



**Samhain Issue,
Year of the Reform “L”
Oct 26, 2012 c.e.
Volume 29 Issue 7**

Blessings upon you all. Remember the events of 50 years ago, the dark age of the Cuban missile crisis when the world teetered on the edge of Nuclear War. And yet peace prevailed, and in the course of the next 12 months, the Reformed Druids arose, the Peace Movement began, a president died, and the sixties truly began.



Samhain is likewise a time of change, when Druids find it harder and harder to go outside, and spend more and more time inside, figuratively and literally. Spend it well with your visiting friends and ancestors. Share the fruits of that introspection, and contemplate the cessation of life’s hustle and bustle, and the quiet times. Read more about meditations in this issue.

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NEWS OF THE GROVES

All World's Grove: News from Rochester, NY

Doing well.

Monument Grove of Alexandria: News from Virginia

Neck deep in songs, poetry and story as Time of Sleep approaches. May begin to play the harp again. Itching for Halloween. Reading lots of books by Druids and listening to old Druid podcasts.

I've realized, I read and post to Druid groups on Facebook far more than most average and sane Druids. Maybe time for better life balance?

As always, still waiting for people to stop by and visit. Serving the Washington D.C. capital region. Contact mikerdna@hotmail.com

MOCC News

For those who have an interest in goings on, or who wish to make your thoughts on the matter accessible, the MOCC is going into it's Samhain Convocation, and is going to vote on a couple issues dealing with our Rule, which serves as part of our founding documents and acts as kind of a rudimentary Constitution and Bylaws (when taken together with the Acts of the Archdruid and Acts of Convocation in the MOCC's various bodies). It proposes adding the description of the MOCC as a 'Church' to the Statement of Purpose and add 'in the public domain' to it's proprietary clause. Because the MOCC is a grandchild group of the RDNA, because there is some crossover membership between the MOCC and other bodies in the Reform, and because of our seeking other voices beyond our body in this issue, we are extending the privilege of vote here, too. The actual vote is going on at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/moccgroveofthethreerays_2010 in the Polls section. Feel free to join the group and let your voice be heard on the matter.

The Living Druids – Update!!



Update 10/15/2012

For some Druids, the crossing of Samhain symbolizes the beginning of the “Season of Sleep” of the Earth Mother. As many of you know, I chose to retreat into quiet contemplation over the summer with regard to The Living Druids, saying that I would be back to talk more after Samhain.

The small private Facebook page has barely seen activity since June, and many of us who came together to chat about this vision haven’t spoken since then.

After some reflection, and pondering upon current events in the realm of Druidry, the state of Nature, and the state of our crossroad in the world between “The Collective vs. The Individual” – I realized that I’d been approaching the formation of this group – by committee – to an extent that ideas and objectives became far too diluted, and far too splintered from the original intent – the sovereignty of the individual Druid and his or her direct experience.

While I will still be honoring my self-commitment to reflection until Samhain, the winds have shifted in me, and I realize now more than ever that sometimes a “Sovereign Druid” must take a step forward and bring about their radically new paradigm into the world on their own two feet. If successes happen, this idea will bear fruit and benefit many. If failure ensues, then the failure lies only with the investment of the founder (me).

Democracy sometimes calls us to test a free and democratic marketplace of ideas brought forth by individuals. Also, the protection of the clarity of vision, mission, and purpose in a fledgling child, idea, or organization often needs the nurturing and care of its parent or inventor before it is released to grow and morph in the larger world.

With that, a preview of more ideas are brewing and fermenting:

- The development of a Code of Ethics for members of The Living Druids
- A membership model that fosters the Sovereignty of the individual Druid, and his/her self-responsibility for learning, growth, and self-development.
- Opportunities to share our uniquely inspiring experiences to inspire others.
- Resources for Druid Practitioners.
- A structure that is fiscally sound relying upon nominal and voluntary membership fees, sponsorship opportunities, and potential advertising revenue. Perhaps also FREE individual membership in the style of a Mainstreet Chamber of Druids.

More information and possible timelines for launch will be forthcoming after Samhain 2012.

To the Deeper Journey,
Scott Schumacher



RDG NEWS

CONSTITUTION OF THE REFORMED DRUIDS OF GAIA

We the Reformed Druids living upon the Planet Gaia, Seventh planet in the Solar System of Lugh, in the Milky Way Galaxy, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure Tranquility, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Be'al to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Reformed Druids of Gaia.

ARTICLE ONE

The name of this organization shall be The Reformed Druids of Gaia and it shall be an autonomous collective of the Reformed Druid movement.

ARTICLE TWO

The Basic Tenets of North American Druidism, as set forth in The Book of Law, are these:

- 1) The object of the search for religious truth, which is a universal and a never-ending search, may be found through the Earth-Mother; which is Nature; but this is one way, yea, one way among many.
- 2) And great is the importance, which is of a spiritual importance, of Nature, which is the Earth-Mother; for it is one of the objects of Creation, and with it do people live, yea, even as they do struggle through life are they come face-to-face with it.

ARTICLE THREE

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Reformed Druids of Gaia is to invoke a web of knowledge, mythos and experience that provides a framework for reconnecting with the Earth Mother, and re-gathering her progeny through tribal collectives consecrated to responsible conservatorship and progressive cognizance within the ever evolving tradition of Neo-Pagan Druidism.

ARTICLE FOUR

1) Any person, regardless of race, gender, color, culture, age or sexual preferences may become a member of this organization upon presenting a petition, which may be oral, stating that she or he believes in the Basic Tenets of North American Druidism, as set forth in The Book of Law in The Druid Chronicles, and that she or he further believes in and agrees with the self-definition of this Branch of the Reform.

2) A member of the Reformed Druids of Gaia shall be defined as one who:

- A) Has affirmed that they are in agreement with the two basic tents of Reformed Druidism.
- B) Has paid the initiation fee.

3) The word "Druid" shall be construed to mean a member of either gender and the word "Priest" shall likewise be construed to mean a member of either gender, both genders being equal under this document in all ways.

4) There are three classifications of members:

A) A Solitaire is a Druid who is otherwise not affiliated with any other body within the Reformed Druids of Gaia and is a sole practitioner of Druidism.

B) A Grove is an autonomous collective of Druids within a specified locality.

- 1) A Proto-Grove is a beginning, or pupae form of a Grove wherein a minimum of three Druids have decided to form a local autonomous collective.
- 2) A Proto-Grove becomes a Chartered Grove, and receives a Charter from the Mother Grove when these three conditions are met:

- a) The group has existed continuously for one year and one day;
- b) One member of the group has been ordained to the 3rd Order; and
- c) Two additional members have been initiated to the 2nd Order.

C) An Order is an extra-local autonomous collective of Druids who may also be Solitaires or members of Groves or Proto-Groves. At the time of the enacting of this Constitution, there are four Orders:

- 1) The First Order, which consists of all those Druids who have affirmed or otherwise acknowledged the Two Tenets of the Reform.
- 2) The 2nd Order, which consists of all those 1st Order Druids who have undergone an initiation rite, and who have successfully completed a course of study laid out by the Mother Grove.
- 3) The 3rd Order, which consists of all those 2nd Order Druids who have answered to call to the Priesthood of the Reform, have been mentored by another Priest; have undergone an overnight vigil in a forest or wilderness area of Mother Gaia, and who have been duly ordained by a 3rd Order Priest of the Reform whose lineage is traceable to the original Senior Archdruid of the Redwood Coast.
- 4) The Order of the Mithril Star is the educational Order of the Reformed Druids of Gaia, and is charged with authoring all study materials and guides as needed and as called for. Membership in the Order of the Mithril Star is open to all members of the RDG, regardless of classification. Leadership of the Order of the Mithril Star is invested in a Patriarch or Matriarch, who serves a lifetime term (or until they see fit to retire) and is appointed by the Senior Archdruid of the Redwood Coast.
- 5) Other Orders may be established as needed or desired for purposes of edification, folly or whimsy by any three 3rd Order Druids who feel so called to constitute such, by petitioning the Senior Archdruid of the Redwood Coast who will appoint a Patriarch or Matriarch to lead the new Order.

ARTICLE FIVE

Executive Branch:

- 1) The Executive power shall be invested in a regular Grove of the Reform located in the Redwood growing region of Northern California, and referred to as the Mother Grove of the Reformed Druids of Gaia. The spokesperson and executive officer shall be the Archdruid of the Mother Grove, referred to as the Senior Archdruid of the Redwood Coast.
- 2) The Mother Grove is charged with the execution of the day to day business of the Reform.

ARTICLE SIX

Legislative Branch:

- 1) The Legislative power shall be invested in an extra-Grove body called the Nemeton of Dalon ap Landu, or NoDaL. The membership of NoDaL consists of all those Druid members of the Reformed Druids of Gaia who have been ordained to the 3rd Order Priesthood of the Reform.
- 2) The business of the NoDaL shall be conducted using the usual protocols of Parliamentary Procedure and decisions shall be made by consensus vote of members present in meeting.

ARTICLE SEVEN

Judicial Branch:

The Judicial Branch shall be invested in an extra-Grove body called the Provisional Council of Archdruids, or PCoA. The membership of PCoA consists of all those Druids who have been elected to serve as Archdruid of a local Grove, or who are administering a Proto-Grove.

ARTICLE EIGHT

This Constitution may be amended by a consensus vote of the members of a Convention or Yearly Gathering of the Mother Grove, Nemeton of Dalon ap Landu, and Provisional Council of Archdruids and in two consecutive

meetings, a quorum being present of members of each body being present. A quorum for this and all purposes shall be taken to be two-thirds of the members of the Convention.

ADOPTED this 54th day of Foghamhar, in the Year of the Reform 44, being the date of 23 September, 2006 in the Common Era, by



“SO SAY WE ALL!!”

AMENDMENT ONE

Whereas the dawn of the Reformed Druids of Gaia represents the beginning of a new age of Reformed Druidry, the calendar of the Reform shall be reset beginning the forthcoming Samhain, on which will begin the First Day of Year One of the Gaian Reform (YGR), being also the 1st Day of the Second Age of Reformed Druidism.

Poems

Smoke

My sole feels like it will blight and wither, so
full of sorrow
Grim darkness overtakes, shrouded in eerie
gloom
The pounding pain is incessant, relentless
Seeking that tranquil bliss
Compelled to plead for the caress of Smoke
I feel the gentle rustling on the breeze as she
arrives
My mind trying to dismiss what my heart knows
Like a nightingale the smell of magic fills the air
See the faint
iridescent glimpse of a wing pass
As she busily sweep and cleans my aura
Smoke weaves her magic Fae spell
As sweet relief sings blessedly
Speaking ever so deeply with my soul
Pain enticingly removed from every dark recess
Replenished with luminous, polished calm
In a breath, Smoke is back in her enchanted
realm
Leaving behind only her essence for me to honor

Karen Cummings 09/15/12

A Frozen Moment

On Gossamer wings she floats
Resting at the edge of an ancient grove
A deep blue mountain standing tall at her back
Catching the silver glistening of the moon
Among giant ferns she sits to prepare
Gathering the circle, herbs and resins
The cauldron, a spark of spirit
A handful of petals burn in the flame
Grey haze lifting, twirling, to weave around the
tree tops
The sweetest smells fill the air
As the coldness of the night settles near
The forest begins to sing it's night time song
All the while the scents, so alluring
Wafting, drawing everything into the circle
fragrant
Within the deepest green she waits
A killdeer's shrill call heard in the distance
Like a siren announcing the arrival of
The Greenman she knows from the labyrinth of
her dream
As he caught her gaze in a frozen moment
The perfume of her magic beckons him close
Hum of lips in the ache of night
Evermore the forest beckons them
Drunk from lovers embrace
They fade into the mists of eternity
Karen Cummings 09/15/12

The Journey

During the twilight of an unborn dream
Colored leaves are fluttering down
Dancing in the soft dark breeze
Simultaneously Raven wings swoop upward
Onto a beckoning branch
Betwixt the worlds, lingering,
Eyes entranced, searching out over the landscape
Peer between the veil of time and space
Feel the rushing wind
Sense the rapture of a majestic forest...focus,
Silver moon shines, touching each glistening
feather
Join the darkness, wander the crystal stars
Through the shadowy mist branches form a
circle
Sacred circle, spiritual planting
Swirling roots are calling with sweet voice
The wings must land again
On the green summoning cedar branch
Silhouette against the deep of a cobalt sky
Grounded wings still, dusk eyes quiet
Slumber in the cradle of an enchanted journey
Karen Cummings 09/15/12

ANCESTORS

Your messages I hear clearly,
Your paths i walk proudly
your lessons I learn faithfully
...Your words I speak lovingly

I see your spirit in the land
Your silent guidance in my hand
your battle scars within my heart
Your many secrets I 'll take part

Your messages I hear clearly,
Your paths i walk proudly
your lessons I learn faithfully
Your words I speak lovingly

Your whispers on the wind,
your wisdom threads through my kin,
As stoic as the mighty trees,
as playfull as the waves on seas.

Your messages I hear clearly,
Your paths i walk proudly
your lessons I learn faithfully
Your words I speak lovingly

Rugged as the mountain tops,
solid as the stones and rocks,
ancestors before me,
you've left your marks so I can see.

Your messages I hear clearly,
Your paths i walk proudly
your lessons I learn faithfully
Your words I speak lovingly

There comes a time within the year,
The veil is thin I feel you near,
I thank you for the gifts you bring,
your drumbeats in my soul ring.

Your messages I hear clearly,
Your paths i walk proudly
your lessons I learn faithfully
Your words I speak lovingly....

(J.anglehart october 2012)

Echoes Of Change

Echoes of change float on mountain breeze, it skips, it snaps and scurries with ease. Whistling tunes, and forming it's song, it does, lilt and reel and dance all along.

It rides it current, in lofty heights, it caresses it cajoles in great might. You drift away like a floating cloud, you feel the power, in and around.

Teasing, taunting drifting freely, it does pull and drag over rock earth and sea. It covers the land and envelops the sea, it gives breath to you, it gives breath to me.

There is not a place where it doesn't speak it leaves you feeling humbled and meek. It can howl and scream and whisper your name, echoes of change and not of the same.

The gifts of change it does animate all, from fluttering leaves to the mighty snow squall. Echoes of change let your spirit, fly free, limitless heights in wafy cloud sea.

By
Penny Young

Hiraeth

By
Penny Young

The mountains do call and echo my name, the land of my fathers and those before i came. I stand and covert all that i see, the heather, the grass, the deep, rooted tree.

Down in the valley, where all is so green, the peaks, the troughs, the hilltops, i have but seen. Hedgerow and sheep, patchwork the scene, and the wily fox, stalks so keen.

Hiraeth, Hiraeth, i hear you call me, land of my fathers, myths and legends be. I speak to the mountains, as they speak to me, my kin does call, and i call thee.

Echos of the past, stir me, Hiraeth, Hiraeth come to me.
Child of the oak, dragon borne be , Hiraeth, Hiraeth i seek to find thee.

Grounded and rooted, in this earth, this land, this soil, that did give me birth, I perch on mountain, and sing to thee, cascading Awen's over, rock, root and tree.

Hiraeth, Hiraeth, you call to me, i will answer, and travel over, land, earth and sea.

Whispers on the wind, encompass me, the Hiraeth i carry, where i am or where i be.

Yule Is Near
Brigid Sands

Soon comes the long sleep
Soft and white the winter snow
Evergreen the Holly and the Pine
Neath the starlit night

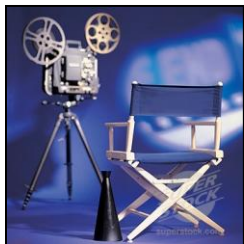
Round the hearthfire sit my love and I
And all our pets snug and warm
Holly King you grace our hearts
Your boughs upon the mantle

Wheel of life the circle turns
Seedtime and harvest, fallow ground
As the sun its path across the sky
Brings the seasons of my life

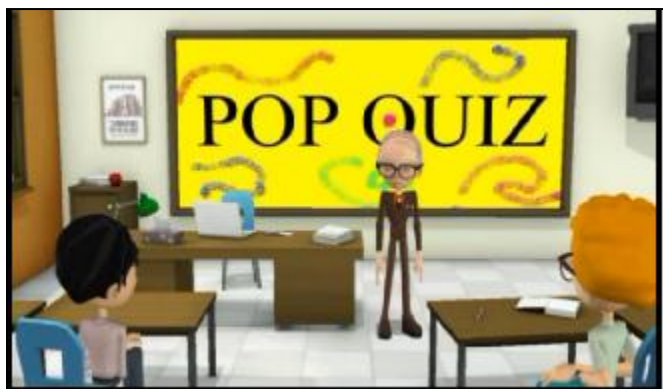
Manger scene and corolers sing
Yule has come again
With eggnog and rum, stockings hung
Feasting and gift giving a delight

Or greet the morn in grateful rite
Awed by Nature' s winter glory
Lift a toast to Lord and Lady
And dance upon the new laid snow.





Video Productions of Druids



Season One Quiz for Desperate Druids

<http://youtu.be/RrsR58rNOdc>

Read instructions first, you need 30+ min., a quiet room, and maybe print the quiz sheet!!)

(CC) Peter has a bizarre dream and undergoes a rigorous quiz in his sleep, comprising sixty questions on the liturgy,

organization and beliefs of Reformed Druidism; in addition to his knowledge of the characters and story line trivia from the first 16 episodes of Season One.

Hopefully, our viewers can achieve a score over 500 points too? While the CC button on YouTube can translate the spoken parts into different languages, the printed questions cannot be translated. To make the test easier for those with poor eye sight or difficulty reading, or slow with English, you can print out the whole written test at <http://www.rdna.info/test.doc> and check your answers at <http://www.rdna.info/answer.doc> (no peeking!!)

Based on your score, you can download an achievement fan badge graphic for posting on your facebook site!

700-960 Points - Level 4 - <http://www.rdna.info/a.jpg>

550-699 Points - Level 3 - <http://www.rdna.info/b.jpg>

400-549 Points - Level 2 - <http://www.rdna.info/c.jpg>

001-399 Points - Level 1 - <http://www.rdna.info/d.jpg>

The animated Desperate Druid series will have 60 episodes when completed and will cover the education and adventures of Peter as he joins the odd Jackpine Grove of Ypsalantu University in Michigan. They are confronted by numerous supernatural problems and all-too-real dysfunctional group dynamics. However, in the course of the series, you will learn about Reformed Druidism.



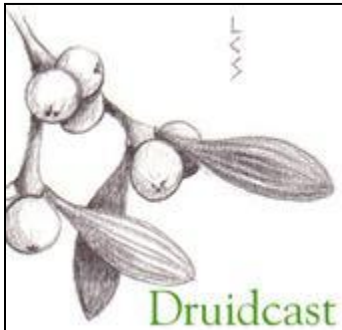
Now **THIS** is interesting: <http://youtu.be/0a1hv2pG6-A>
TIME OF THE SIXTH SUN Philip Carr-Gomm
www.youtube.com

An excerpt from the upcoming film **TIME OF THE SIXTH SUN**...Philip Carr-Gomm discusses the symbolic meaning of the Long Man of Wilmington from a Druid perspective...



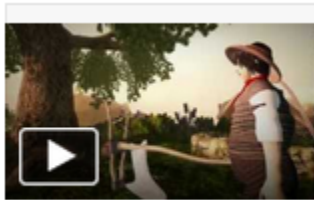
History Channel series "Lost Worlds" features the Pagans of The Orkney Islands. Locations: Skara Brae and the Ring of Brodgar.

<http://youtu.be/BtnfEWn6Rn0>



DruidCast podcast episode 67 is now online and on iTunes. http://traffic.libsyn.com/druidcast/DruidCast_SHOW67_OD.mp3

With a wonderful comparative lecture comparing our modern concept of bardism, with what ancient bards did to earn their living, and examples of final survivors of bardic tradition in Finland and the Balkans in the 19th century.



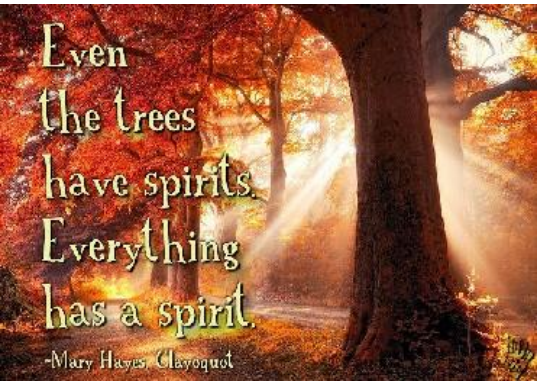
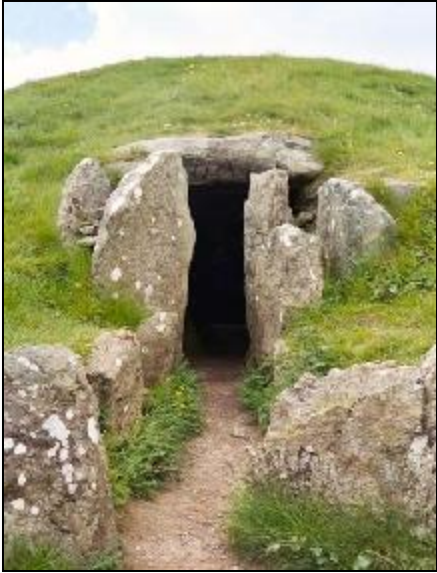
The Tree Of Life
www.youtube.com

PLEASE SIGN & SHARE THE PETITION TO SAVE OUR ANCIENT FORESTS, HERE (<http://bit.ly/HDFkFZ>) WOODLAND TRUST. 'The

Greetings to all at DRUID and thanks for having me here. http://youtu.be/JI_vTmnPJv0
To introduce myself, I am an Eco-Druid, Bard, Pagan Poet & Machinima film Maker, Celebrating Nature, Spirit and the Ancient Ways. Here is an example of my machinima films by which i hope to spread an environmental - spiritual message to wider society, enjoy The Tree Of Life, Bright Blessings ~
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JI_vTmnPJv0



Bart's Art: "Fall Equinox"



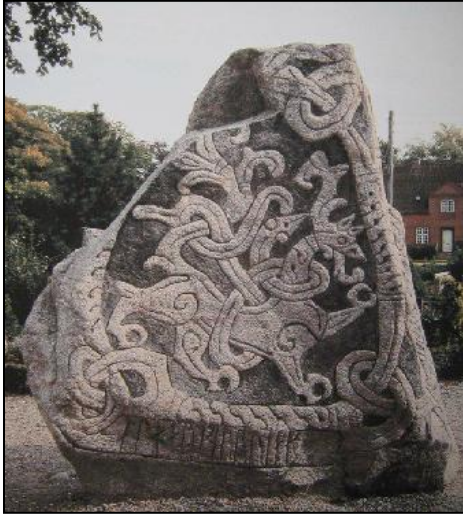
I searched for God
and found only myself.

I searched for myself
and found only God.

- Sufi proverb

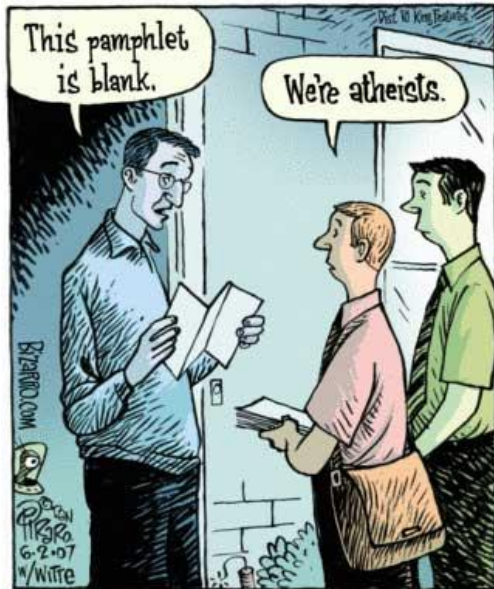


Heal me,
Heal me where I am.
Here I am,
here I am.
Love me,
love me as I am.
Bare and naked
is what I am.



Debates

Athiest Druids?



Walter OK - so I have a question (actually, two questions):

Can one be an atheist and still be a druid?

Can one be agnostic and still be a druid?

Just curious...

Scott Heck yeah!

George Can a God / Goddess be an Atheist? The term Druid has perhaps more definitions than a old Oak tree has leaves. The concept of a God or Goddess also is felt by many but like the wind invisible to all. TDK

George Still the Oak calls many but never ask what kind of sandals they are wearing. TDK

John Michael A good followup question would be, do atheists have spiritual experiences? Might some consider themselves to be spiritual? Or would they call it a personal esoteric endorphin rush?

Furthermore, us druids can PROVE nature exists! See it, touch it, put it in a petri dish, test tube, and then once we're satisfied it's there, we can glorify it, take joy in it, run more tests, elevate it and deem it sacred in the sense that we choose it deserves veneration in our own individual ways.

We can say it is what it is, nature is nature, with shades of gray, we can call it good, and we can dedicate a chalice of whiskey to it and take a swig! We can form a pattern of traditions and then call it a religion if we like.

George Perhaps one could ask. If one does not except that they are a God / Goddess just trapped for the moment in Mortal Coil, what kind of Druid are they really ??? TDK

Thomas yes and yes. if a deity or two can themselves be Druids, it stands to reason that others who do not accept their claim to godhood can be coworkers as Druids with them.

Mike TheFool Depends how clever and adaptable you are, and how accomodating your interlocutor is to you straddling definitions.

Mike TheFool I suspect OBOD, AODA, and RDNA, having a fraternal-like structure are the most adaptable to philosophic-based Druids, in addition to theologic-based Druids.

Bruce Well said all

Ellis The way I look at it, a Druid is god (as is anyone/everyone else), therefore a Druid who is an atheist does not believe in him/herself. Likewise, a Druid who is an agnostic is not sure of her/himself. Disclaimer: I am speaking only for myself, as I am not currently in any position of authority in any Druid organization, or disorganization. So my opinion on this matter is my own, and YMMV.

Cid Phoenix If your particular flavor of Druidism includes "Thou art God" as a tenet, then it is nonsensical to be an atheist or an agnostic. If, on the other hand, your brand doesn't include "Thou art God," then the next question becomes, "What is it about Druidism that attracts an atheist/agnostic?"

I can envision a scenario in which it is possible for there to be a Druid who does not believe in any sort of divine -- a humanist Druid, who reveres and respects nature and seeks knowledge both of the self and of the world. But I'm not sure why one would - want- to follow such a path -- identifying with atheism specifically disavows anything to do with the spiritual realms, while Druidism generally makes a point of emphasizing such things.

I can see no incongruity with an agnostic Druid. In fact, I would argue that every last one of us, even those who profess "Thou art God," is an agnostic to some extent. An agnostic is one without knowledge of God -- and can any of us say that we know ourselves, or our fellow Gods, perfectly?

Rusty Mon Of course. "Druid" denotes a person within a Cultural Caste System, not a Religion. There are plenty of "neo-druids" who are Religions unto themselves, just like people who say they are "christians", and are not.

George Or maybe Binder Druids ???

Mike TheFool Some may interpret and participate in the pantheistic practices of druidry but interpret the gods as archetypes or artistic symbols of psychology, and stay in harmony with atheistic principles. Religions can be seen through lenses other than spiritual.

Ellis In ancient times, "Druid" may have denoted a person of a particular caste system (I have read no evidence that supports that hypothesis, and Dr. Hutton is silent on the issue, which is to say, it is one of those things that we cannot, and therefore do not, know). Regardless that is not true today however. Today anyone is a Druid who says they are a Druid. I am a Druid. DISCLAIMER: I speak for no organization or dis-organization, but only for myself. My opinion therefore carries no weight what so ever. YMMV.

Mike TheFool We're all caste in many roles.

Ellis But when they made us, they broke the caste,

Brigid I think the answer has always been yes because the approach to Druidism can be philosophical, practical, spiritual, or religious. Whether you treat the Gods as myth, archetype or an ultimate truth and an entity you cannot deny existence of - all these approaches are found in the Druid community at large.

George For me Ellis, all walk the Druids path that feel the call of the Oak and heed it as best they can. So many soils and different seeds but all growing to try and be great Trees. TDK

George "In Days of Old, DNA played its well known role. But the Sperm of Babble shattered all the lines. Now Returning Soul must take to what even that binds. Ask not why is Druid's. Magick oh so weak. But look for lost Gems of the Druid's Egg where ever you seek. " TDK
***Please take this as not a Racial statement except in the concept of treating all present humanity as one single race, not color of skin but skin itself. TDK ***

Mike TheFool Can I be a Druid and still not be a Druid?

George Mike a very good question. Yes as a Believer in reincarnation and Soul DNA (equivalent) I believe that do to many things both biological, social, environmental, effect how well one can hear/feel the Oak whispering on the Psychic winds of your Soul and the Mother Earth Earth's Network too. " The Ley is the Ley but few find the Way" TDK

Mike TheFool Maybe I'm getting too zen? I should empty my zen more frequently.

George The Zen garden is always really to harvest for those that do not need to eat! TDK

Jay Ó Tuathail Speaking of gardens...Can one use copious quantities of Seven Dust and be a Druid? The pests in my garden seem to enjoy all of my save-the-earth, organic attempts to discourage them from eating my veggies.

George Look into Wood Vinegar Jay, you can make it or buy it. Depending on problem a chicken is nice too!

Rusty Mon Use Garden-Grade Diatomaceous earth (/ˈdaɪ.ətəˈmeɪʃəs ˈθɪrθ/) also known as D.E., diatomite, or kieselgur/kieselguhr, is a naturally occurring, soft, siliceous sedimentary rock that is easily crumbled into a fine white to off-white powder. Does not kill Earthworms.

Jay Ó Tuathail Diatomaceous earth is tiny sea shells that slice up bugs' exoskeletons right? A friend of mine told me to get some at Tractor Supply or a place like that...does it help control fleas too? Thought she said that...now, I could Google it, but I'd rather have an actual conversation with people than an algorithm.

Jay Ó Tuathail Okay...another can you be a Druid IF question: You are liberal on social and environmental issues but would be considered more conservative on issues like criminal justice or economics? See, I have this friend...

George How one sees Life, interconnects with Nature's living networks and relates to them does not make or unmake you from being a Druid if you feel the call. It just reveals your depth of understanding and compassion. TDK

Rusty Mon Diatomaceous Earth indeed scratches the Exo of bugs, and they die of water-loss...I consider some Bugs to be Criminals when they take more than they need, and the same goes with Human-Bugs...



A Time of Wake, A Time to Sleep

. Debate among the New Order of Dalon Ap Landu, a group obviously different from the original Council of Dalon Ap Landu, but composed of like-minded Third Order and Third Level Druids to debate and discuss and recommend ways to do and think about things.

Ellis: the NoDaL of RDG is voting on whether or not to establish a tradition that on the holidays of Samhain, Yule, Imbolc, and Oestara, to 1) make it a point to partake of the traditional Waters of Life (Black Label and water (exceptions to be made for those Groves with AA members); and 2) Make it a point to ordain anyone eligible for 2nd Order. In addition, if on a Friday, the traditional potluck will include bunless hot dogs, and if on a Friday during the season called "Lent", bacon cheeseburgers. By thus so doing, we will be eschewing all of the known dogmas of all of the religions we are thus aware of. Also on these days, a toast honoring Galileo will be offered, as he was the first to eschew dogma (that of the earth being flat, and of the sun orbiting the earth).

Why is the NoDaL considering this? Because there are some who ascribe to the unscientific notion that between Samhain and Beltane, the Earth Mother sleeps, even though anyone living in the Southern Hemisphere, the California coast, between the tropic of Capricorn and the tropic of Cancer, and several other places, knows that the Earth Mother is not only awake, but dancing her heart out. But some hold fast to this DOGMA (while holding equally fast to denying they have any) just as the Catholic Church held fast to the dogma that the earth was flat and that the sun orbited her, and as other groups today hold that the earth is only 9,000 years old, that dinosaurs lived among humans, and that the big bang and evolution never happened.

Druids are scientists. That is something we know they always have been. Science trumps dogma any day of the week, therefore we should always, always, always celebrate science over religion.

And so say we all!

Tina sounds good, Ellis.

Cid Phoenix Sooooo...you're...protesting dogma by proposing different dogmas...?

Crystal Williams I like it. I'm all for encouraging the growth of learning and especially of casting aside such things as would otherwise be all but blindly accepted - we are intellectuals, and Druids were the scientists, lawyers, doctors of their time. It is important to keep that in mind,

perhaps even forefront. This seems a fine line, however - couldn't it be said that recognizing Nature as cognizant in Her own way - or perhaps simply sacred and to be cherished and feared (among many other things) be deemed Dogma in some aspect, as an "authoritative principle, belief, or statement of ideas or opinion, especially one considered to be absolutely true"? And regardless, wouldn't there be another way of accomplishing such goals outside of casting aside the dogmas of others? This is an internal affair - can comparing with outside sources provide the proper results?

I find myself thinking of A Stranger In A Strange Land; or Mike in particular. He counted those that still held to a certain dogma (of God being outside themselves) as failures. Would these that hold to the Earth Mother slumbering be counted as falling short in a similar fashion? If they are, and if comparison to their own shortcomings with the eschewing of other dogmas could indeed shed light on such a fact, it makes me wonder how such maintenance may otherwise develop in the future.

Ellis Cid Phoenix: How does a dogma differ from a tradition? Or do they?

Ellis Here's my take: A dogma is a belief that cannot be proven scientifically. For example, "the earth is flat," "the sun revolves around the earth," are dogmas that were held by the Catholic Church for hundreds of years. People were burned at the stake for questioning them. Like wise, the idea that the Earth Mother sleeps between Samhain and Beltane is a dogma, because we know in fact that it is simply not true, especially when we look at the whole of the planet (which is why we are the Reformed Druids of GAIA -- we are the Reformed Druids who live on this planet). Even so, the dogma is embraced by our brethren in the Reformed Druids of North America, where, while it was true in Minnesota where the RDNA was born, it certainly is not true everywhere in North America. The Pacific Coast is part of N. America, and it certainly is not true west of the Coast mountains, nor most places south of Big Sur. In fact, you have to travel along the coast clear up to about mid British Columbia, before you would encounter so much as frost on say, December 22nd. Then there is Mexico, which is also part of N. America which hardly experiences any winter at all. So this dogma of the Earth Mother sleeping is not only a falsehood on a planetary basis, it's not even true of the whole of N. America. That's what makes it dogma - something that is demonstrably false. Now there are some members of the RDNA who cling to this idea, yet at the same time proclaim that have no dogma. Mike TheFool's site even proclaims: "The RDNA is known for it's lack of dogma..," yet here is a dogma that is used to deprive people of ordinations, and dictate what when a liquid can be consecrated. I think it's the denial of many that they have no dogma that makes this most disconcerting and frankly, hypocritical.

Crystal Williams Oh, I agree the whole idea is a bit off the rocker. Even within those areas where it DOES snow and full winter comes, the Earth Mother doesn't truly sleep. The trees sleep, the grass retreats, but not all life ends during the cold winds. It's a different sort of activity, and there aren't any blossoms to celebrate the life of Gaia herself - but the earth itself is still as aware as before.

My question, however, is that you say a dogma is a belief that can't be proven scientifically - definitively, that would be accurate. But then, Goddess Bridget is a dogma,

as is my own Patron Goddess Epona. As are the Fae. As are the spells we ourselves practice. Semantics, I suppose - in principle I agree, regardless. Honoring the shift during the colder parts makes sense, but so does listening to what Nature herself decrees - and She decrees that she does NOT rest everywhere, nor even have heavy snows or true freezing during December even in such places as would claim she does sleep. Falsifying things is a force that deserves to be opposed, especially with the many forms such a foe is known to take. Hypocrisy can be a very dangerous thing and, in my own beliefs, deserves to be resisted at every turn. It is far too easy to find yourself on the wrong side of it otherwise.

Shimon de Valencia Speaking from Australia, the Great Mother is certainly slapping on Her suntan oil and is already in party mode. I do take umbrige about the flat Earth posture. The Catholic Church held a lot of kooky ideas, but it never advocated a flat Earth (Eusebius, Augustine, Venerable Bede amongst others clearly argued for a pear-shaped Earth). If we make our traditions referent to other traditions why stop there? Why not add Sukkot, Diwali, Pesach and Eid traditions as well? Personally I say embrace the Fifth World and diversity within tradition. But creating more layers of regulation and Dogma seem a step in the wrong direction. Unless of course we are going to be as civilised as the Pastafarians who agreed they needed a schism, so agreed to start one (Bless His noodly goodness - without meatballs), that I could embrace as worthy of pontificating upon. The 2nd circle ordinations are a brilliant idea.

Ellis In Australia Pagans will celebrate Beltane on November 1st, correct?

Crystal Williams Question - I know this is under/a part of the Order of the Mithril Star as I had come into all this through following such links as the Mithril Star gave. Now, I know that two points on that Star are Wisdom (the first) and Learning (The sixth). But two more are Compassion (The Second) and Idealism (The seventh). So in that spirit, while romanticizing winter as being the time of the Great Mother's sleep (even if just in that particular area) is incorrect, and promoting it as fact is against two of the stars - if they want to really go with that there's compassion in regards to letting them keep their notions of the Mother resting (again, even if just in that area) and there even seems to be a touch of innocent idealism to the notion itself. So - what harm?

Shimon de Valencia Beltaine is Nov 7th this year, and Litha is Cecember 21st in Australia.

Ellis Crystal Williams: It's actually the other way around. OMS is a subset of RDG, which is to say, you can belong to RDG and not belong to OMS but you can't belong to OMS without belonging to RDG. OTOH, much of what RDG teaches it inherited from OMS. Now to the other question: it's not an attack on those who wish to believe that way. It's more of a calling out, "Hey, you say you are against dogma, yet you want to impose this idea....." It's not that we even disapprove of that belief, it's more that they use it to justify certain actions we feel are unfair, like denying people advancement just because it's the wrong time of the year. When we speak of compassion, we're more calling for, say, Congress to expand access to food stamps, or for more affordable housing, or for maybe handing a homeless person a buck or two. Besides, it's not that serious of a deal. In fact, nothing in the Reform movement should ever be taken very seriously even if it seems we are.

Crystal Williams Ahh, that's the subset then. I just knew it was a part of one another at the least. ^^ You've a point, that doesn't seem at all fair, especially as a justification as it doesn't honestly hold up. In that sense, they could stand a bit more compassion themselves - to deny something because of such reasoning could leave someone feeling rather cheated. Though I'm honestly not all that politically inclined, so I'd be most likely to take interest in the homeless example, I do find it interesting to have a much broader range of what compassion refers - a larger sort of compassion. I suppose in that sense the third star (Liberalness) is also politically based. And thanks - 'don't take it very seriously' sounds to me a lot like 'we're all fairly relaxed,' which is a great comfort. No big deal!

Ceridwen Arseneau Deeeep breaths, everyone...

Mike the Fool I am a bit amused of comparing the season of sleep to a flat-earth view of the world. But it gave me good thought, on an issue that has come up often over the last 20 years of traveling Druids, whether it be Irony in the tropics, myself in Japan, or Ian in the Antarctic.

What did the 3rd order specifically decide about the seasons?

Jan 27 1965 Liturgy: That the waters-of-sleep shall be used during the winter half (Geimredh & Earrach) and the waters-of-life shall be reserved for the summer half (Samradh and Foghamhar), except when they are needed for healing of the consecration of a priest. The priest shall wear the red ribbon when consecrating the waters-of-life, and he or she shall wear the white ribbon when consecrating the waters-of-sleep, both as the mark of the 3rd Order.

Well, that's the rule, as stated more clearly than the Nov.-May shorthand that we often note.

How a discerning Druid might interpret this? Is it arbitrary to say the Earthmother sleeps x to y during the year? Are we bereft and estranged from her during that time? Are people dead while they sleep next to us in bed? Should we, or should we not, shift our ritual focus according to her activity or inactivity, or according to our immediate needs and circumstances?

Reformed Druids are scattered in many parts of the world, far from Minnesota, and time pressures and availabilities can seem pressing with limited windows of engagement with an aspiring Druid seeking to join. What does a Druid do in these situations? Well they read more carefully, think, and do the right thing (hopefully) which isn't always what they want to do, and note always what is written. Besides, is there any penalty in our writings for NOT following the rules? Does it ever say things WON'T work if you don't follow the instructions?

If you really need to ordain a priest in the Winter, then you can do it. It has been done before, starting with David Frangquist and Marta Peck. I'd assume that's true for other

ordination purposes, but the necessity might be less urgent. Healing is also mentioned as a reason. Other reasons aren't listed or excluded.

If you're grove is in an area (like Australia) that has temperate climate, but reversed seasons, then you follow according to season, not the calendrical date, as indicated. Note that the calendrical dates of those seasons are specified. Winter might be all of a day in some locations or non-existent.

If you live in a climate where it is always summer, then always have available waters-of-life, unless the divination fails and you use the waters-of-sleep.

If you live in a climate where it is always winter or spring (such as Greenland), then only waters of life when there is a necessity and a favorable omen.

If you live in a climate with wet and dry all year (India), then omens might be adjusted, but you're clear to use waters-of-life much of the year, if not all year.

We've had folks from California complain before of having to do divination to use Waters-of-life and assume the Earth mother is always happy and willing to bless the waters whenever we feel like it, and perhaps she does, but to assume she does or doesn't, well, that seems to not be asking her opinion, which is what the divination is, a chance to let her challenge our assumptions and decide the matter.

We live in a world of constantly "on", "go go", "never stop". A break in our rhythm is discomfoting, especially one potentially 6 months (or longer or shorter). I gather humility from the exercise, heavens knows I need it.

I understand people don't like to be told what they can or cannot do, but I think the system is flexible, and Druids are pragmatic and can bend it easily to local needs. What I think is lost by not having a Season of Sleep, is losing a chance to set aside time, like a field in fallow, in the year's rotation to focus on dreaming, study, and restraint – and the opposite wakefulness, action and exuberance. Like any period of restriction, it gets old and uncomfortable after a while, but if you really need an ordination or healing or similar work (and truly can't wait) then just check the omens for a loophole permission, but I usually expect to get chided for doing so, and the likelihood of negative omens to be higher, just like anyone bothering someone in their sleep (no matter how much they love you).

So call it dogma if you will, but both in rule and practice, it's pretty flexible, and it adds an important element of framework in the arrangement of the calendar of the year, giving different ways to praise the earth-mother. I do admit we've gotten lazy about explaining how the seasons work and been over-reliant on using North-American (i.e. Minnesotan) based calendrical dates of Nov 1 and May 1. A clause should be noted when describing the calendar, that it really depends on local climate conditions and environment and intentions of the earth mother (no safe bets, anytime of the year).

Don't see a reason to dismiss this part of the calendrical rule ENTIRELY in the zeal to be anti-dogmatic, and list every discomfort as dogma, or to insert numerous technical footnotes that validate every exception. The self-inspection of one's rules and structure is never a bad exercise, just make sure that following generations have the same freedom that we are employing, and that we don't burden them with even more complicated rules (or chaos) to avoid fluid guidelines that seem restrictive in certain interpretations. Hopefully, the voices of reason and humility and humor and restraint will always exist in a grove.

Michelle I'd like to point out that some people are allergic to glutes or have Celiac Disease, which are the base of grain alcohols. Exceptions or modifications should be made if members of Groves suffer from these problems.

Shimon de Valencia And lo, the assembled Druids did hear the pronouncements of their Gorsedd. And a great tumult was heard. A lone voice spoke - Are we not Druids? Do we not make it up as we go along? And a sacred laughing was heard from all. Then they all arose as one and remembered why they were Druids.

Mike TheFool Waters of life are not narrowly defined as whiskey, and readying has Aries according to needs for non alcoholic variants Luke tea or plain water or mead or w fruit juice. Too. Milk has also been used.

Mike TheFool Meant variants according.... It's the blessing rather than the composition that distinguishes the eaters of sleep and life.

Mike TheFool Waters

Cheryl Feather The sleep/wake cycle makes for an interesting cycle, but not necessary, to me anyway. But whiskey makes me sick if I can even get the stuff past my nose to drink it.....lol. Personally, I prefer to use water or wine.

Crystal Williams Well put Mike - and Shimon, too. *deep breath* If naught else, the fields do tend to lay dormant at the time and growth it slowed or ceased elsewhere. It seems only polite to wait for the Mother to return her focus before asking of her.

Self inspection in this way really is a good thing - it gives perspective as we 'make it up as we go.' It also makes for a really interesting way for us all to grow closer; at least I feel closer and view it all as a deeper understanding.

Mike TheFool It also gives a slower period of less liturgy and meetings to recharge the often overburdened leaders of the grove. Other talents of the group come up hopefully if not an increase in family based visits during end of year holidays and a return of activity in earrach
October 23 at 9:54pm via mobile · Like

Morgan Isn't creating dogma to eschew dogma just... more dogma? Just playing devil's advocate here... =)

Mike TheFool It's the old spirit vs letter of the law. The lesson of the reed and willow to bend when necessary.

Ellis Why not less liturgy all year round?: <http://eureka.reformed-druids.org/practice.htm>

Mike TheFool Why not? Religions tend to slip into visible gatherings to indicate they are real groups. Liturgy is only a tiny part of Druidic regimen.

Jenn Ninjakitten I say we start the dogma that the Earth Mother doesn't sleep between the Northern Hemisphere's Samhain and Beltane, she goes on vacation in the Southern Hemisphere :-). Actually, in a way, we could rationalize that she kind of does that if we think of birds migrating as a natural pattern.

Ellis Problem with location centered dogma is that it's easily dis-proven as soon as the location is altered. "The Earth Mother sleeps from Samhain until Beltane," is true so long as you live in the Midwest, or for the most part anywhere north of the Tropic of Cancer (though, the closer you come to the Tropic, the less it's true). There are exceptions. The entire California coast is an exception. Between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, the Earth Mother parties continuously. South of the Tropic of Capricorn, she sleeps on the opposite schedule, and she continuously sleeps at the poles. Now, add the problem of the Druid doing a stint on the ISS. What does he follow? If we establish a permanent presence on the Moon, or on Mars, what do they do? Better to do away with the dogma all together. Or, to do what the autonomous collectives of RDNA and RDG have always done -- whatever the hell they please!

Cheryl Me being me, I would vote for the "whatever the hell they please" part..... I'm a cat and don't herd well.....lol!

Ellis Then there's the other side of the discussion: dogma itself. Our parent group prides itself on "eschewing dogma" yet mention that you ordained someone at the celebration of Yule and all hell breaks loose. Then, if you mention that that's just a dogma, they go into denial mode. Soooo, from the very beginning of RDG, because we are "of Gaia" we've held that the Earth Mother does not sleep. If those who are "of North America" wish to argue, it falls on deaf ears, as it doesn't apply to a planetary based group. OTOH, individual Groves of RDG, being also autonomous collectives, may also do whatever the "hell they want" based upon whatever criteria they set. Perhaps there is a Grove in Alaska comprised entirely of Druids who once lived in Australia, and wish to maintain a sense of connection to their homeland. Happy Beltane to them (October 31st).

Ellis Astrology has a similar problem (but only if we go off world). How will you chart a child born on Mars? How do you cast a daily reading for an astronaut on the ISS? Or on the Moon? And when we travel beyond our solar system, what then? What if you are born on a planet with two suns? What will that chart look like? Of course, the Zodiac and planets will all be different

as well. The entire science would have to change (recall Becky Vescent's troubles casing Mike's natal chart in SiaSL, and you grok where I am going).

Cheryl Dogmas are usually, or possibly always, ridiculous..... I think, for what that's worth, ordinations can be done at any time. I can't see Gaia as being asleep for half of the year; a Mother's work is never done no matter what time of the year it is! And She would be available for her children at all times and in all places, that's just how a Mother is. Just MHO, MYNT

Crystal Williams It would have to be localized, of course, if there was anything about the Mother sleeping - which in a sense, she can be claimed to do as growth tends to stall during the winters (here). In the arctic (North Pole, that is) there's even a short growing period where grass will spring forth again and bring in herds of elk, although it is very, very short. OTOH south of that you have conifers and those few that can handle such tough fare (the needles are harder on the stomachs). Since there's still growth and greenery there (although the trees are smaller at much older stages because there are very rare times where active growth is possible) with the constant leaves, would that be a place where it could be considered that the Mother always wakes?

Perhaps, while we can of course attempt to understand our Mother, this is an issue that (even localized) would bring too much of a headache, such as poor Becky trying to cast for Mars. Possible, surely, but relations of such things on our planet have no more to do with Mars in that aspect than the supposition that Nature sleeps in a place with two suns the same as she would here. Everything would have to be intimately localized.

Lynn science is a load of bollocks too ... it eventually requires faith and complicit reasoning that can be undone if you don't speak the language of signification... Waters of life.....are you taking the piss? (sorry I'm thinking of Father Jack and that whisky bottle..) I'm feeling irreverent and out of sync with this ritualised slaughter dressed up in fast food clothing.....grrrrrr....for some meat is murder not as sweet as apples or pomegranetes....but hmmm could be partial to a wee dram.... - perhaps its the unappetising thought of a greasy chomp on a bloody cheesy burger. I love pigs and I would not personally want to partake in its dishonourable blood letting sacrifice when there are more compassionate options?????????????

Mike TheFool As mentioned, when necessary, and omens concur, ordinations can happen. The first ordination of a priest, frangquist, was in April. I have ordained 2 myself in the time of sleep. If your place does not have a measurable geimredh or earrach then the time of sleep doesn't occur. If the concept of sleep means inactivity, then I'd counter that bears bear and nurse cubs without problem, and I sometimes get up for a snack or bathroom break on a long nighter. Seems flexible to me. Perhaps you'd rather make it clear that it is flexible and provide examples of exceptions? I have seen all the council decisions flexed in a least one circumstance. As with any organizational structure, of which ours is rather wispy to begin with, if one consistently ignores, changes, bend or forget the basics, are you really sharing the same experience that the others are, and when does it become an apple and orange both sharing the same name, like "fruit". Certainly it is a gradient, and like a last snowflake beginning an avalanche. I think reformed Druids have bigger dogmas to fry. Just saying

Ceridwen Unless their Karma ran over their Dogma... :-P

Ellis We don't do omens. You see, since a central part of our belief system is that we are god(s), and omens are a method of questioning god(s), it would be rather silly for us to ask for omens when we could just vote amongst ourselves. Or so I grok.

Ellis Last I checked, the NoDaL was split on the issue, so unless a few no votes turn into yes votes, it's all moot anyway, since NoDaL votes by consensus (our own version of the filibuster). Of course, the Mother Grove could vote to override the NoDaL, or,...See More

Aisha So then why have this conversation in the first place?

Articles



Steampunk Druidry

Alison Leigh Lilly | October 13th

Intro: I don't believe in mere coincidence. The gears of chance and synchronicity move us all. So when Nimue Brown (blogger at [Druid Life](#)) shared her musings on [Steampunk Druids](#) on the very same day that our Faith, Fern & Compass podcast episode on [Steampunk Magic](#) aired, it got my attention. I've been a fan of Nimue's writing for quite a while, and every so often I'd caught mentions of her interest in steampunk, especially when it came to her work on the [Hopeless Maine](#) comic project. I was absolutely thrilled to discover that I wasn't the only one out there exploring the overlap between steampunk and Druidry. So I asked her to share some more of her thoughts here. And this awesome guest post you see before you is the result. Enjoy!

Steampunk Druidry for Social Revolution

By **Nimue Brown**

Picture ----Steampunk Druid, by Tom Brown

I've been looking for a place to stand for some time now. There's the whole theory that with the right position and a big enough lever, you could move the world. I'm not interested in moving it, more changing it, but that lever and place to stand metaphor holds up passably. There are so many things wrong out there, from attitudes to the planet to social norms and gender politics,

beliefs about money and responses to poverty... I could go on. There is a vast amount that needs to change for us to survive and thrive as a species and not destroy the one planet that is our home.

I love Druidry, and I love the whole mindset that goes with Druidry. However, it's not for everyone. That's in many ways the problem with any spiritual approach — it can't be all embracing, and if it sets out to include everyone, it's probably going to become vile. Where religion is concerned diversity is important, and about the only available antidote to the poisonous idea of 'one true way'. I've known for a long time that Druidry was not going to be the place to stand in terms of wielding a lever to change the world. I've looked at Green politics, too, but the problem there is that far too many people are inherently mistrustful of power, authority, politicians and the systems they work in. Converting a lot more people to Green politics would therefore not necessarily fix much. It would most likely draw in the inherently political, not the innately disenfranchised, and it's the second set of folks that I'm more interested in.

Then I found Steampunk. There is only one rule in Steampunk, and it is 'be nice to each other.' There's shades in that of 'an it harm none, do what you will.' It's a culture where respect and good manners are very much expected and encouraged, where tolerance and diversity have room to thrive. It creates, for example, a space in which crossdressers and trans folk can wander about in the gender identity/kit of their preference without fear of harassment. Prejudice is not even slightly splendid. There's a delicious irony here, too, because of course Steampunk invokes the Victorian era, that great heyday of racism, sexism, colonialism, jingoism, classism, oppression, gay bashing and hypocrisy. Steampunk is not really about Victorian era stuff at all, it's about how a group of people wish it had been. This is the world of the upbeat period novel. More Jules Verne than Charles Dickens, you'll see the wondrous inventions and no orphans will be going up chimneys.

About two minutes in to exploring Steampunk as a counterculture movement, it dawned on me — this isn't historical re-enactment. It isn't about the past. It's about now, and the kind of society we want to live in, and the ways in which we want the world to work. It's playful, with room for both the burlesque and the genteel. Anyone who wants a title, can have a title. Anyone more drawn to the 'punk' aspect can play it that way. It turns out that there's room for anyone who wants in, and you don't even need a pair of goggles.

The surface of Steampunk offers a burgeoning fiction genre, an aesthetic that seems to be catching on all over the place, a music scene — sepiacore (I think that's how you spell it) and chap hop, and no doubt more to come. There's a growing arts and crafts movement within the community, and there are going to be inventors, I have no doubt. There probably are already. Steampunk is about innovation in every area of human endeavour, and it's about doing good stuff, with a social conscience and a sense of humour.

It's a good place to stand.

I've noticed along the way that people bring their other passions to Steampunk. Look around and you'll see pop culture icons like Boba Fett and K9 appearing in Steampunk form. Anything can be done over to fit. Moving into Steampunk does not therefore require leaving your previous

addictions behind. For me, that's going to mean Druidry. I'm contemplating ideas like revival-revival, because the Druids of the Victorian era were like something out of Monty Python (I've read *Blood and Mistletoe*...). I envisage a mix of the real and the unreal, playful, with scope for satire, and also for heartfelt, soulful stuff. The Secret Order of Steampunk Druids is not going to be even slightly secretive (except, perhaps, about where we've hidden the cake). It won't be remotely orderly. It will be both Steampunk and Druidic, some fondness for both sides are a must.

If you want to join, you will need to invent your own, tea-based initiation rite, or find someone who is offering initiations. I'll post some suggestions somewhere online eventually. If you don't know much about Druidry, please give yourself a really big and important title. If you're a Druid, think up something funny and maybe a bit subversive. The rest of it we'll have to make up as we go along.

In the meantime, there's a dominant culture to subvert, rule books to rewrite, and a world to save. I'd like to try doing it by drinking a lot of tea, wearing a silly hat and being excessively polite to people, at least in part.

For anyone interested in more of my ramblings about Druidry and things historical, there is also [Druidry and the Ancestors](#).



Regenerative Design and Nature Awareness: The Other RDNA

Editor: Anyone ever encounter the "other" RDNA?

Established 1983.

*Regenerative Design and Nature Awareness (RDNA)
Program in California?*

<http://www.regenerativedesign.org/courses-events/rdna>

Looks fascinating, all about sustainable living.

They have a Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Regenerative-Design-Institute/136490821892?ref=ts>

and a Youtube Channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/Regenerativedesignin>

The Regenerative Design Institute (RDI) is a non-profit educational organization with the vision that all people can live in a mutually enhancing relationship with the earth. We envision a world in which people, inspired by nature, create and maintain healthy and abundant livelihoods that enhance fertility and biodiversity on the planet. We envision humans as a positive, healing presence on Earth, creating more abundance on the planet than would be possible without them.

Our mission is to serve as a catalyst for a revolution in the way humans relate to the natural world. As we continue to develop Commonweal Garden into an educational center and demonstration site in permaculture and regenerative design, we serve as an inspiration of possibility for how people can live in a mutually enhancing relationship with the Earth. Through our programs and courses, we teach the skills and technology people need to become community leaders and create healthy solutions to the current environmental crisis.

Creating Resilient Leaders and Community

Are you ready to build a more meaningful relationship with the earth, your community and yourself – and make clear your role as a community member and an integral part of the natural world? The Regenerative Design and Nature Awareness (RDNA) program is an advanced 9-month program that extends hands-on, skill based training to help you develop the leadership skills you need to bring sustainability and regenerative practices into your personal and professional lives. Through RDNA, you can learn to design powerful communities, regenerate ecosystems and facilitate positive community change.

Our instructors are fully engaged visionaries working in regenerative design, nature awareness, cultural mentoring and leadership. They bring the tools they have gathered through years of experience, working locally and around the world, to create resilient leaders, cultural systems and landscapes. They weave these tools together into the dynamic and lifestyle that makes up the RDNA program.

Using the teachings of regenerative design, nature awareness, 8 Shields Culture Mentoring and the Ecology of Leadership, RDNA offers a comprehensive exploration of where we came from, where we are now and where we are going.



Samhain Recipes

by Domi O'Brien

Baked Apples

Preheat oven to 375.

Core apples. Do not peel. Keep whole or half or quarter.
Arrange in baking

dish. Sprinkle with fresh lemon juice, cinnamon, and white or brown sugar or honey. Dot with butter if you like.

Pour apple juice or cider in to cover bottom third of dish.

Bake 40 minutes for quartered apples; an hour for whole.

Serve warm or cold; whipped cream is a nice accompaniment.

(Optional: sprinkle apples with raisins, currants, or almonds before baking; baste with pan juices. Substitute cardamon for cinnamon; sprinkle with vanilla or almond extract.)

Barmbreac

This is the traditional Irish Samhain divinatory bread. It's one of the few Irish breads which uses yeast rather than baking soda.

TOKENS: These are items that will not melt in the oven heat. They represent prosperity, relationship, fertility or new projects, etc. I often use a ring or a heart, a flower, a coin, etc. Pewter buttons work for some of these. I wrap each one in a small foil wrapper.

BREAD:

4 cups flour
2 packets yeast
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup melted butter
1 and one half cup very warm but not hot milk
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon mace (optional)
2 cups dried currants (the "spots" or "freckles" of the bread, "breac") or raisins

Mix yeast, sugar, mace, and salt into flour; stir in milk and butter; let rest in covered bowl in warm place 15 minutes; turn out onto a floured surface; knead well; knead currants in. Shape in ball. Return to bowl; cover; let rise until doubled.

Grease a 10 inch round baking pan.

Preheat oven to 375.

Punch down dough; insert divinatory tokens in foil; shape carefully into round loaf, making sure tokens are not visible. Place in greased pan; cover; let rise.

Braised Pork with Herbs

1 - 4 to 5 lb boneless center cut pork
Brown on all sides in hot oil in skillet
Transfer to crock-pot or Dutch oven
Season with salt and pepper
Add
2 chopped onions
1 teaspoon each
Dried sage
Dried thyme
Dried rosemary

Dried parsley
1 cup water for crock-pot or 3 cups for Dutch oven.

Cover.

Cook 6-8 hours in crock-pot OR bake 3 hours in a 325 oven for the Dutch oven.

Gabriela's Duck

Rinse 2 ducks, 3 to 5 lbs each. Place in a large non-reactive container with a cover

2 tablespoons salt
4 branches fresh rosemary
1/2 half gallon of orange juice
1 fifth of sweet sherry
1 tablespoon crushed black pepper.

Place in refrigerator; chill 24 to 48 hours, turning ducks over occasionally.

Preheat oven to 475. Place ducks in large roasting pan.

Reserve marinade.

Roast 45 minutes; drain excess fat. Reduce heat to 275.

Cut up 3 lbs potatoes
3 lbs apples
3 lbs carrots
3 lbs onions.
(4 cups cooked white
beans, optional

3 lbs parsnips, optional

Surround ducks with veggies and fruit. Pour marinade over. Cook 4 to 5 hours, basting every half hour with marinade. Veggies should be very soft. Duck should be meltingly tender.

Decorate with fresh rosemary sprigs and orange slices. Dissect at table.

Serves 10 to 16. Hot rolls or bread and a green salad go well.

Honey-glazed Salmon

Heat oven to 375 F

Place 2 lb salmon fillet on baking dish. Brush with honey (or maple syrup).

Sprinkle with chopped hazelnuts if you like (and you know no one you are serving is allergic to nuts)

Bake about 15 minutes; check for doneness; return to oven briefly if needed.

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Tarragon Mushrooms

Preheat oven to 325.

Arrange 12 to 16 ounces mushrooms in baking dish.

(Optional: add one or two onions, sliced, diced, or chopped)

Beat together:

Juice of 1 lemon or 1/3 cup balsamic vinegar

2 egg yolks

1 teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons tarragon

1/2 teaspoon pepper

1/4 cup sherry or marsala, optional

Pour mixture over mushrooms.

Bake, covered, one half hour; uncover; bake another half hour.

Pumpkin Soup

2 cups chicken stock or broth or vegetable stock or broth

2 cups canned pumpkin

Juice and zest of 2 freshly squeezed oranges

1 teaspoon nutmeg

1 finely chopped onion

1 clove garlic, sauteed

Salt and (coarsely ground) pepper to taste

heat all ingredients together gently.

Serve plain, or ladle into bowls and add a swirl of heavy cream or sour cream to each. Sprinkle with zest or nutmeg.



Editor's Note: I tried the acorn preparation and it worked. Took like 20 water changes on chopped nuts, but it was fun fingerfood.

Acorns: The Inside Story

by GREEN DEANE

Acorn: More than a survival food

The first time you eat an acorn it makes you wonder what the squirrels are going nuts about. As the bitterness twists your mouth into a pucker it reminds you animals can eat a lot of things we can't... unless we modify them.

A lot has been said about acorns. I'll try to say a few things that haven't been said. Let's start with that fact that the world's biggest acorn is in Moore Square Park in downtown Raleigh, North Carolina. Raleigh calls itself "The City of Oaks." The "Big Acorn" is ten feet tall and weighs 1,250 pounds. I'd hate to meet the squirrel that can carry it away. But, it does remind me of a general rule of thumb about acorns: The bigger the cap on the acorn, the more bitter it will be.

The English word "oak" is some 1,260 years old. In German it was "eih" ending up "eiche" The Dutch extended it to "eychen" or "eychenboom." (I went to school with a "Cossaboom" meaning cherry tree.) Oaks are also mentioned in ancient texts. Greeks of old said "dryas." Modern Greek say "dris." It was the preferred tree of Zeus. Those faithful to Zeus gathered around oak trees. The Celts preferred to knock on oak wood. One variation of their word for oak was "dair, the fourth letter of the Celtic alphabet and part of the name of the city Kildare (means "Church in the Oaks.") Often associated with strength, the US military awards gold "oak leaf clusters" for exceptional bravery. Oaks have been a significant part of every culture around them.



The word "acorn" is a combination of "ak" for oak and "corn" meaning seed thus acorn means oak seed. The Greeks say *velanidi*, the Spanish *bellota*, the French *gland*, Italians *glanda*, Portuguese, *glande*, and in the forgotten fifth romantic language, *ghinda* in Romanian. Those Roman's got around. All the Romantics come from the Latin word *gland*, which also lent itself to the medical term for a certain acorn-like part of the male anatomy. The acorn is also one of the few nuts or fruits that is not directly named in Modern English after the tree it comes from which is why one does not hear of oak nuts... walnuts, bechnuts, hickory nuts, oak nuts... gland... it could all get rather naughty.



The larger the cup, the more tannic acid. The smaller the cup, the less tannic acid.

At least 450 species of oak populate worldwide. Some 30 species in the United States have been used for food and oil. The Live Oak is the most prized, not only for food but particularly ship building. Its very long, graceful limbs were ready-made for boat keels and ribs. In fact, the US



Navy once had its own live oak forest just for boat building. Sold off long ago, the Navy began stockpiling Live Oak in 1992 for restoration of the USS Constitution. It got 50 live oaks from Florida in 2002 of 160 that were cleared for a golf course near Tallahassee. Just as 200 years ago, the trees were selected for their natural curves for the ship. In the white oak family, the Live Oak's acorns are among the mildest one can collect. Botanically the Live Oak is *Quercus virginiana*. *Quercus* (KWERK-kus) was the Roman name for the tree and *virginiana* (ver-jin-ee-AY-nuh) means North America.

The seed crop from an oak, the acorns, is called a “mast” which means food and putting on a crop of acorns is masting. It is tempting to say it is probably related to the word to “masticate” meaning to chew but it isn't. Mast came from the Middle English word “mete” meaning meat, which at that time meant any food, and we still use it abstractly in that way, as in “Education became his meat and experience his drink.” *Mete* came from the Italian word *madere* which came from the Greek word, *madaros*, meaning to be wet. That takes a bit of explaining. Greeks divided food into two large categories. “Wet” food was food fit for humans and pigs. Dry food was fit for cattle and fowl. Now you know.

Acorns are quite nutritious. For example, the nutritional breakdown of acorns from the *Q. alba*, — the white oak — is 50.4% carbohydrates, 34.7% water, 4.7% fat, 4.4.% protein, 4.2% fiber, 1.6% ash. A pound of shelled acorns provide 1,265 calories, a 100 grams (3.5 ounces) has 500 calories and 30 grams of oil. During World War II Japanese school children collected over one million tons of acorns to help feed the nation as rice and flour supplies dwindled.



Oaks fall into two large categories, those that fruit in one season, white oaks, and those that fruit after two seasons, the black oaks and the red oaks. The latter category is far more bitter than the former. The first category have leaves with round lobes and no prickles at the end of the leaves. The black and red oaks have prickles at the end of their leaves. They also have scales on the cups of the acorns and hair inside the caps. Some times those in the first category don't need any leaching, or very little. The

rest always do. But first, clean the acorns.



To clean acorns dump them into water and separate the ones that float. Take the ones that sink and dry them in a frying pan on the stove or in the oven at 150F or less for 15 minutes, preheated. You don't want to cook them yet, just dry them off and make them a little easier to shell. The yield, not counting bad acorns, is 2:1. two gallons of usable acorns in the shell will yield a gallon of nutmeat.



There are three general ways to leach acorns. The least common way is to bury them whole in a river bank for a year, which turns them black and sweet, good for roasting. The other method is to grind them into a coarse meal and soak several days or weeks (depending on the species) in many changes of cold water until the water runs clear. These will be slightly bland but good for making acorn flour. (Sometimes the leached acorns will be dark but sweet afterwards.) The third way — boiling — is least preferred because if done wrong it will bind the tannins to the acorn and

they will not lose their bitterness. Also, when you boil the acorns you also boil off the oil with the tannins, reducing their nutrition. That oil, however, is very nutritious. At this writing it is selling for \$182 a gallon. You can make it for far less.



The boiling process requires two pots of boiling water. Put the acorns in one pot of already boiling water until the water darkens. Pour off the water and put the hot acorns in the other pot of boiling water while you reheat the first pot with fresh water to boiling. You keep putting the acorns in new boiling water until the water runs

clear. Putting boiled acorns into cold water will bind the tannins to the acorn and they will stay bitter. So always move them from one boiling bath to another. Putting acorns in cold water and bringing the water to a boil will also bind the tannin. So it is either use all cold water and a long soaking or all boiling water and just a few hours of cooking. There is one other difference between the two methods.

The temperature at which you process the acorns at any point is critical. Boiling water or roasting over 165° F precooks the starch in the acorn. Cold processing and low temperatures under 150 does not cook the starch. Cold-water leached acorn meal thickens when cooked, hot-water leached acorn meal does not thicken or act as a binder (like eggs or gluten) when cooked. Your final use of the acorns should factor in how you will process them. If you are going to leach and roast whole for snacking then boiling is fine. If you are going to use the acorn for flour it should be cold processed, or you will have to add a binder.



Personally, I grind mine in a lot of water to a fine meal, let it set, then strain. I add more water to the meal, let set and strain. I do that until the water is clear or the meal not bitter. That takes a few days to a week. Then I dry it in the sun, unless there are squirrels about, then in a slow oven (under 150° F.) I end up with a meal or flour, depending on the grind, that will not crumble when cooked.

There are nearly as many ways to leach acorns as there are opinions about acorns. Another way is to put the shelled acorns in water in a blender or food

processor and blend them into a milk-like slurry. Put that slurry in a fine mesh bag and then massage that under running water like a faucet. It works very quickly but of course some meal and oil is lost in the process. But it turns hours of leaching into minutes. Of course, leaching them in a stream is the easiest way but you can also arrange for a container to leak slowly. Simply put a cloth on the bottom to hold the meal in and fill the container when it is empty, or run the faucet slowly to maintain the leaching. Another ways is to clean out the tank on your toilet and put the shelled acorns in a mesh bag in there. Every flush will remove tannic water and bring in fresh.



Many Native Americans preferred bitter acorns to sweet ones because they stored better. If after leaching there is just a hint of bitterness that can sometimes be removed by soaking the acorns in milk for a while. The protein in the milk will bind with the tannin in the acorns and can be poured off, if there is just a little. To get oil from the cold-leached acorns, boil them. The oil will rise to the top of the water. Also, charred acorns can be used as a substitute for coffee but really nothing is a substitute for coffee.

Whole leached acorns can be roasted for an hour at 350° F, coarsely ground leached acorns slightly less time. They can then be eaten or ground into non-binding flour. To make a flour out of your whole or coarsely ground acorns, toss them in a blender or food processor. Strain the results through a strainer to take out the larger pieces then reduce them as well. Acorn flour has no gluten so it is usually mixed 50/50 with wheat flour. Since acorn flour is high in oil it needs to be stored carefully and not be allowed to go rancid. Remember cold processed acorn flour has more binding capacity than heat processed acorn flour.



Live Oak acorns top the food list for birds such as wood ducks, wild turkeys, quail and jays. Squirrels, raccoons and whitetail deer also like them, sometimes to the point of being 25% of their fall diet.

Interestingly, the tannin tends to be in the bottom half of the acorn which is why you will often see a squirrel eat only the upper half of the acorn. Squirrels are also not fools. They will eat all of a white acorn when they find one because it is the least bitter. They will bury the very bitter red and black acorns so over time some of the bitterness is leached into the soil. Raiding a squirrel's hoard will get bitter acorns. By the way,

acorns shells and unleached nutmeat have gallotannins which are toxic to cattle, sheep, goats, horses and dogs.

If you use the boiling method don't throw away the tannic water. The water has a variety of uses. With a mordant it can be used to dye clothing. The tannic acid also makes a good laundry detergent. Two cups to each load but it will color whites temporarily a slightly tan color. Tannic water is antiviral and antiseptic. It can be used as a wash for skin rashes, skin irritations, burns, cuts, abrasions and poison ivy. While you can pour the tannic water over poison ivy, if you have the luxury freeze the brown water in ice cube trays and use the cubes on the ivy eruption. If you have a sore throat you can even gargle with tannic water or use it as a mild tea for diarrhea and dysentery. Externally dark tannic water can be used on hemorrhoids. Hides soaked in tannic water make better leather clothing. Using the brown water turned hides tan colored and that is

why it is called tanning and from there we get the words tannins and tannic. In traditional tanning methods, whole hides are soaked in a vat of tannin water for a full year before being processed.

Oak trees begin to produce acorns at about 20 years old but usually the first full crop won't happen until the tree is about 50. The average 100-year old oak produces about 2,200 acorns per year. Only one in 10,000 will become a tree.

Besides dyes paints have also been made from the oaks. It also a dense wood for working and weights 75 pounds per dry cubic foot. The hull of the US warship, USS Constitution, was made entirely of oak, white oak covering over a live oak core. At the waterline she was 25 inches thick. Eighteen-pound cannonballs bounced off the oak, notable in the 1812 battle with the HMS Guerriere. That battle and the subsequent loss of British ships caused the British to issue the order that no ship was to attack the Constitution singlehandedly. The Constitution, as of this writing, is still on duty and berthed in Boston.

Sprouted acorns are also edible as long as they haven't turned green. I've heard from German forager Peter Becker has a slightly different view of what to do with acorns.

“What I do to prep acorns for consumption is let them germinate, so the starches turn into malt sugar. I've only just developed a new product with acorns to introduce this precious nut to public because acorns are generally considered inedible here in Germany. NewTella is a sweet breadspread just like Nutella, the famous hazelnut creme, except that all ingredients are locally available, it has less sugar and the only fats are from the acorn. The basic preparation is to roast leached, peeled and germinated acorns, boil 1 part acorns with 3 parts of apple juice, when soft process them smoothly, add 20 % sugar with pectine. This bread spread is also a great way to preserve acorns and can be used for cookies. It's a great way to promote this gigantic untapped ressource and jazz up general nutrition.”

A few exchanges about Peter's process is below in the comments. He shells them, leaches them (cold water) and sprouts them before using them to make his NewTella. That helps convert the starch to malt, which is sweet. To visit Peter's site [click here](#).

Lastly you may have a use for those acorns that float. Most of them have a weevil grub in them, the Acorn Curculio. Look for a little 1/8 inch hole. In time that grub will crawl out and burrow into the ground for a couple of years turning into a full-fledged insect. You can use that grub in the acorn as bait for fish. Or, you can let it crawl in to a bucket of dirt or sawdust or a container of oatmeal where it will make a cocoon which you can then open later and use for bait. Store live in the frig. Also, squirrels like the grubs so it is not beyond reason to use them for bait for aquirrels. And to answer your question, the grubs are edible by humans raw or cooked.



Acorn Bread

2 cups acorn flour
2 cups cattail or white flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1/3 cup maple syrup or sugar
1 egg
1/2 cup milk
3 tablespoons olive

Bake in pan for 30 minutes or until done at 400 degrees.
A far more simple form of acorn bread is to make a thick acorn porridge out of cold processed acorn flour. Take a large tablespoon of the porridge and drop it into cold water. This causes the porridge to contract. Take the lump out of

the water and dry.

IDENTIFICATION: Acorns, small nut with cap. Rough and larger caps belong to the more bitter acorns.

TIME OF YEAR: Usually late summer, fall, tree do not produce every year.

ENVIRONMENT: Oaks inhabit all kinds of environments.

METHOD OF PREPARATION: Numerous once leached of tannins.: out of hand, flour, candy.

HERB BLURB

The tannins have been used as an astringent as well as antiviral, antiseptic and antitumor but could also be carcinogenic. The mold that develops on acorns has antibiotic properties.



A Meditation about Meditation

By Mike the Fool

Don't worry, I'm not going to tell you how to breathe. You've probably heard 10 or 15 times by now about how meditation is good for your health, mental fitness, religious vitality and inspiration. Blah, blah, blah! Since you know Zen, Yoga, the ever popular Tree Meditation of pagans, I'd rather tell

you about the tradition of Meditation in Reformed Druidism.

Oops, did someone say, we don't do that? If you've never attended a grove liturgy (especially older modeled liturgies) you probably just haven't noticed it, because it is hidden. In America, we're possibly the first group that did Meditation, and it has been part of our liturgical tradition since Day 1. It's rather easy to miss if you look through the small sample of 100 liturgies in Part 3 of ARDA; it usually is just a line saying "The Meditation" and two lines after it. Hard to see

amongst oodles of chants, invocations, consecration and stage directions. You'll notice that the other modern Druids usually do liturgical meditation only as a preparatory step, not in the middle of the service. The reason is that Reformed Druidism borrow the basic framework of an Episcopal service, which has a sermon, and stuffed the content of the service with Celtic, Vedic, Bardic and other material, but they kept a quiet spot after consuming the consecrated Waters of Life. After the 1970s, Reformed Druids began to do non-liturgical meditations, but this is how our tradition began.

So how was it originally done? Well the Founders hoped to avoid long dull sermons, although David Fisher excelled at them. The basic formula was for three items, perhaps totaling 5 to 10 minutes together. The Druids would listen, either sitting or standing, together or in a circle, as the Archdruid (or guest) would read one written item of interest, then expostulate upon the item or other idea they wished to discuss, and then all would sit quietly and think. The quiet portion was adopted from Quaker traditions, and people often would watch the lovely surrounding Nature while they thought. Naturally, there might be more readings or poetry. While the other portions of the service might have lovely bits, a message in a call-response, poem offerings, a quiet procession or a quiet divination of the winds; it was in the Meditation, that a specific lesson or idea for the week/month was shared. It was instructional or inspirational, to further their progress in Druidical inquiry. Some thought it was the most important part, and the most ecumenical portion.

So what did they read and talk about? Only two or three saved liturgies included the meditations. Often the choice appears to have been a last minute decision. As episode 14 of Desperate Druids show you, organizing a service or festival had so many chaotic moving parts, that the meditation might be rather low on the totem pole of priorities. There were always safe fall-backs, in case time ran short, and these were frequent! In all likelihood, the Archdruid would originally draw upon a few sources: 1) a book of clippings from their studies at Carleton or the newspaper, 2) the fifth portion of The Druid Chronicles (Reformed), entitled "Book of Meditations" written in 1964 by David Frangquist, 3) the "Green Book" volume 1 collected by David Frangquist from early services in 1966, or 4) a book of stories or wise sayings taken out of the library (Frangquist liked "The World Bible". The early collection of the Apocrypha, with the lengthy epistles might be sought for a lengthy tract, or the Archdruid would put pen to paper and write a traditional sermon. Frangquist warned future Archdruids to beware this last item in his final meditation as Carleton's Archdruid:

Three years ago
Gone now
They found something
Had a good time
Could laugh.

Restrictions now gone
Still must laugh
If you can't laugh
You are dead, and
Your religion dying.

Your spirit is your own
Find what you will
But together good
Yuks.

If A-D can't laugh,
Or sermonizes,
Kill him!

I leave you...



Sometimes, a member of the grove would provide the Archdruid with a material. In the pre-internet era, this is how people shared interesting material, in an age where finding Druidical reading was not easy. Now we do this all the time, easily, perhaps making meditation and story exchange a less exciting opportunity than it used to be?

Most of these writings naturally had a touch of humor, were playful, rather exotic (back then), and introduced bizarre concepts the students had encountered about religious outlooks; often with a reference to Nature or a quirky view of reality. The goal was to broaden their understanding of what religion, philosophy, and the overlap of the two concepts; and how Nature could be a part of it. Even a brief skimming of the previous source work in pre 1975 literature shows a high degree of eclectic cultural material. More often, it was not Celtic, but drawn from a growing corpus of Asian or Middle-Eastern material, then beginning to finally blossom in mainstream America, to supplement the member's Judeo-Christian base framework. With the 1970s, and more distinctively pagan-inspired groves, more came from ancient Celtic material, mystical and Gnostic tracts, and a core of neopagan essays began to circulate.

As Zen, Tai Chi, Tantrism, Yoga, Transcendentalism Meditation and a host of other meditations began to creep into common practice in the United States by the early 1980s, Carleton's tradition had turned to Native American, Feminism, Wiccan and Neopagan liturgical inspirations, with a smaller role being given to the meditation during services; although Reformed Druids would often join groups that did practice meditation. Emmon Bodfish, Archdruid of the Live Oak Grove in California, came up with an interesting movement meditation attached after this article.

In the 1990s, when the internet was beginning to re-unite all the Groves that couldn't be bothered to write to each other, I began to resurrect the older writings and ways of Reformed Druidism at Carleton, and doing my best to keep the eclectic mixture of liturgical practices we'd collected during the 1980s. The Green Book Volume 1 which I mentioned earlier had become a sort of personal reflection manual in the 1970s, that people would borrow from the Archdruid and just read on a sunny afternoon in the woods. In the 1980s it was forgotten and lost. I was astounded when Richard gave me a copy in 1993, never having heard of it in previous writings, and it never having been shared with the Berkeley Druids, for fear Isaac would publish it. I developed Green Fever, and I brought the meditation back into the forefront of my services, and did some collecting work of my own, and produced four more books of material for the perpetually lazy Druid to sift from. If there is one thing I'm good at, it's collecting stuff made by other people.

What I like about the Green Book format is that you can just stuff in more material of your own. It isn't a final corpus. Like Reformed Druidism, you can just keep innovating and trying things, so long as you don't force others to swallow whatever you bring back to the Grove. Norman Nelson loved to talk about his "chap book", in which he would clip out articles (Not necessarily Druidic, but interesting), stick in cartoons, some leaves and the such. A Green Book should grow organically, be occasionally trimmed, viewed occasionally and shared with curious friends, just like a mix-tape of your favorite songs.



And what about the quiet portion of the meditation?
Well you are quiet.
And then you're quiet some more.
And you either close your eyes or you watch the pretty
trees swaying in the breeze.
You can think about the writing and the speaking that
just happened.
Or you can think about nothing.
But you are quiet.
Ellis describes one version of this activity, most likely
derived from Quaker meeting practices, that he follows

in RDG meetings in California (see following article).

Interestingly, several of the recent Druid manuals/books I've been reading are insisting that beginning Druids devote a regular part of their training to meditation. See chapters to this effect in *Solitary Druid's Handbook*, *The Druidry Handbook (AODA)*, *Mysteries of Druidry (Cathbad from Order of White Oak)* and the list goes on and on. Rather than casting fireballs, many Druidic novel, such as Ellen Hoppman's trilogy of the *Priestess of the Forest*, include meditation practices, which some complained about as too Vedic inspired for their Celtic tastes.

In conclusion, you can do without it, you can do with it, but the trend is obvious, the benefits are well known, the styles are numerous. Reformed Druids have been meditating since our foundation, and now society and other Druid groups are incorporating meditation into their training regimens. So it seems time to dust off the concept in the Reform. Why invent the wheel? If you can find a system of meditation that works for you, either borrow it whole hog, or give it a shellacking of Celtic imagery or terms, but just do it. You'll likely curse about how tough it is, likely drop it, but if you keep with it, you'll eventually wonder how you ever got a long without it.



Green Book of Meditations The Original 1966 Introduction

Those who join the Reformed Druids are, in one sense or another, religious rebels. They are usually fed up with the hypocrisies and inadequacies of the institutionalized churches. They seek a satyric outlet, and they find it in Druidism. But they are seldom anti-religious. On the contrary, they often feel that there is in fact some truth to be found in religion, and this belief is

affirmed in the Basic Tenets. A common complaint among Druids is that the truth has been obscured because they have been forced, more or less against their will, into various particular religious molds. They seek to be freed in order to freely seek, and to make independent judgments on what passes for religious truth.

Druidism, as an institution, must remain independent. It can never hope to profess absolute truth; for when it does, it then will become no better than the fossilized institutions from which its members have fled. But even while it systematically shuns dogmatism, it can, and must still lead. It must provide the opportunity for discovery, which many of its members have never had. It must, in short, provide in its written meditations a taste of the writings of the world's great religions, in the hope that this taste will stimulate a wider search for knowledge and wisdom in the quest for religious truth.

As Arch-Druid, you are charged with preparing meditations, which will prove meaningful to the congregation. In order to do this, you must choose selections from the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Taoists, the Muslims, and many others, as well as from the Bible. You must provide a wide variety in order to give truth a chance. The best method is to study widely yourself. But this can be too time-consuming. I therefore strongly urge you to purchase, for your own edification, an excellent and useful collection: Viking Portable #5, Henry Ballou's World Bible. It is available in paper for less than \$2.00, or in hardcover for slightly more. The selections are short and illuminating, and the editor exhibits a bias, which can almost be called Druidic. It makes a good beginning.

For those Arch-Druids who are lazier still, or who suddenly find themselves in desperate need of a meditation at the last minute, I offer the following collection. It is hoped that the collection, although short, is representative and especially useful for Reformed Druids.

David A. Frangquist
Editor, 1966



Green Book of Meditations

Preface to 1976 Edition

In the first few years after the foundation of Reformed Druidism at Carleton College, there became attached to the office of Arch-Druid three collections of written material, which became known collectively as the Three Books of the Arch-Druid. Handed down over the years from Arch-Druid to Arch-Druid, they have acquired for the Druids at Carleton some measure of venerability, such as the scant age of the Reform can confer.

The first of these, The Book of the Worship of the Earth-Mother, preserves much of the liturgy used in the beginning, though indeed as the Reform grew, so did the realization that liturgy cannot remain fixed and static while religious outlook changes. So today each presiding priest is encouraged to write liturgy that he can celebrate without antagonizing his own religious scruples; and while much is still drawn from the Book of Worship, its influence is less than it once was. The second book, the Archives, though of much historical interest, has hardly ever borne much influence on the religious activity at Carleton.

By contrast, the Book of Written Meditations has waxed large in the consciousness of the Carleton Grove, larger even, perhaps, than the Druid Chronicles. These meditations were gathered by David Frangquist as an aid to lazy Arch-Druids (or so he said), and the collection was bound in green covers which readily distinguish it from the black covers of the Book of Worship and the blue covers of the Archives; indeed at Carleton it is called simply "the green book" and that has become in effect its title. These meditations found their way with increasing frequency into services at Carleton, not from increasing laziness, but from increasing awareness of the treasures that David had gathered together between the green covers. Members of the grove would often borrow the book for their own meditation and reflection, and eventually the essence and core of Druidism at Carleton could be found in seminal form within this free-form, eclectic collection more than any place else, save only the great world at large, whence, after all, these meditations came.

And so we have thought it appropriate to print The Green Book to bring it to a larger audience, in the hope that others, too, may find it useful in the search for awareness. The pages of the original are unnumbered, for David encouraged his successors to add such meditations as they found appropriate. We encourage our readers to do likewise, and have accordingly left the pages unnumbered. There have been additions since David's time, but they have been few. For this edition we have included several selections that have long wanted adding; the Yeats' poems, for example, which have almost become part of the Carleton liturgy. We have resisted the temptations to make a few excisions. We should especially have liked to excise the "Sayings of the Ancient Druids" which are no more Druidic than is Stonehenge, and which certainly cannot be said to represent the beliefs of the Reformed Druids; yet David included it, and we shall not gainsay him.

Herewith, then is The Green Book, in substantially the same form as it was bequeathed to Carleton by David. May you find joy in the reading!

Richard M. Shelton
Ellen Conway Shelton
Editors, 1974



The Four Salutations of the Day

By Emmon Bodfish

See also a video at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T85VKVFFeZo&feature=youtu.be>

Many readers who have been doing the Proto-Grove ritual on their own for awhile write to us asking "What is the next step?" and "Is there a Druid training program?" There is no Druid Training program yet for those not involved in active Groves. We are working on it. But meanwhile a fruitful place to start your training is with the Four Salutations to the Day. If you have been at one of the regular bi-monthly Summer Services of an R.D.N.A. Grove, you have heard the invocation of the "three ways of day and one of night." In this contemplative exercise you will be marking these four turning points of the day with a short, specific ritual, an active meditation in which you will be learning several basic essentials of all psychic or meditative work. It will keep you mindful of your intention to train and of your specifically Druidic vocation and heritage.

These four times, "trathan" in the old Gáidhlig, are noted in Welsh and Irish folklore as magical times when the "other world" is especially close to ours and communication or passage between the two is easiest. The old epic and Bardic poems speak of these times as power-times when spell working was done and an adept person might

receive a vision or message from an ancestor or a patron Deity, a moment when a bard, inspired, might speak a prophecy. These are DAWN, NOON, SUNSET, and STARS. STARS is usually interpreted to be midnight.

One of our former Archdruids recounts that when an acquaintance of his was traveling through rural Ireland recently he found that the cottagers stayed indoors or stayed quiet around the noon point of the day. When he rose to go out, or to move on about some mundane business, they would say, "Oh, sit a while. Have another cup of tea." When asked, they would say something vague to the effect that it is a tricky time, unlucky to be bustling about. He did not ascertain whether they did not know why this was so, or if they were just cautious in talking about such matters to a stranger. Most, he felt, did not know why, and this taboo on activity is the last little remainder in folk memory of the old custom of observing the *trathan*.

The first purpose of the four Salutations is to put you in tune with the natural, celestial rhythms of the day and the changing seasons. The second purpose of the Salutations is a meditative practice, to practice entering an altered state of consciousness at will. The third purpose is to remind you of your Druidic commitment and to organize your day around the four natural turning points of Earth's time clock, providing stop-points in which you take stock of your day, of the passage of time, of nature and your own existence in it.

You will begin by learning to achieve mental silence, to stop thought, and to hold your mind silent for the time it takes the Sun to rise or set. In the temperate latitudes this is about two and a half to four minutes counted from the Sun disk's first contact with the horizon to its last contact, assuming a flat horizon for averaging's sake.



The first skill to be mastered in the Salutations is the ability to hold the mind silent. You must learn to stop thought. By thought I mean the sentences that are normally running through your mind all day and in your dreams at night. I do not mean becoming unconscious, hypnotized, nor losing awareness of yourself or your surroundings. In the Silence you will in fact become more aware than usual of your immediate surroundings. Some Eastern sects consider this the only "true" form of meditation. This is "outward directed" mediation, as contrasted with inner contemplation, "astral travel," or hypnotic trance. It is harder than it sounds, at first, though most people can do it for a few seconds right off. That's enough to start you. Here are some techniques to help you get further into that state and to help you learn to use it. In this wordless state, your consciousness may be turned by your will either inward or outward. In the Salutations it is turned outward. It surprises many people to find that they can perceive, and in acute detail, without any thoughts or words going through their minds. You will progress through this silent space to other states of consciousness. As you are able to hold the Silence longer you will learn from it and be able to explore with it.

1. Repeat a simple phrase, silently in your mind until all other thoughts cease, then let the phrase grow fainter and fainter and fade out. For the solar Salutations, "Hail Belenos!" This is a crutch; drop it as soon as you can.
2. Enter the Silence. Listen to your breath. Listen as though it were the most important instructions you were ever to hear, and which you must memorize. This will stop your mental sentences.
3. Listen to all the ambient sounds as if they were music.
4. Think to yourself down in to the heels of your feet and the heels of your hands. Feel yourself exist.

In doing the Salutations four times a day, you are learning to enter a different state of consciousness at will, regularly and often. These three: will, consistency, and practice are the keys to meditative and psychic progress. The goal is to be able to enter, at will, the state of consciousness that you will need in order to do a particular psychic or spiritual work. Small amounts of frequent practice achieve more than an occasional long session.

Do the four Salutations by the celestial clock, at Dawn, Noon, Sunset and Stars whether you are "in the mood" or not. This way you will become capable of entering this clear, silent state at any time, regardless of moods and circumstances, "to find a refuge outside the passions" of the moment, as an old book says. This practice builds and furnishes that refuge, a base-of-operations, for your further work. When you can hold silence for twelve to thirty seconds at a time, alert, eyes open, taking in perceptions as far around toward the corners of your peripheral field as

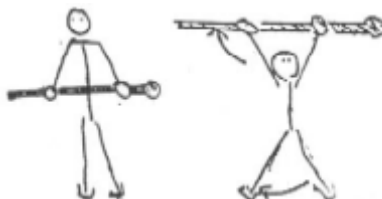
you can, you will notice that things look different from the way that they do in your normal, “mundane” state of consciousness. I won’t list the changes because I do not want to bias your perceptions, the self-fulfilling prophecy trap. Not everyone gets all the different changes, but you will discover yours. (Write to the Missal-Any when you do, we like feedback, and we can answer questions individually.) These changes will be your signal that you are in a meditative state, at the Silent Place, rung one of the metaphorical ladder of meditative training. When you have completed the Salutation, then, in line with the third purpose, take some time to consider from this higher perspective what you have been occupied with since the last Salutation. It is a step in getting control of your time, your habits and your life.

The Four Salutations of the Day

Stand, waiting for the first bit of the sun’s disk to appear over the horizon. Hold your staff in front of you, your hands in front of your breast bone. Your left hand is above your right hand and the staff is not touching the ground.



When the first bit of the sun’s disk clears the horizon, turn your staff horizontal and raise it over your head in one motion. Breathe in a full breath as you raise the staff, and at the same time step to the right with your right foot. Hold the breath; silence your mind. Your arms and your legs now form two triangles and you are looking at the first sun through a “trilithion” formed by your arms and staff.



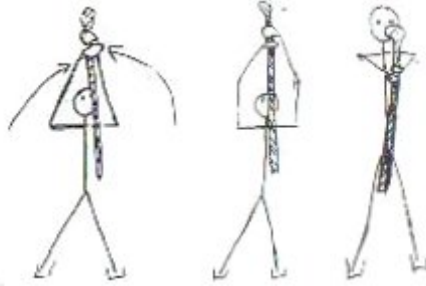
Holding the breath, turn your staff back vertical, and, holding it at arm’s length, exhale slowly as you lower the staff between your gaze and the morning sun, momentarily blocking it out, until it seems to rise again over the top of the staff.



Let go your left hand from the staff and holding it in your right, sweep both of your arms up and outward, breathing in until you reach full extension. Your head, arms, and legs form a pentagram, your lungs are filled with the new air and you are fully open to the morning light. This is true even when there is rain falling in your face in the winter. Then you are open to that truth, that dawn and that aspect of Nature. You hold mental silence here in the open position until the sun’s disk clears the horizon.

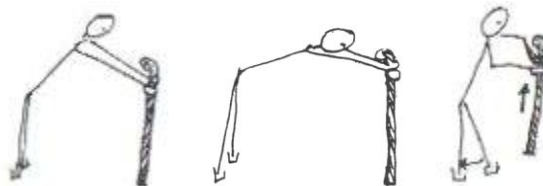


When it is free of the last horizon* sweep your hands up and together over your right hand, as you inhale. Hold the breath for an instant, then begin slowly exhaling as you turn the staff back to vertical again and lower it again with your line of sight and the risen sun.

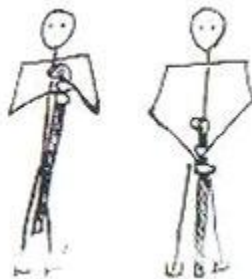


*horizon: trees, buildings, mountains, freeway “on” ramps, whatever is between you and the setting or rising sun.

Continue on down, touching your staff to the ground, arms fully extended and your head bowed between them. Concentrate on the ground and your staff and feel the earth energy move up the staff, through your arms and to your lungs as you inhale another full breath. Raise your head and pull your staff in toward your heart as you straighten up and inhale fully.

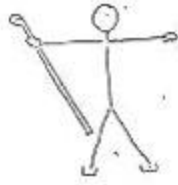


Your hands on your staff, touch your breastbone. Hold silence. Perceive the dawning light all around you. Take several (three to nine) calm breaths. Then as you exhale, lower your staff and step right bringing your feet together and the staff to rest on the ground between your two big toes. Press it down. “Ground down” mentally; return to the mundane mental level and worldly functioning. The day has begun.



At NOON you face due South. At solar noon, as opposed to clock noon, the sun will be at the highest point in the sky that it will reach that day, and it will also be directly South. The movements and the breathing for the NOON Salutation are the same as for the DAWN, however do not look directly at the noon sun. Look at the southern

horizon directly below it. Feel the rays and the warmth. Hold silence in the open position for twenty four breaths. Finish the Salutations as at DAWN.



Open Position

At evening, when the sun is about to set over whatever is your local western horizon, take your stance facing it. When the sun's disk touches tangent to the first bit of the horizon, inhale and raise your staff over your head in the first movement of the Salutation. Holding silence, draw it down between yourself and the setting sun until the sun reappears over the top of the staff. Breathe out as you do this. Move to the open position as before and hold it out as you do this. Move to the open position as before and hold it in silence until the last bit of the solar disk is about to sink below the horizon. At that moment, inhaling, bring your arms up and together with the staff between you and the sun. Then as in the other Salutations, exhale as you bring the staff down to ground at arm's length in front of you, bowing forward as the last gleam disappears under the horizon. Feel yourself "bowing down the sun" in synchronization with it. When you feel the ground energy move up along the staff, through your arms, and body, inhale, mind silent, eyes totally perceiving. Hold your staff and hands at heart level as before. See the night begin around you. One day is over; a new day has begun. Press your staff down to the ground again at your feet. "Ground down" mentally. Come back to the mundane world, refreshed. Recall what has happened since NOON.

At celestial midnight, STARS, the sun is on the other side of the world directly below your feet. At this midnight or just before you go to sleep, do the Salutation to the STARS. Face the North Star. Calm your mind. Recall what you have been doing since the last Salutation. When you have achieved mental silence once more, then raise your staff over your head and inhale. View the North Star then raise your staff over your head and inhale. View the North Star through the "trilithion" of your arms and staff. The rest of the Salutation proceeds like the NOON Salutation. Here you will draw your staff down until the North Star seems to rise over the tip of it. You hold silence in the open position for twenty four breaths, then complete the movements as at NOON. Ground down. Retire. Sleep.



Wizard's Tree Exercise Video

Animated by Celestial Elf
<http://youtu.be/z88RydOdIZY>
five minutes long

One of many types of tree meditations used by modern Druid groups.

Whilst I am not sure whether Gandalf, Dumbledore and Merlin practiced this particular visualization technique, they may have. The Wizards Treeing Exercise presents the meditative aspect of Treeing -

How Wizards Connect To The Universe.

With practice, the act of Treeing will become second nature, those that already practice meditation or other forms of inner energy control such as Tai Chi, Qi Gong or Yoga will find that Treeing is a more profound method of joining your energies with the Earth and the Divine. Once accomplished you will discover that with practice your Treeing retains its connection to the Earth and the Universe wherever you are and you will be able to know that your Tree exists at all time, drawing in the golden energy of the Universe. Written by Stanley Stewart, Master Wizard, Wayfinders Association of Modern Wizardry (<http://www.artofmodernwizardry.org/>)



What Is A RDG Druid Meeting Like?

By Ellis <http://eureka.reformed-druids.org/practice.htm>

A meeting begins when two or more worshipers come together to be in the presence of the gods.

They usually sit facing each other in a circle. This helps them to be aware that they are a group together for worship, and puts everybody in a place of equal status.

When it seems that everyone is settled in the Archdruid will begin The Rite of The Waters of Life, which is followed by a period of silent meditation, during which everyone waits in shared silence until someone is moved by the Awen (i.e. has a strong religious feeling) to do something as part of their worship.

A person will only speak if they are convinced that they have something that must be shared, and it is rare for a person to speak more than once.

The words spoken are usually brief and may include readings (from the ARDA or other books), praying, or speaking from personal experience. Each speaking is followed by a period of silence.

Druids believe that the gods speak through the contributions made at the meeting. Some people say that there is often a feeling that a divine presence has settled over the group.

The words should come from the soul - from the inner light - rather than the mind. Druids know that even if the words they feel moved to speak have no particular meaning for themselves, they may carry a message from the gods to other people.

There may be no outward response to the contribution from other people, but if there is it will be something that builds positively on the previous contribution. Discussion and argument are not part of the meeting.

The meeting ends when the Archdruid stands and, while making the sign of the Druids three times, says "Peace! Peace! Peace!"

Usually, a pot luck follows.


Books



New Tolkien book by J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fall of Arthur*, will be released in May 2013
www.tolkienlibrary.com
In May 2014 there will be released the world first publication of a previously unknown work by J.R.R. Tolkien,

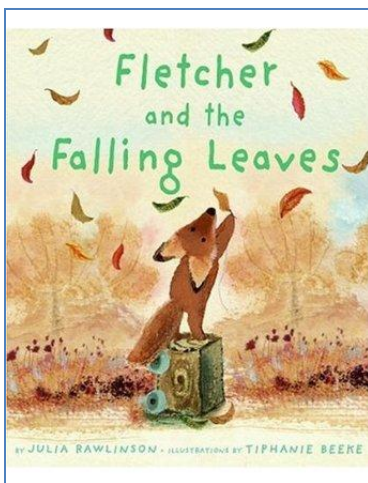
promo video for "From the Cauldron Born" the new book from Kristopher Hughes, due out in December can't wait ! :-)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=S0e1t4inwS4



Kris Quicktime
www.youtube.com

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=S0e1t4inwS4

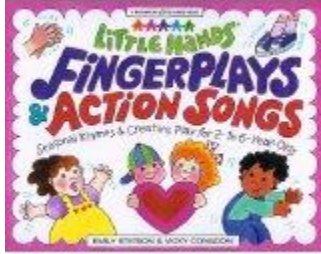


Fletcher and the Falling Leaves

by Julia Rawlinson (At your public library)
4 acorns out of 4

Review: When the leaves on his favorite tree turn brown and begin to drop, Fletcher, a young fox, worries that the tree is sick. Although he tries his best to help the tree, the last leaf finally falls. The next day when Fletcher visits the tree, he sees a magical sight that convinces him that falling leaves don't signify the tree's demise. Rawlinson's carefully worded text is superbly matched by Beeke's impressionistic watercolors. Fletcher's character is clearly evident in his distinct facial features and body language, and the magical

change of the season is accentuated as the scenery goes from soft, hazy earth tones to cool white and blue-green. For the scene in which Fletcher beholds the "magical sight" of the tree covered with ice, sparkle has been glued to the pages; the effect will make children gasp with delight. Given such a strong debut, the unforgettable Fletcher is primed for more picture books as he discovers the ways of the world. *Randall Enos*

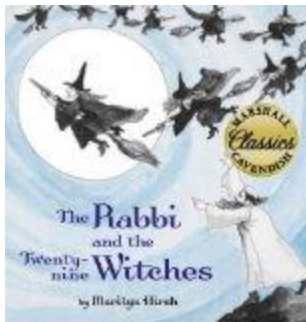


Little Hands Finger Plays and Action Songs

3.5 Acorns out of 4

I liked the four seasonal chapters of poems that are linked to hand actions that you and your child can share (anytime, anywhere, such as on a nature walk or trapped in the house on a rainy day). Since *Druidry for kids* is about action and doing rather than lecturing, this is a fun family activity with little Druids under 6. There are also corresponding crafts. Some of the rhymes aren't particularly good, but about $\frac{3}{4}$ are.

Review: This resource is packed with fingerplays, crafts, songs, games, and snippets of information arranged by season. Topics for the first section, fall, include apples, leaves, squirrels, Halloween, and Thanksgiving. Winter suggests themes of mittens, snow, and a number of holidays including President's Day. The text consists mainly of fingerplays and action rhymes interspersed with boxes containing simple craft and recipe ideas; short, thematic book lists; "Check the Calendar" notations of special days (Winter Solstice, Groundhog Day, Earth Day, etc.); and happenings throughout the year. Some of the fingerplays are familiar ("Five Little Pumpkins," "The Wheels on the Bus"); others are original ("Dr. King, He Had a Dream" sung to the tune of "B-I-N-G-O"). Simple, black-and-white line drawings of children of various ethnic backgrounds are scattered throughout. The pages for autumn are bordered by leaves, winter with snowflakes, etc., to allow for ease of locating material. For seasonal programming, this title will be useful for educators and libraries serving young children.



Editor: One story I remember from my childhood that is just plain awful was written up recently. [The book also mentioned they made evil potions and stole the milk from the cows on the full moon.]

[Lessons from Bad Children's Books: The Rabbi and the 29 Witches](#)

[In LBCB, I take older books my children have and analyze the messages within.] <http://icanwritefunny.blogspot.com/2010/10/lessons-from-bad-childrens-books-rabbi.html> *Matthew Kagle, Creative*

Commons.

Story

Once upon a time there was a perfectly normal town that was near a cave filled with evil witches. We know the witches are evil because the book tells us so and because, once a month on the full moon, the witches would fly over the town and scream a lot. The townspeople were scared of them, partly because of the screaming, but mostly because... Oh, no, wait, they're just scared of the screaming. Anyway, nobody goes out at night.

One day, an old grandmother tells the Rabbi that she wants to see the full moon. The Rabbi agrees to help and comes up with a plan. He gathers twenty nine men and has them put dry robes in clay pots, then they go out to the witches' cave.

At the cave, the Rabbi convinces the witches that he is a witch like they are, and that he can walk between raindrops, which the witches want to learn how to do. The witches conjure a magnificent feast for him. In return, he pretends to conjure the men from outside, who put on the dry robes (it's raining out) and come in to the cave.

Pretending to take the witches outside for a dance, the men drag the witches out into the rain, where they melt away into nothing. Then all the townspeople go to the cave, eat the feast, and sing and dance.

Oh, and they get to see the full moon at last. Yay team.

Lessons

1. Kill people who annoy you

There is never any mention in the book of the witches causing any harm other than screaming. Sure, the people have nightmares and the livestock are disturbed by it, but the witches never curse or directly harm anyone. The wise Rabbi of the town never even tries to ask the witches to keep their screaming down. He just sets off to kill them. Come to think of it, my neighbor keeps playing his stereo really loud at night; maybe I should pay a visit to his "cave" if you know what I mean.

2. Jewish stereotypes are real

The old woman who sets everything off says "I want to see the full moon before I die! Is that too much to ask?" She then complained about never seeing her grandchildren and went back to her room to sit alone in the dark because it's too much trouble to turn on the light. Bagels.

3. Follow your leader blindly

When the Rabbi tells the men they're going to the witches cave armed only with pots filled with robes, nobody asks why. They just assume that, because he was a Rabbi, he knew what he was doing. Later, the Rabbi told them to wear their underwear on the outside of their clothes, paint their faces blue, drink this special Kool-Aid he prepared, and come to his Amway meeting.

4. Menstruation is Evil

Once a month the witches, all female, screamed a lot and scared everyone. Come on, do I have to spell it out for you?

Editor's Alternative Ending: *The witches are purified by the rain, and decide to be nice, each family adopts a 400 year old granny-witch, the men in town dance with them regularly, and the witches establish a pharmaceutical industry, second to none, that cures illness and lengthens lives, making everyone prosperous, happy, and they still get to fly around on the full moon, with townkids in tow, screaming a lot.*

NEWS



[gallery-8202812.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/archaeology/revealed-early-bronze-age-carvings-suggest-stonehenge-was-a-huge-prehistoric-art-gallery-8202812.html)

Revealed: Early Bronze Age carvings suggest Stonehenge was a huge prehistoric art gallery

A detailed laser-scan survey of the entire monument has discovered 72 previously unknown Early Bronze Age carvings chipped into five of the giant stones.

DAVID KEYS

The Independent

[http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/archaeology/revealed-early-bronze-age-carvings-suggest-stonehenge-was-a-huge-prehistoric-art-](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/archaeology/revealed-early-bronze-age-carvings-suggest-stonehenge-was-a-huge-prehistoric-art-gallery-8202812.html)

For part of its existence as an ancient temple, Stonehenge doubled as a substantial prehistoric art gallery, according to new evidence revealed yesterday.

A detailed laser-scan survey of the entire monument has discovered 72 previously unknown Early Bronze Age carvings chipped into five of the giant stones.

All of the newly discovered prehistoric art works are invisible to the naked eye – and have only come to light following a laser-scan survey which recorded literally billions of points micro-topographically on the surfaces of the monument's 83 surviving stones. In total, some 850 gigabytes of information was collected.

Detailed analysis of that data – carried out on behalf of English Heritage - found that images had been engraved on the stones, normally by removing the top 1-3 millimetres of weathered (darker coloured) rock, to produce different sized shapes. Of the 72 newly discovered images revealed through the data analysis, 71 portray Bronze Age axe-heads and one portrays a Bronze Age dagger.

Prior to the laser survey, 46 other carvings (also of axe-heads and daggers) were known or suspected at Stonehenge – mostly identified visually back in the 1950s. The laser-scan survey has now confirmed the existence of those other images and provided more details about them.

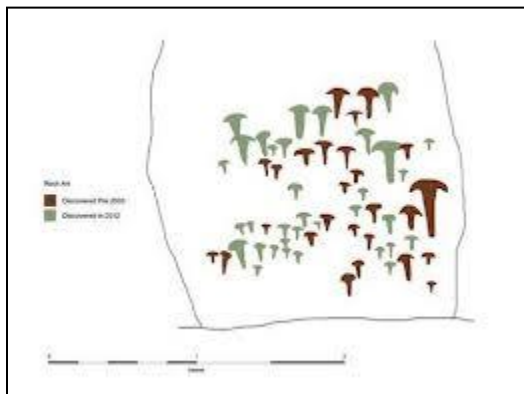
The 72 new 'rock art' discoveries almost treble the number of carvings known at Stonehenge – and the monument's largely invisible art gallery now constitutes the largest single collection of prehistoric rock carvings in southern Britain. Although now largely invisible to the naked eye,

back in the Early Bronze Age the images, composed of then-unweathered (and therefore lighter coloured) stone would have been clearly visible.

The revelations are likely to be of huge importance to archaeologists' understanding of a key part of Stonehenge's life as a prehistoric temple.

It's known that, when the main phase of the monument was initially built in the middle of the third millennium BC, it was designed primarily as a solar temple, aligned on the mid-winter and mid-summer solstices. But, as Stonehenge evolved over subsequent centuries, the extent to which other religious functions were added is not yet known.

Certainly, in the period 1800-1500 BC, vast numbers of individual monumental tombs were constructed in the landscape around Stonehenge and additional features (various circles of ritual pits) were laid out around the monument. The carved axe-heads and daggers also belong to this



enigmatic period - and may signify some sort of expansion or change in the great stone circle's religious function.

In Indo-European tradition axe-heads were often associated with storm deities – and some surviving European folklore beliefs suggest that upwards-facing axe blades were used as magical talismans to protect crops, people and property against lightning and storm damage. It's potentially significant that every single one of the Stonehenge axe-head images have their blades pointing skywards, while the daggers

point downwards. The axe-heads – the vast majority of the images – may therefore have been engraved as votive offerings to placate a storm deity and thus protect crops.

It may also be significant that the vast majority of the carvings either face a nearby set of tombs (from roughly the same period) – or the centre of Stonehenge itself. Rare evidence from elsewhere in Britain suggests that axe-head and dagger carvings could have funerary associations.

The laser-scan data shows that many of the axe-head images have exactly the same dimensions as up to half a dozen other images in the prehistoric Stonehenge 'art gallery'. This in turn suggests that real axe-heads were being used as 'stencils' to help produce the images. If that's the case, the largest axe-heads portrayed - up to 46 centimetres long – depict objects which were far bigger than archaeologists have ever found and which must have been for purely ceremonial or ritual use.

The laser-scan survey was carried out for English Heritage by a Derby-based survey company – the Greenhatch Group – last year. A subsidiary of York Archaeological Trust – ArcHeritage, also operating on behalf of English Heritage – then spent many months analysing and cataloguing the vast quantities of data.

“The new discoveries are of huge importance. They also demonstrate how emerging technologies can extract previously unsuspected and crucial information from a monument like Stonehenge,” said Marcus Abbott, Head of Geomatics and Visualization at ArcHeritage. “As the previously invisible images started appearing on our computer screens, we stared in disbelief at the sheer quantity of carvings being revealed – and treble-checked all our data,” he added.

The survey and analysis has also yielded other new insights into Stonehenge. It’s revealed, through an examination of how finely the stone surfaces were worked, that the entire prehistoric temple was constructed to be viewed primarily from the north-east. That’s the side of the monument which is approached by what archaeologists have long believed to be a processional way, aligned with the solstices.



Because, it now seems that Stonehenge was built to be viewed from that direction, it suggests that some sort of religious procession made its way towards the monument, along that route, probably on mid-winter’s and mid-summer’s day.

Detailed analysis of the data also shows that one of the stones at the now ruinous south-west side of the monument was also very deliberately worked and shaped to allow a line of sight through to the setting sun on mid-winter’s day. This, along with other new evidence, suggests that the south-west side of the monument was once fully functional – and will reduce support for those who have, up till now, argued that Stonehenge was never completed. The implication therefore is that at some stage in its history there was a deliberate attempt at its destruction.

Particularly puzzling is the laser survey discovery that the prehistoric stone masons, who helped create Stonehenge, used two different stone-working techniques. The stone-dressing work on the monument’s great circle (both uprights and lintels) was accomplished by working parallel to the long sides of the stones, while the five stone ‘trilithons’ (the great horse-shoe arrangement of linteled stones) within the great circle were dressed by working at right-angles to the sides of the stones.

This previously unknown fact – revealed by the laser scan operation – suggests that the great ‘trilithons’ may have been constructed slightly before the great circle rather than being contemporary with it.



NEW WRITTEN LANGUAGE OF ANCIENT SCOTLAND DISCOVERED

Once thought to be rock art, carved depictions of soldiers, horses and other figures are in fact part of a written language dating back to the Iron Age.



By Jennifer Viegas

Wed Mar 31, 2010 07:00 AM ET

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Riders and horn blowers appear next to hunting dogs on what is called the Hilton of Cadboll stone, pictured here.

Rob Knell and Rob Lee

THE GIST:

- **A new written language, belonging to the early Pict society of Scotland, has just been identified.**
- **Stylized rock engravings have been found on hundreds of Pictish Stones.**
- **If the writing can be deciphered, it would provide a unique insight into early Scottish history.**

The ancestors of modern Scottish people left behind mysterious, carved stones that new research has just determined contain the written language of the Picts, an Iron Age society that existed in Scotland from 300 to 843.

The highly stylized rock engravings, found on what are known as the Pictish Stones, had once been thought to be rock art or tied to heraldry. The new study, published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society A*, instead concludes that the engravings represent the long lost language of the Picts, a confederation of Celtic tribes that lived in modern-day eastern and northern Scotland.

"We know that the Picts had a spoken language to complement the writing of the symbols, as Bede (a monk and historian who died in 735) writes that there are four languages in Britain in this time: British, Pictish, Scottish and English," lead author Rob Lee told Discovery News.

"We know that the three other languages were -- and are -- complex spoken languages, so there is every indication that Pictish was also a complex spoken language," added Lee, a professor in the School of Biosciences at the University of Exeter.

He and colleagues Philip Jonathan and Pauline Ziman analyzed the engravings, found on the few hundred known Pictish Stones. The researchers used a mathematical process known as Shannon entropy to study the order, direction, randomness and other characteristics of each engraving.

The resulting data was compared with that for numerous written languages, such as Egyptian hieroglyphs, Chinese texts and written Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse, Ancient Irish, Old Irish and Old Welsh. While the Pictish Stone engravings did not match any of these, they displayed characteristics of writing based on a spoken language.

Lee explained that writing comes in two basic forms: lexigraphic writing that is based on speech and semasiography, which is not based on speech.

"Lexigraphic writing contains symbols that represent parts of speech, such as words, or sounds like syllables or letters, and tends to be written in a linear or directional manner mimicking the flow of speech," he said. "In semasiography, the symbols do not represent speech -- such as the cartoon symbols used to show you how to build a flat pack piece of furniture -- and generally do not come in a linear manner."

Although Lee and his team have not yet deciphered the Pictish language, some of the symbols provide intriguing clues. One symbol looks like a dog's head, for example, while others look like horses, trumpets, mirrors, combs, stags, weapons and crosses.

The later Pictish Stones also contain images, like Celtic knots, similar to those found in the Book of Kells and other early works from nearby regions. These more decorative looking images frame what Lee and his team believe is the written Pictish language.

"It is unclear at the moment whether the imagery, such as the knots, form any part of the communication," Lee said. He believes the stones also contain semasiographic symbols, such as a picture of riders and horn blowers next to hunting dogs on what is called the Hilton of Cadboll stone. Yet another stone shows what appears to be a battle scene.

Paul Bouissac, a University of Toronto professor who is one of the world's leading experts on signs and symbols, told Discovery News that he agrees "it is more than plausible that the Pictish symbols are examples of a script, in the sense that they encoded some information, which also had a spoken form."

What is known about a writing system, however, "does not amount to deciphering this putative script," Bouissac added.

"We will have to wait for the discovery of what would be the Pictish equivalent of the Rosetta Stone, which made possible the cracking of the Egyptian hieroglyphic code," he said. "This may or may not ever happen."

DRUID INQUIRER INFO

Publishing Information

Title: Druid Inquirer: A Scrapbook of the Reformed Druid Communities

Editor: Michael the Fool

Published: 8 times a year. No mailed copies, just free on the internet, print your own.

Submissions Policy: Give it to me! If you have news about your grove, written a little essay, like to write up a book or move, have a poem, saw an interesting news article in the paper, or have a cartoon, send it in to mikerdna@hotmail.com or send by Facebook message to **mike.thefool**

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