place which had been appointed to it.
3. And as they did complete their task, the sun did make a brief appearance unto them from in the midst of those clouds which were covered over the sky;*
4. and each took this to be a sign, each in their own way.^c
5. Now after the work was the second time completed, those whose purpose it was to do evil unto the altar did come the second time also;
6. and they did come in the darkness of the night, for they were the Anti-Druids.
7. Now when these Anti-Druids did come, their coming being covered by the darkness of the night, they did come with the smell of drink heavy upon them; yea, were they so filled with drink that they were under the influence thereof.*
8. And they did pull at the stones of the altar, yea, did they tear at the altar with their bare hands, and they did pull the stones away, one from the other.
9. Now as the Anti-Druids did defile the altar in this manner, one of their number did shout in his loudest voice: "Blasphemy!...Blasphemy!" for so was he under the power of strong drink.
10. And it came to pass that the faithful did perceive that the altar had once again been attacked by the hand of violence, then did they again rend the air with their lamentation, so great was their grief.
11. Wherefore they did set to the task which was before them, which was the task of placing the stones the third time in their proper places; but they did fix them there this time with mortar,^d that they might not be wrested therefrom by the hand of the Anti-Druid.
12. And a curse was placed on the altar; and the Arch-Druid spake unto the Druids assembled saying: "Verily I say unto you, whosoever findeth him who hath done this thing, be he admonished to do whatsoever he will to make for him his life miserable."
13. And it came to pass that it was made known to them that one of the Anti-Druids had come to twist his ankle, yea, even to sprain it; and this was taken to be a sign.

The pieces of the second altar had been reassembled and the third stone altar was mortared. Here is also one of three known usages of the Druid curse, and only 4 living people still know it, and they aren't sharing it. Such was the limit of revenge on the Anti-Druids, pretty tame. Now a very important debate come up at this point.

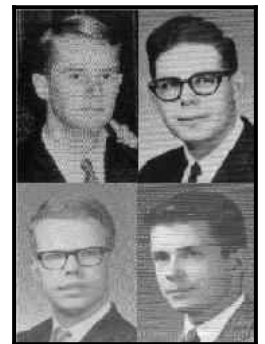
Chapter the FIFTH*

1. And it came to pass that the time was near at hand for the altar to be consecrated.
2. Now it was the custom that when an altar was to be consecrated, that a sacrifice should be made upon it, which sacrifice should be of a living thing, yea, a thing which doth testify to the bounty of the Earth-mother.
3. And the purpose of this sacrifice is to consecrate the altar.
4. But behold, there did arise a dispute among the Druids concerning this sacrifice which was to be made upon the altar.
5. For there were some among them who were in favor of a small sacrifice and some who were persuaded that the sacrifice should be a large one;
6. those being in favor of the small sacrifice having a desire that it be of the living leaves and branches of a tree;
7. those being in favor of the large sacrifice having a desire that it be of the living flesh and blood of an animal or bird.
8. Wherefore, there did ensue a dispute among them concerning the manner in which this sacrifice should be made.
9. And it came to pass that Howard, who was Preceptor, did arise and he spake unto them saying: "Have ye not forgotten that we are reformed, yea, even do we call ourselves by the name of Reformed,^c wherefore we must put behind us those things which do bring offense to our senses;" for Howard was one of them who were in favor of the small sacrifice.
10. But another did arise, who did call himself Jan, for he was in favor of the sacrifice of an animal, and he spake unto them saying: "Have ye not forgotten the customs of old which were the customs of our predecessors before us? Verily I say unto you, nothing will be acceptable to the Earth-mother save it were nothing smaller than an animal or fowl, yea, even a chicken."*
11. Wherefore, there was about to occur a great schism between those on the one hand who were of the first faction and those on the other hand who were of the second faction.
12. And they were exceedingly wroth one with the other.
13. But behold, Jan did rise up and relent his position, asking neither that flesh nor blood be spilt upon the altar; for he did perceive that they were not strong enough and that such a schism would be their end, wherefore he did relent that the schism might not take place.*
14. And it came to pass that the altar was consecrated by the burning of living leaves and branches of a tree;^f and it came to pass that the altar was consecrated on the third Saturday after the celebration of Beltane (which is the first day of the month of May).

And thus the first great schism threatened to split asunder Reformed Druidry over whether to have animal sacrifice or not for consecrating the third stone altar. It is likely here that the consecration of altar ceremony was finalized. Thus, modern Druidry in America made the fateful decision in the spring of 1963 to only use plant sacrifices, a decision subsequently followed by all known offshoots of the RDNA, including ADF, Keltria, ODO, MOCC and OMS.

To the right clockwise from upper left: Fisher, Cherniack, Frangquist and Nelson.

But the drama continued.



Chapter the SEVENTH

1. Now on the fifth Saturday after the celebration of Beltane,^{*} the Druids were assembled as usual; and after the waters-of-life had been passed, the Arch-Druid spake unto them saying:
2. "Behold, how our altar is attacked on the one side,^g and our recognition is rejected on the other.^h Are we not afflicted even as were our predecessors before us?"
3. "Our predecessors of old did take up the sword and fight with those who afflicted them, but they were defeated.
4. "Wherefore, we must not take up the sword, but remain tolerant and patient in our afflictions that there might be peace."*
5. And he spake saying: "Behold, this is the last time we shall be together for a long time. The time is at hand when we shall depart, each of us going his own separate way.*
6. "Behold the flowers of the earth and the beauty thereof; and behold the sky and the clouds and the beauty thereof; and behold all the handiwork of the Earth-mother and the beauty thereof.

7. "Be ye firm in the faith; and as ye go your separate ways take time to pause before all the glory of the Earth-mother (which is Nature); and fail not to meditate on that which has been said and done here, yea, even as the sun does reach it height in the north (which is Midsummer and an important day with us) should ye meditate on these things.
8. "For verily I say unto you, when the sun crosses the equator, shall ye be again reunited here with these thy brethren."ⁱ
9. And each went his own way glorifying the Earth-mother and singing her praises, yea, even unto the very ends of the land did they journey praising the beauty of all that is to be found in earth and sky.
10. Now these are the records which have been made to the glory and honor of the Earth-mother. Praise be to the Earth-mother for the beauty which is in her in the earth and in the sky; all the birds of the air and the animals of the ground are a testimony to her excellence. Even as the dawn of the new day brings new light, is there new hope.

Peace!

The Druids went home on their summer vacation, trusting that the altar would be there when they returned in September 1963. A policy of non-violence was announced, and Druids have been loath to retaliate to such means. The altar did survive:

The Latter Chronicles

Chapter the FIRST

1. The chronicles of the acts of the remnant after the faithful were scattered over the face of the land. Which record is a true and an accurate one of the Reformed Druids of North America.
2. Now it came to pass that on the fifth Saturday before the festival of Samhain,^{a*} a number of the faithful did gather on the hill where the altar had been built in the period of Samradh.^b
3. And this was to fulfill the prophecy which had been made:
4. "For verily I say unto you, ye shall be reunited here with these thy brethren."^c
5. And they did perceive that the altar which had been built did still stand upon the hill where it had been built.
6. And all did wonder, yea, they did marvel that the altar had been preserved in their absence from the hand of the Anti-Druid.
7. And this was taken to be a sign.^d

Sadly this was not to last long. The elements themselves were unkind to the altar during the bitter Minnesota winter. The following events happened in April/May of 1964.

Chapter the SEVENTH

1. Now it came to pass that the festival of Beltane was near at hand; so the Druids did go up upon the hill of their altar, that they might see that all was in order.
2. And it came to pass that they did come up upon the hill, which was the one upon which was their altar, and they did look upon the altar which was there.
3. And they did say, one to the other, "Behold, our altar has not well weathered the periods of Geimredh and Earrach."
4. And they did say, one to the other, "Let us now go and fetch great stones, and place them together in a new altar, which shall be the greatest of all the altars which we have built."
5. Wherefore, they did go and fetch great stones, and they did bring them to the place of the altar. And they did begin to place them together in their proper places, according to the shapes thereof.^y
6. And each Druid did work at the building of the altar with his bare hands.^z
7. And they did fix the stones of the altar in their places with mortar, that they might not be wrested therefrom again by the hand of the Anti-Druid.^a
8. And when they had completed the altar, they did stand back from it and rejoice in its completion; for it was the finest of all the altars which had been built.
9. And the altar was about four cubits long, and about three cubits wide, and about three cubits high.^b
*
10. And there was a passage through the center of it which did extend from the top of the altar down to the very bottom thereof, and through it could pass the smoke of the altar fires.*
11. And it came to pass that they did become apprehensive, for they did perceive that the mortar was still not dry;

12. and they did say: "Behold, the mortar is not yet dry, and the Anti-Druid will come and he will tear the stones from their places in the altar before they have been fixed there by the drying of the mortar."
13. And they were sore afraid.
14. But it came to pass that one of them did step forward, and his name was David (the Chronicler).^{*} And he did offer himself for the purpose of the guarding of the altar.
15. And he did take it upon himself to stay by the altar until the mortar had dried.
16. And as he sat by the altar he did see the sun go down in the west; and all the majesty of the heavens were opened unto him.
17. And he did keep his vigil upon the bosom of the Earth-mother^c as the moon did rise in the east, and yet as it did set in the west.
18. And behold, as the sun did rise again in the east, and all the Earth was bathed in the warmth thereof,^d the Arch-Druid did come up upon the hill of the altar.
19. And they did kneel before the altar; and the Arch-Druid did consecrate David (who was the Chronicler) as a priest of the Order of Dalon Ap Landu.^{e*}

So, in order to protect the fourth altar while the mortar dried, David Frangquist vigiled on the site. You can see his meditation from that experience in Meditations, Chapter 1. Around that time, David Fisher, the First Archdruid, was getting ready to step down from Druidry at the close of his Junior year. Fisher was moving towards applying for an Episcopal seminary school, and the serious turn of Druidry discomfited him. Frangquist used this as an opportunity with Norman Nelson to set up a system of three Orders, the third one being the Order of Dalon Ap Landu, the priesthood. Frangquist was the first to be ordained as a Third Order Druid, followed by Norman Nelson. Soon afterwards they began establishing the fourth to sixth orders. But that's another story.

The fourth and greatest stone altar of Frangquist's vigil didn't last long and the story takes an interesting turn in May of 1964.



Chapter the EIGHTH

1. Now it came to pass that the festival of Beltane was near at hand;^{*} so the Druids did go up upon the hill of their altar, that they might see that all was in order.^f
2. And when they had come to the place of the altar, they did find it not. And they did find there not even the least stone thereof.
3. For behold, all that was the altar had disappeared, yea, even the last vestige thereof.
4. And they did perceive that the altar had been again destroyed by the hand of the Anti-Druids.^g
5. And this was the fourth time^{*} that the altar had been defiled by the Anti-Druids, and this was the most complete and utter destruction that had yet come to pass. For they had destroyed it with hammer and chisel and all manner of terrible weapon.
6. And it came to pass that a great wailing and moaning did go up, and the air was rent by the lamentation of the Druids.^h
7. But behold, they did go up from that place, and they did celebrate the festival of Beltane;ⁱ for even in the midst of their misfortune did they rejoice in the return of spring, and in the abundance of life which is the perpetual gift of the Earth-mother.
8. And they did go up upon the hill which was a short way off; and at the top of the hill they did find a grove of three oaks.
9. And they did rejoice in the renewal of the flow of the waters-of-life; and they did pour a libation of them upon the rock which they did find upon the hill where the three oaks did stand strong against the dark sky.
10. And that place came to be revered among the Druids, for it was the place of refuge in the time of their troubles.
11. And they did call that place the Hill of the Three Oaks.^{*}



It was completely gone this time. The Druids left the site of the Monument Hill and moved to the site that they labeled the Hill of Three Oaks, which is still called that by the campus. In other words, after the destruction of the fourth stone altar, they decided to use whatever was available, wherever they met. One interpretation I like is that rather than be tied down to a specific location, and a man-made altar modeled on Judeo-Christian versions, the whole world had become now a giant altar and religious site, holy, ready to be worshipped upon. So it is to this day. On the Hill of Three Oaks, you can still see the naturally placed rock they found there, slowly eroding due to proximity of large fires. Here's a photo of that natural stone altar in summer/fall of 1964. Chalice falls off easily, but that just adds to the drama, sometimes they still used the record rack to hold the accoutrements as in the opening photo of this article.

Story Corner



Stone Soup

Three soldiers trudged down a road in a strange country. They were on their way home from the wars. Besides being tired, they were hungry. In fact, they had eaten nothing for two days.

"How I would like a good dinner tonight," said the first. "And a bed to sleep in," added the second. "But that is impossible," said the third.

On they marched, until suddenly, ahead of them, they saw the lights of a village. "Maybe we'll find a bite to eat and a bed to sleep in," they thought.

Now the peasants of the place feared strangers. When they heard that three soldiers were coming down the road, they talked among themselves. "Here come three soldiers," they said. "Soldiers are always hungry. But we have so little for ourselves." And they hurried to hide their food. They hid the barley in hay lofts, carrots under quilts, and buckets of milk down the wells. They hid all they had to eat. Then they waited.

The soldiers stopped at the first house. "Good evening to you," they said. "Could you spare a bit of food for three hungry soldiers?" "We have no food for ourselves," the residents lied. "It has been a poor harvest."

The soldiers went to the next house. "Could you spare a bit of food?" they asked. "And do you have a corner where we could sleep for the night?" "Oh, no," the man said. "We gave all we could spare to the soldiers who came before you." "And our beds are full," lied the woman.

At each house, the response was the same -- no one had food or a place for the soldiers to stay. The peasants had very good reasons, like feeding the sick and children. The villagers stood in the street and sighed. They looked as hungry as they could.

The soldiers talked together. The first soldier called out, "Good people! We are three hungry soldiers in a strange land. We have asked you for food and you have no food. Well, we will have to make stone soup." The peasants stared.

The soldiers asked for a big iron pot, water to fill it, and a fire to heat it. "And now, if you please, three round smooth stones." The soldiers dropped the stones into the pot.

"Any soup needs salt and pepper," the first soldier said, so children ran to fetch salt and pepper.

"Stones make good soup, but carrots would make it so much better," the second soldier added. One woman said, "Why, I think I have a carrot or two!" She ran to get the carrots.

"A good stone soup should have some cabbage, but no use asking for what we don't have!" said the third soldier. Another woman said, "I think I can probably find some cabbage," and off she scurried.

"If only we had a bit of beef and some potatoes, this soup would be fit for a rich man's table." The peasants thought it over, then ran to fetch what they had hidden in their cellars. A rich man's soup, and all from a few stones! It seemed like magic!

The soldiers said, "If only we had a bit of barley and some milk, this soup would be fit for a king!" And so the peasants managed to retrieve some barley and milk.

"The soup is ready," said the cooks, "and all will taste it, but first we need to set the tables." Tables and torches were set up in the square, and all sat down to eat. Some of the peasants said, "Such a great soup would be better with bread and cider," so they brought forth the last two items and the banquet was enjoyed by all. Never had there been such a feast. Never had the peasants tasted such delicious soup, and all made from stones! They ate and drank and danced well into the night.

The soldiers asked again if there was a loft where they might sleep for the night. "Oh, no!" said the townfolk. "You wise men must have the best beds in the village!" So one soldier spent the night in the priest's house, one in the baker's house, and one in the mayor's house.

In the morning, the villagers gathered to say goodbye. "Many thanks to you," the people said, "for we shall never go hungry now that you have taught us how to make soup from stones!"



The Stone Cutter

The Stone Cutter

by Benjamin Hoff

There was once a stone cutter who was dissatisfied with himself and with his position in life.

One day he passed a wealthy merchant's house. Through the open gateway, he saw many fine possessions and important visitors. "How powerful that merchant must be!" thought the stone cutter. He became very envious and wished that he could be like the merchant.

To his great surprise, he suddenly became the merchant, enjoying more luxuries and power than he had ever imagined, but envied and detested by those less wealthy than himself. Soon a high official passed by, carried in a sedan chair, accompanied by attendants and escorted by soldiers beating gongs. Everyone, no matter how wealthy, had to bow low before the procession. "How powerful that official is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be a high official!"

Then he became the high official, carried everywhere in his embroidered sedan chair, feared and hated by the people all around. It was a hot summer day, so the official felt very uncomfortable in the sticky sedan chair. He looked up at the sun. It shone proudly in the sky, unaffected by his presence. "How powerful the sun is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be the sun!"

Then he became the sun, shining fiercely down on everyone, scorching the fields, cursed by the farmers and laborers. But a huge black cloud moved between him and the earth, so that his light could no longer shine on everything below. "How powerful that storm cloud is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be a cloud!"

Then he became the cloud, flooding the fields and villages, shouted at by everyone. But soon he found that he was being pushed away by some great force, and realized that it was the wind. "How powerful it is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be the wind!"

Then he became the wind, blowing tiles off the roofs of houses, uprooting trees, feared and hated by all below him. But after a while, he ran up against something that would not move, no matter how forcefully he blew against it - a huge, towering rock. "How powerful that rock is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be a rock!"

Then he became the rock, more powerful than anything else on earth. But as he stood there, he heard the sound of a hammer pounding a chisel into the hard surface, and felt himself being changed. "What could be more powerful than I, the rock?" he thought.

He looked down and saw far below him the figure of a stone cutter

Cooking Corner



Apple Cinnamon Pudding

2 cup Apple juice
1 cup Water
1 pinch Sea salt (optional)
1 cup AM Rice and Shine
1 Tsp Cinnamon
1 cup Roasted pecan or other nuts -- (chopped)
1 Tsp Vanilla

Bring juice, water and salt to a boil in a large saucepan.
Stir in Rice and Shine and cinnamon.
Turn heat to low.
Simmer 5 minutes.
Remove from heat.
Stir in nuts and vanilla.
Let set until slightly cool.
Pour into a 9" square pan.
Refrigerate until set and cool.
Serve squares plain or with a little fruit syrup.

**LifeAdvice: Handle every stressful situation like a dog.
If you can't eat it or play with it, then pee on it & walk away.**

Druid Media



Mabinogi, the On-line RPG

<http://mabinogi.nexon.net/Intro/>

Okay, stop reading now and just click the link and look at the beauty of this introductory mini-movie showing this on-line adventure. Okay, whew!, now that you're back.

The Mabinogi is known to most Druids as a collection of ancient Welsh stories of hero/gods from about the 12th century, likely inherited from Druidical times. This same-named videogame is inspired by Celtic themes and decorations, but from what I've researched, it doesn't follow those stories. Each day of on-line

play has a Celtic season (e.g. Samhain, Lughnasadh) and such, but that is more seasoning than substance. Re-incarnation plays an important roles as your character ages and matures from teenage yeas to old age, you must decide when to be reborn, but you won't lose too many of your skills or booty, more like the Doctor Who "regeneration" than death.

I have not actually played this game, (new job, new kid, new language for me in Asia) but about 300,000 in the U.S. and many millions more in Korea and Japan are fascinated by this game. It is in English, so don't worry. Yes, the 3-D graphics are a bit on the cutesy Anime style, but the game has just just so many facets that I wish I had the time to play it. It is also monitored to keep trouble-makers away and more family friendly, although nothing is perfect.

In addition to defined 2-D text quest-dialogues there are interspersed 3-D combat adventures in richly mapped worlds to explore. What sets this game apart from other games, is that killing monsters is just one aspect of the fun. Like Sim-Life type of games, your avatar can also meet your friends around a campfire and sing together, trade adventure stories, hold a concert. Naturally, as with anything originally popular in Asia, you can custom tailor the clothing and hairstyles of your avatar. All dungeons are randomly generated depending on what item you throw on the altar before the goddess statue found at the entrance. You can explore with several on-line friends together.



You can also simply start your own farmstead, have a pet, go fishing, grow crops, run a store, design and sell goods, and here's the important part. You can get paid in real money for some things. The entire game is free to download and play online, but if you wish to have fancier stuff, that little castle and other perks, you have to pay in cash too. Now that can be a bit off-setting for some, but if it is a world you wish to thrive in, then it is worth it to some. If you don't want to pay anything, there is plenty free for the taking for the more casual adventurer.

Take a look this adventure over a weekend and see what you think.

Bardic Corner

When a Man Builds an Altar

By Mike, DC Grove

Mar 2005, For the Public Domain

Based on "When a Man Loves a Woman" by Percy Sledge

Click link of copy and plug address directly into a new browser window for music:

<http://www.garyrog.50megs.com/midi/whenamanlovesawoman.mid>

Dedicated to Fisher, Nelson, Cherniack & Frangquist and all those other folks into Rolling Stones. Thanks to Sam for showing me his inspiring altar back in 1993.

[Intro music]

When a man build an altar
Can't keep his mind on nothin' else
He'll search the woods
Use the best rocks he's found
If it is cracked, he won't use it
Gods brook no such stuff
Show it proud to his best friends
And he guards its grounds.

When a man builds an altar
Sheds his sweat, blood and tears
Trying to reach out to what he needs
He'd give up all his comforts
And struggle in the rain
It They said that's the way
It ought to be

When a man builds an altar
He gives it everything in his heart (yeah)
Trying to reach out
To that precious world
Oh Gods, please show me your ways

When a man builds an altar
Deep down in his soul
He can mirror that mystery
If his hard efforts make him a fool
He's the last one to care
Locked hearts quest for the key.

Yes, when a man builds an altar
I know exactly how he feels
'Cause O Gods, above, around
I am that man

When a man builds an altar.

[Closing Music- scating – humming.]

PEBBLE AND THE MAN

(Donovan Leitch)

(Aka, annoyingly cheerful song)

Also recorded by :

Donovan; Sudhananda.

Little pebble upon the sand,
Now you're lying here in my hand
How many years have you been here?

Little human upon the sand
From where I'm lying here in your hand,
You to me are but a passing breeze

The sun will always shine where you stand
Depending in which land
You may find yourself
Now, you have my blessing, go your way

La la la la la la la la la la
La la la la la la la la la

Happiness runs in a circular motion,
Falters like a little boat upon the sea
All our souls are deeper than you can see
You can have everything if you let yourself be
Everybody is a part of anything, anyway
You can have everything if you let yourself be

Happiness runs, happiness runs
Happiness runs, happiness runs
(3x)

Happiness runs in a circular motion,
Falters like a little boat upon the sea
All our souls are deeper than you can see
You can have everything if you let yourself be
La la la la la la la la
La la la la la la la, let yourself be

Happiness runs, happiness runs
Happiness runs, happiness runs

Book Reviews



Rise Up Singing

<http://www.singout.com/rus.html>

<http://www.amazon.com>

This book is a gem. By that I mean, it stands out head and shoulders above other songbook collections, because it is so dearly prized by folk-musicians, and the selection was lovingly cut and polished by the authors. I am promoting this book, because it has been “the hymnal” of the Reformed Druids at Carleton and the central songbook of the weekly meetings of the Folk Music Society at Carleton since 1987.

It is a diverse, inspiring and cherish book.

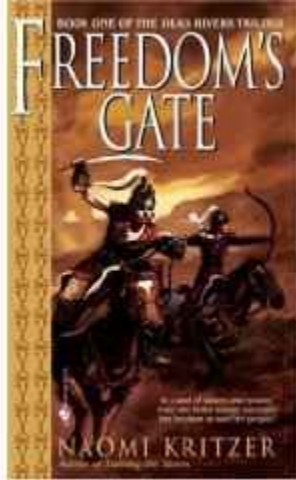
After a long dryspell of 5 years, I picked it up again, and began singing to my newborn son every night, sometimes I keep singing long after he’s fallen asleep, because I can’t stop, just one more song! It is simply one of the most “Druidic” collections of songs I can imagine, teaching you hope and love for the earth and the many cultures upon it.

The publishers (Annie Patterson and Peter Blood) of the venerable Sing Out! magazine have been collecting and promoting the best of traditional and modern folksinging since the mid 1960s. This collection, last updated in 1988, 300 pages covers 1200 songs (with chords) from about 18 genres. The bias is on songs that have made it in the U.S. 40-70 old world ballads are here via Appalachian versions, but you also have pop-folk music like some from Simon Garfunkel, James Taylor, John Denver, Beatles, Judy Collins, etc. As modern Reformed Druids, we tend to multiple cultures of inspiration and this book meets that need. It s a starting point, to explore the vastness of the fields of music.

The official sections (each one about 40 songs) includes: America, Golden Oldies, Ballads, Blues, City, Rich & Poor, Dreams & Fantasies, Creativity, Play, Ecology, Outdoors, Faith, Gospel, Home & Family, Lullabies, Freedom, Struggle, Friendship, Love, Farm & Prairie, Hope, Sacred Rounds, Mountain Voices, Seas & Sailors, Time & Changes, Women, Unity, Work, Traveling, Men.

The average American flipping through this book would know about 80 to 100 songs, many long forgotten in the struggle of a work-a-day life, a folksinger probably 200-300 of them. By meeting with other people, around campfires or sing-a-longs, you will quickly learn the others. “Hey I got this book, do you know any of these?” You can also buy the teaching CDS by genre from their website which will have a verse or two from each song accompanied by music. I am buying one CD every three months, and play it in the car, and then when I get home, I pull out the book and try to sing a new song every night with my son.

I recommend getting the Large Print version, and definitely the lie-flat spiral-bound versions. There are discounts at <http://www.singout.com/rus.html> for CDS (2 sections on each, \$12 for one CD) and buying 15 books at a time for a group. Folk music is the music of the people, music that lasts.



[The Dead Rivers Trilogy:](#)

By Naomi Kritzer

[Freedom's Gate](#) ISBN 0553586742 \$7 2004

[Freedom's Apprentice](#) ISBN 0553586734 \$7 2005

[Freedom's Sisters](#) ISBN 0553586750 \$7 2006

I previously did a raving review about her "[Fires of the Faithful](#)" & "[Turning the Storm](#)" duology in the [2005 Lughnasadh issue](#) of the Druid Missal-Any. Now I must share more about this impressive author from Carleton College, and a friend of mine. You can see her blog at <http://www.livejournal.com/users/naomikritzer/>. Her web-page is <http://www.naomikritzer.com/> They are all available on

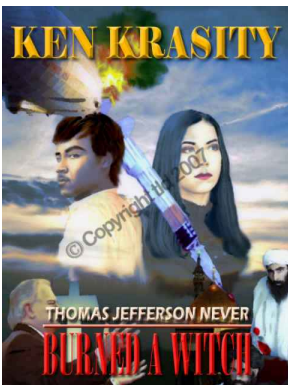
<http://www.amazon.com> but sadly not often on the shelves of the bigger book chain stores.

The Dead Rivers Trilogy is centered around Lauria, a young Greek freewoman and slave-catcher in a compellingly plausible alternative Earth (somewhere between India and Greece) where the vast empire of Alexander the Great never collapsed in the 3rd century B.C. but continued and grew due to the discovery of a means of sorcery to entrap and enslave genies (djinnii), obviating the need for technological and economic development over the following centuries, as the genies could carry goods, transmit messages and assist in nearly any endeavor for the minute class of the rich and powerful. The only thing the genies cannot do is kill a human, which would free one, but they for example steal their weapons in battle, so that you could fight them more easily. As in her first series, religion is empowered and perverted by the ability to do real magic, but not always to the benefit of the common person, as magic and tyranny combine to forestall any rebellion.

As in the ancient world, slavery for the bulk of the population was commonplace, and Lauria was good at bringing them back to their masters. However, she has a change of heart and abandons the Greek cities, to join the runaway slaves on the steppes who live in warrior bands on the edge of civilization. The three novels depict her quest to free the slaves she has returned, explore and destroy the source of power for the Sisterhood of spell Weavers, and free the mighty sacred rivers that were redirected from the homeland of the Danibeki people by enslaved genies. To do this she builds a network of escaped slaves, shamans and disaffected sorceresses and soldiers.

Each book is about 400 pages, and takes about 6 to 7 hours of delightful reading, I finished each on a long weekend set aside for their reading. There are some similarities with the novels of the author Mercedes Lackey, but Naomi's major in religion in college definitely adds sparkles to the daily lives of the people described.

I suggest you try one and see if you can possibly stop at just one.



Two books by Ken Krasity.

Thomas Jefferson Never Burned A Witch

J. S. Malawi, a dedicated atheist in a world of believers, is drawn into a fluid and unpredictable world of religious extremism, anti-establishment rebellion and ruthless self-interest. Christian, Islamic and anarcho-capitalist zealots have set in motion conflicting plans that could cascade into global catastrophe. J.S. must decide whether his deeply-held secular values allow or even require him to help a band of rebels deploy a purloined biological agent that could solve the problem of religious terrorism once and for all, but with potentially dire "collateral damage." Before he can do

anything, however, J.S. must figure out whether he can trust anyone in a paranoid environment where even supposed allies manipulate and sacrifice one another to further their causes.

Join J.S. in this fast-paced, quirkily comic thriller, and enter a near-future world of governments beholden to religious fanatics, of giant stratospheric airships and microbial assaults, of moral ambivalence and treachery.

First 6 pages at <http://clublighthousepublishing.com/EXCERPTS%20&%20REVIEWS/EXCERPT-THOMAS%20JEFFERSON%20NEVER.htm>

\$6 at http://clublighthousepublishing.com/POLITICAL_THRILLER_PAGE.htm

Torque of Tor Darroch

Tarl Grudffyth, a warrior druid on the island of Hybyrnn, is thrust into battle against the Uhtils, a vicious cabal of evil mages who aim to control Hibiyrnn. Tarl finds an unlikely ally in Golsun Molgun, an out of place merchant and scribe who has his own reasons for despising the Uhtils. As Tarl and Golsun race the Uhtils to find the gems of the legendary Torque of Tor Darroch, they explore a fantastic, living world populated by primitive clans, cunning townspeople, devout pilgrims and loathsome, terrifying beasts.

Can they overcome the Uhtils and their beastly minions to unlock the secret powers of the magical Torque?

6 page sample at <http://thomas-jefferson-never-burned-a-witch.com/Documents/SAMPLE.pdf>


\$6 at http://clublighthousepublishing.com/FANTASY_PAGE.htm#THE%20TORQUE%20OF%20TOR%20DARROCH

Movie Review



The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep

When a lonely young boy named Angus discovers a large, mysterious egg along the shores of Loch Ness, no one is prepared for what lies within. He soon discovers that the strange, mischievous hatchling inside is none other than The Water Horse, the loch's most mysterious and fabled creature! But with the Water Horse growing ten times its size every day, Angus finds it increasingly difficult to keep his new friend a secret. Two-time Academy Award(r) nominee Emily Watson (1998, Hilary and Jackie; 1996 Breaking the Waves), Alex Etel, Ben Chaplin (The Thin Red Line), David Morrissey (The Reaping) and Brian Cox (Running with Scissors) star in this heart warming tale from director Jay Russell (Tuck Everlasting) and written by Robert Nelson Jacobs (Flushed Away).

Starring [Bruce Allpress](#), [Geraldine Brophy](#) 

Directed By [Jay Russell](#) 

Genre [Adventure](#), [Family](#), [Fantasy](#) 

Runtime 1 hour 53 minutes

Release year 2007

Movie studio Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

MPAA Rating Rated PG for some action/peril, mild language and brief smoking.



Events



Announcing the Southwest Druid's EGG (Equinox Grove Gathering)

The first annual Southwestern Druid's EGG (Equinox Grove Gathering) will be held at the White Tank Mountain Regional Park in Phoenix, Arizona during the weekend of September 19th through the 21st, 2008

This groundbreaking gathering will emphasize the wide diversity within the modern Druid movement. We are proud to present practical discussions on western esotericism, poignant folk rock imported from England and engaging herb walks addressing botanical medicine, spirituality and ecology. Our presenters represent viewpoints and perspectives from Druid Revivalry as well as Celtic Reconstructionism. Although this gathering is being hosted by members of several different Druid Orders, it is not restricted to those who walk a Druid Path, it is open to adherents of all spiritual paths.

Associated Orders of participants;
Order of WhiteOak (Ord na Darach Gile)
The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids (OBOD)
The Reformed Druids of North America (RDNA)
Ancient Order of Druids in America (AODA)

Tentative Schedule of Events

Friday, September 19th 2008

- *2pm to 5pm- Arrival and setup time for participants and those who will be camping
- *5pm to 6pm- Opening Dedication, Introductions and Blessing of the Gathering.
- *Remainder of Friday evening as a "social mixer" with Paul Mitchell entertaining

Saturday, September 20th

(Around 9:00 AM) First Half of Gordon Cooper's Workshop

*Lunchbreak

*Second Half of Gordon Cooper's Workshop

Gordon Cooper, Archdruid of the South for the AODA Grand Grove will be giving a day long workshop on Victorian Esotericism and Spirituality. This roller coaster ride through the 19th century paradigms that form much of the core of modern Western Esotericism and magic will be supplemented with notes, several participatory opportunities and hand outs. Gordon's engaging style and encyclopedic knowledge will leave you with your jaw hanging. This will be Gordon's first public presentation in several years and it promises to be well worth the wait! Prepare to be amazed and enlightened!

(Around 7:00) Paul Mitchell Concert

Paul comes to us from the largest Druid Order in the world, the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids (OBOD) where he has been referred to as the "spokesperson for modern Druidry". His music is an

attempt to document much of the modern pagan "scene". His songs are influenced by the many characters he has met on his own spiritual journey. Originally inspired by the Broomstick Rally in Plumpton, Paul got together with Tony Lee to form "'The Astaroth, Astaroth, Astaroth - Hey That's a Great Name For a Band' Band". After several years playing songs around campfires and the odd pagan conference or two, Paul recorded "Far Better Pagan" and launched it at the Pagan Federation National Conference in 2000. A few more gatherings followed. Paul then went on to record "The Drinking Times", highlights of which include a well respected kazoo solo. More recently he has been blessed with copies of live recordings and has amalgamated some of these to release "Arch Druid - Live and Dodgy". All of Paul's CDs are available if you would like to buy them. Either contact Paul directly, or you can go to <http://www.myspace.com/pagansatire>

Sunday, September 21st

(Around 9:00 am)

*Dr. Kenneth Proefrock's Native Southwestern Herbology Workshop

Kenneth is a Celtic Reconstructionist Druid, a member of the Order of WhiteOak Druids as well as OBOD and AODA. He has been a practicing Naturopathic Physician in Northwest Phoenix for the past 12 years, with an emphasis on Medical Herbalism. He is a regular presenter at major botanical medicine conferences throughout the United States. This workshop will be an experiential foray into the realms of native plant lore, plant spirit medicine, and desert ecology.

***Petroglyph Plaza hike**

*(late afternoon) Grove Ritual/Alban Elved Ritual

*(evening) Official Closing of the Southwestern Druid's Equinox Grove Gathering of Fall 2008

Monday, September 22nd

*(morning) All participants and campers to be breaking camp

Please, if you are definitely going to be in attendance (and especially if you are going to be camping) please let us know at 623-977-0077. We don't need detailed information about you, we merely need to know roughly how many people will be in attendance and who will be camping so adequate space can be provided.

As a reminder to those who will be attending, this will be a "pack it in, pack it out" situation. Every person will be responsible for their own trash. Also, NO GLASS CONTAINERS are allowed within the park. We have the Group Campground reserved, which has Ramadas, showers, barbecues, and fire pits (although there may be fire restrictions due to the time of year).

About the White Tank Mountains regional park: Nearly 30,000 acres makes this the largest regional park in Maricopa County. Most of the park is made up of the rugged and beautiful White Tank Mountains on the Valley's west side. The range, deeply serrated with ridges and canyons, rises sharply from its base to peak at over 4,000 feet. Infrequent heavy rains cause flash floodwaters to plunge through the canyons and pour onto the plain. These torrential flows, pouring down chutes and dropping off ledges, have scoured out a series of depressions, or tanks, in the white granite rock below, thus giving the mountains their name. The park is a virtual treasure trove of prehistoric Native American ruins and petroglyph sites. More info can be found at http://www.maricopa.gov/parks/white_tank/

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I'll try to give credit to whoever the original author is, and they retain the copyright to their works, and we'll reprint it one day in a future binding also. Nasty works will not be published. Although my standards are not sky-high, incomplete works will be nurtured towards a publish-able form. Submissions are accepted from other publications and organizations, so you need not be a formal member of the RDNA to have your items published.

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'They never quite finished it - it was probably over budget!'