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An Un-Official Publication  of the Reformed Druids

Oimelc, Year 42 (February 1st, 2005)

Volume 21, Number 1

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imelc, festival of Bride, Bridgit, Bredes, the daughter of Dagda, and Celtic goddess of fire and the hearth. She is patroness of Bards and craftsmen. She sends poetic inspiration which the Gaels regarded as an immaterial and suprasensual form of fire. Always one of the most prominent and popular deities, it is thought to be She who the Romans called the "Minerva of the Gauls." The early Christianizers of Ireland were unable



to eradicate Her worship and instead adopted, or co-opted Her into their own pantheon as "Saint" Bridget. According to Charles Squire in Celtic Myth and Legend, She is still the most popular of all Irish saints with the country folk, and is still easily "recognized as the daughter of Dagda. Her Christian attributes, almost all connected with fire attest her pagan origin. She was born at sunrise; a house in which she dwelt blazed into a flame which reached to heaven; a pillar of fire rose from her head when she took the veil; and her breath gave new life to the dead." This last attribute of the "saint" may be one of the powers of the Goddess which is recorded nowhere else. Knowledge of it was lost when the Druidic teachings were destroyed by the Roman Church and its soldiers It is preserved only in folk memory and here in the co-opters' own writings.

She may be related to the British Goddess Sul, worshipped at Bath, and of whom the first century Latin writer Solinus says "She ruled over the boiling spring and at her altar there blazed a perpetual fire which never whitened into ashes, but hardened into a stony mass."* A perpetual fire burned on the altar of the Druidic sanctuary of Bride at Kildare we learn from both Christian and Pre-Christian sources. Even after the sanctuary was stormed and taken over by Christians, the fire was kept burning, and some of the Goddess' traditions such as that having all and only women clerics in attendance, were continued until the thirteenth century. By then the Roman Church had enough power to impose its monopoly by force and the persecutions were beginning on the Continent. A British bishop declared the sacred fire "pagan" and ordered it extinguished in 1220 A.D.

*a small knowledge of chemistry would make this easy to arrange.

--Emmon Bodfish, reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Oimelc, 1989



News of the Groves



For the [Full Grove Directory](#)

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota



Here in Minnesota, it's gotten very cold, and we're looking forward to it warming up to +5 F by Monday. Winter term and all its troubles and joys have just begun. Will is back from his sojourn in India. Hazel (known otherwise as Corwin) wishes to officially come out as transgendered to the rest of the Druidic community, and to announce her new name, which came to her in December. Peter persists in his desire for (and belief in the possibility of) a winter sweatlodge. But really, it's too cold for much more excitement than answering letters addressed to "Your Eminence" from the UK.

Akita Grove: News from Japan



Pat reports that he is doing well in his temporary odd-jobs and enjoying the wintry pleasures of Northern Japan. He expresses pleasure that Mike will soon be returning to Asia, even if it is Korea (not Japan), and hopes that the Reformed Druids of North Asia will add a third Grove, in Korea, this time.



Sylvagaia/Elder Grove: News from France

Hail all Sisters and Brothers in the Earth-Mother! The Elder (proto) Grove is not as dead as supposed. Thank Be'al for that. We are currently two. I'm not counting trees and other sentient lifeforms. We are egalitarian, there's no AD, but Green Druid Willem is the spokesperson.

Which is a shame since the other human member is the one with the brains. We are more a private studygroup than anything, though we celebrate the eight stations of the year and the occasional full moon. Our path is eclectic and free. We do no harm, not intentionally anyway. We found that the best way to celebrate Yule, Beltain, etc., is to have a meal, with seasonal ingredients, self-picked, self-harvested, or if there's no other choice: self-bought. Our altar changes with the time of the year, following the seasonal changes.

We've been studying a bit of Wicca and Christianity lately but got a bit bored. This is not to say that those directions are boring or bad. Very much on the contrary. Just the books we had. Wicca and Christianity are absolute valid paths to That-Which-Is-Sacred. It's just that the reading material we found was without fantasy or daring. Currently we are reading Marion Green and feel more happy about that. We are researching Reiki. We are studying herbs.

Last year we tried to grow vegetables and fruits in a permaculture way, especially the Bio-intensive methods but things went horrifyingly wrong. After much commotion we will simply try again. Until we succeed.

Also last year we managed to save the varietal purity of certain pumpkins, beans and lettuces. The saved seeds found their way into Costa Rica, where some very poor family-farmers now will at least have the seeds to grow their own crops and not depend on agro-industry. We would advise anyone to look into Seed Saving. We can stop the diminution of biodiversity, of GM foods, of pesticides. We can make a greener planet for our children. Mail me for info (see under).

Happy winter solstice and festivities!

Peace, in the Earth-Mother,
Willem
greendruid at lycos.co.uk
willemhartman at yahoo.com



Awen Grove: News from Canada

I'd better get this in now before I miss the boat again!

Two of our Grove members were wedded in Druidic fashion here at Awen Grove in November. The holidays went well and we all enjoyed spending time with our families. Otherwise, it has been rather slow with the onset of the cold weather and snow.

Blessings under the oaks (frozen oaks, but oaks nonetheless),

Athelia /\



Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

With a dozen pots cooking on the stove, Mike is trying to wrap up another era of his Druidism in America as he prepares to go to Korea this late spring/early summer, for his second period of residence in Asia. He has been studying Korean (a sister-language to Japanese) for 18 months, and is starting to get the hang of it. In Korea, of course, he will be studying indigenous Shamanism and Korean Buddhism while teaching English in High School. Hopefully in the next two months, the last volume of ARDA 2 (NRDNA magazines 1974-2004), an update of the Druid Archives inventory, and two reprints of 1976 RDNA collections will come to print. He plans at least one more pilgrimage to Carleton College before his self-exile.



Eurisko Grove: News from Virginia

The grove here at Hampton is mostly silent at the moment. The decision was made by Gwdion to step down as Senior Druid and he has turned all responsibility over to Vivaine.

We have recent also acquired two new dedicated students and suffered the loss of one of our cats Deva. Eurisko considers all members both animal and human to be defacto members of the grove unless otherwise specified.

Gwydion and Vivaine are in the process of purchasing a new house which will serve as the main base of operations for all future grove activities. We continue our practice of "firebowl" discussions where friends and fellow travelers can come and spent a few hours around a roaring fire talking about anything and everything.

Our rituals have been almost nil since we have the tendency to celebrate with others who have invited us to their rituals. we plan on reviving using our own ritual structure beginning in imbolc.

As for yule itself we did our annual candlelight observation/vigil from midnight to sunrise, with gift exchange included. The weather has not turned too cold yet, but it is cold enough to put a damper on your outdoor plans.



Rowan-Oak Grove: News from Tulsa, OK

hi stacey! well, rowan-oak grove has taken a different turn in our saturday classes. as many of the members have had dreams and visions and prophecies concerning the earth changes we started investigating patterns in weather, seismic activity and vulcanism several months back. our findings were held true by the occurrence of that 9-plus quake and tsunami in the indian ocean just barely 2 weeks ago. so this last saturday when we took up classes again after a 2 week break for the arch-druidess health we spoke of the relationship between geography, geology and earth magicks in the light of the earth changes.

we also began taping classes (since the arch-druidess has a soft voice that is notoriously difficult to properly project and most tape recorders have difficulty even picking it up on tape. the acquisition of a kareoke machine with a professional quality mike solved that problem) as part of our archiving, following the advice of one of our prophecies to make use of technology while we may, yet not become dependent on it and to commit to heart any learning against the day when neither written works or electronic records would be available to us. everyone liked the new addition the mike does amplify the arch-druidess voice nicely and

will be most helpful on those rare occasions when we are in a large space and have the full membership at hand, maybe we should think of one of the more primitive megaphones...giggles uproariously at the thought, can't imagine me speaking before that large a crowd for any reason stay away panic attacks (crossing against evil eye lmao) suffice to say while things are very quiet with no crisis in the grove itself, we worry about our two texas groves.

the gray angels grove hasn't been in touch with us in several months, and the grove of the purple moon had a crisis of their own and much healing life saving energies are being sent that direction. the secreetarty treasurer bro werebear is off on a temp job with sis crystal doing drywall repair, both received their second year ovates training elevations at samhain and sis white tigress has started a grove or study group in the okla city area as part of the rowan-oak grove family only this last month, and received her ordination from the arch-druidess when she was back for a visit this last week. let's see that makes five groves in rowan-oak's family, mocc is growing again myrddin!

we also have been working with the muskogee grove in a matter of translation of an elven dialect that many of us have been speaking for some years, some of us all our lives. this has been fun and frustrating because it is rather a conceptual language and different inflections with the same spellings will mean entirely different things and we have been adapting the elven runes to create the written form of the language pulling in symbols from other languagues for the sounds not covered by the runes. never though when i wrote that novel manuscript years ago that the concepts in it were anything real and that so many people from around the world would link into the "sharayean tradition manifestation" as i term it. got to see it i can find that epic poem so i can share it with you some time.

well i must be about my chores so a good and bountiful oimelc to all!

healing, light, and peace.....and always love

m.s. white raven arch-druidess
rowan-oak grove tag for the mocc



White Rabbit Grove: News from Wisconsin

Hi from White Rabbit Grove;

Spring 2004 was a time of great turmoil for the Grove here, as we got very disillusioned at the historic Carleton gathering by the reality behind other Druids' imagined e-presences. (It seemed to be mutual.) Simultaneously we lost our ISP and gained a different one not belonging to the Grove itself. I'm borrowing its email now; the Grove email disappeared for the quarter and now appears en espanol only, not what I paid for I suppose. But it does send and receive.

We are back in our anonymous lair somewhere in greater Wisconsin and will soon begin talking in rdnatalk again, once the ISP quits confusing me with my ancestors. I will quit leaving the Healing Line (608)226-0052 off the hook, too.

For Solstice we baked spiral cookies and had a small grove of conifers indoors, all artificial, some of which could sing and dance. We also set up an LLC and applied for funding to get the Lord and Lady back into local harmony, hopefully to be approved by Equinox. Keep us in your prayers please. The Archdruid has been putting herself back together for over a decade in order to accomplish this goal.

Oh I suppose I should not be coy about the purpose of the LLC is to market and license my family's patented devices and artworks. We proudly have got one Patent Pending, for the cycling industry, as well as a backlog of innovation awaiting frames.

Here is my Imbolc advice, from Helgaleena at the Healing Line: eat cheese or die. It's that time of year. You either make it till spring or you don't, folks.

Also in Scandinavian countries it is time for the Juhannus bonfires of your Solstice evergreens, with accompanying winter sports.

Peace peace peace,

healingline at ferretlovers.com brought to you today by herman whiterabbit washosha at earthlink.net (will also reach the Archdruid but is not me)



Cat-in-the-Corner Grove: News from Colorado

Has been on extended hiatus for a while, due to the dreaded Circumstances Beyond Our Control.



Sunset Proto-Grove: News from California

The Force of Winter

I recently had an experience that not only humbled me toward 'old man winter,' but also gave me a good deal of relief that this winter and the season of sleep is almost over...for the weather gods have not been sleeping at all. Many of you may know that there have been storms beyond the norm in Southern California. Being a girl from NorCal, I have never really felt very sorry for SoCals when they get a few raindrops.

I may have a bit more compassion from here on out. (Although I still think weather wise, regularly, they are very spoiled when it comes to weather.)

On a recent Friday morning, I arose from bed at 5:30am in order to pack my bags, get my children ready to leave with the sitter, and made my way to the airport for a weekend, business trip. The flight was delayed about 20 minutes, due to a late arrival for the previous flight but we were on our way. The weather being stormy there was significant turbulence in our plane. At moments the view out the window looked like the gods dangled our small prop plane from a marionette string. The destination was Palm Springs. Even in inclement weather, I expected Palm Springs to be a wet, but balmy environment from previous experience of being there in the rain. An hour and a half later, we lowered the landing gear to land, we proceeded to spiral down into the small valley the airport is nestled in. The grid of the city became clear, and then trees, cars, people...we came to about 400 feet...ready to land, when the pilot suddenly pulled up, and raised the landing gear. In the next few minutes it was explained to us, that our flight instead of being redirected was being sent back to its originating airport. Sacramento. After a not so enjoyable flight back, landing and deboarding, we found that the airline was sending no other flights to Southern California that day. So I bought a ticket on another airline, which was also delayed, but that got me an hour from Palm Springs, I then rented a car and drove the remainder. From the time I left my house it took me 13 hours to get to Palm Springs...the hotel/resort was a welcome beacon in the cold stormy night, and I arrived to my room at 9:00pm after taking

care of a few minutes of business. I am seriously thinking I'll drive next time and enjoy the scenery on the way...the back roads through the desert are beautiful.

All this was just another reality check, that man will never control nature. Although I was very tired at the end of the day, I am still very glad of that fact. (Although I am now definitely looking forward toward spring and its sunnier days.)

O.



Poison Oak Grove, News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

The day we dreaded and hoped would never come finally did. After 22 years of continuous use, the Orinda grove site will no longer be available for druid services. The head of one of the community groups that works with the land trust that took over stewardship of Emmon's property (that he left to be open space in his will) didn't want any more druid activity at the grove site, even though other neighbors had no problem with us. So it was with great sadness that the AD of Poison Oak Grove, with the help of some benevolent neighbors, removed the cabers that Emmon at set to mark the sunrises of each of the High Days, the May Pole, the wire cages that protected some of the grove's sacred trees from hungry deer, the driplines that watered them, took apart most of the altar so as not to tempt some wayward hikers who want to light a fire (we will not be held responsible any more!), and after putting a piece of the altar down the Toll Uaigh (offering shaft), we filled it in.

As the AD has a house in the woods now, all the grove materials were transported to her house. She has already started scouting out a new grove site, and has great hopes of rebuilding the altar and being able to have a fire in it setting the cabers at the points where the sunrises at the High Days once again.



"Hail Emmon"

By Albion Guppy

(Editor's Note: In the five years since the founder of A Druid Missal-Any, Emmon Bodfish, has died I have tried to contact his friends and colleagues to let them know of his passing. This past week I was fortunate enough to find another, Albion Guppy, who had also a regular contributor to A Druid Missal-Any over fourteen years ago during its first incarnation. As a tribute to Emmon, Albion wrote this moving poem. We at the Missal-Any are honored to publish it and look forward to Albion's continued contributions.)

Hail Emmon! May the Shining Ones have received you with Joy.

May their Peace even now flow through you.

May you be remembered as one who Served their purposes.

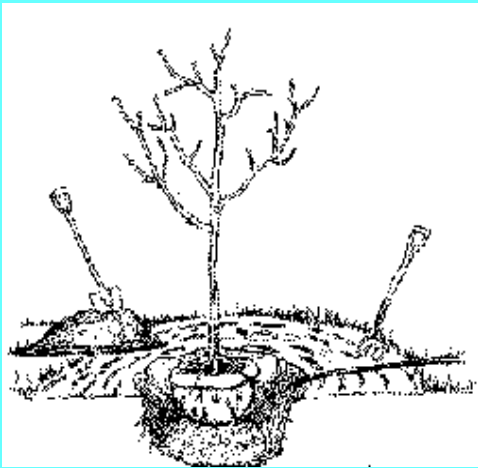
May you find the Ancestors faces smiling upon you.

Your Journey will long be remembered here upon Middle Earth.

Hail Hero Emmon! In our songs and in our hearts, we will recall and remember you!

May the Imbolc Fire burn Bright where you are!

Hail Emmon.



Grove Formation Thoughts

By Mike Scharding, DC Grove

I apologize in advance over my long winded observation.

There comes a time in many Druids' lives when they wish to begin holding services or hold meetings in a semi-organized framework, and the idea of grove formation arises. The first problem that arises is that no one knows how to found a Grove, and second, there are often no Third Order Druids present in the group to run the traditional services and do the usual ordinations. What's an enthusiastic go-getter Druid to do?

Well, first off, I have to say that I'm not the final de-jure authority on the issue, merely one well-informed voice among many. That being said, I have unofficially ended up as the de-facto networker and advisor of groves at the following website: <http://www.rdna.info/newgrove.html> where I give some simple guidelines; and <http://www.rdna.info/wheretrove.html> where I list the various groves and contact information for people who want to reach a pre-existing grove. So let's discuss the pros and cons of Groves.

Benefits and Costs of Grove Formation

The major benefit of Grove formation is a stronger sense of identity, that often comes by slapping a label on something. You are longer "Joe's friends who meet in Joe's backyard" but you are suddenly "The Apple Grove that meets in Joe's backyard." As always, a title is an abstract concept, but titles are important to us, providing legitimacy and gravitas to a venture or person; indicating certain powers or authority are inherent in them. Like a corporation, a Grove is an entity that includes the members, but also exists in a sense as a separate entity in legal and metaphysical terms. In a Grove, there are elections for Archdruid, Preceptor and Server; or President, Secretary, Treasurer (if you want secularly titled folks for dealing with Grove business) and matters can be voted upon, you advertise for recruiting, send representatives to inter-faith council, have members admitted in various formal ways, apply for charity status, print letterhead stationary, buy group land in a forest, produce team T-shirts, and a dozen other nifty non-liturgical ways to build brand-loyalty. Mascots, secret hand-shakes and matching belt-buckles are, of course, optional.



Traditionally, only the Archdruid (being a Third Order Druid) of an active grove would perform ordinations of 1st, 2nd or 3rd Order, so the founding a grove was seen as a necessary pre-step for missionary expansion activities in a region. Some groves were ephemerally founded simply for ordaining one or two folks in question, and then promptly disbanded. Most Groves act rather independently, rarely interacting with their neighbours, following the RDNA traditions, customs and services as their Grove members interpret and

elaborate upon them. Other Groves may disapprove if a Grove goes wildly off-course (such as restricting membership to those of certain faiths, sacrificing mushrooms or Twinkies, becoming too serious, requiring ridiculous fees, or censoring the modes of expression) but there is little they can do but criticize or ignore the offensive Grove. Groves can be fun and exhilarating projects, full of memorable events, conversations and interactions, but not always.

On the flip side of the equation, as with any contentious group of anarchistic leaning spiritual wanderers, you also introduce the specter of small-group politics, group-think, power plays, and the misappropriation of funds. Many groves can't outlive the departure of their founding Archdruid, the owner of the meeting property, or another mainstay of the group, leading to what I call "Grove collapse." Many leaders or supporters may be in danger of eventually suffering from "Grove burn-out" due to the tendency of one or two people doing all the logistic, financing or other grunt work; without adequate compensation or praise from less motivated members. When a Grove collapses, like other works of love, it can be a depressing series of events that can depress involved members. As with marriage or other long-term commitments, you should consider the pros and cons of investing a lot of time and effort into producing a religious group entity. The fact of defining a group has inclusive and exclusive components, by defining who your group is, you are defining who is not in your group in a subtle way; which bothers some who are very inclusionary in character.

Three Alternative Paths to Grove Formation

The way I see it, there are three standard ways to form a Grove, of which each aspiring wannabee Archdruid should be aware. You might come up with some new models, but these are the ones I've seen among the 85 past entities so far in the Reform. First there is a missionary Grove. Second there is a Protogrove start. And third, there is a hiving Grove.



Missionary Groves were the first model in the early 1960s when various Third Order Druids from the Carleton Grove left after four years and went to graduate school or to start a job in another part of the country. The missionary Third Order would arrive in a new area, which would naturally have no pre-existing Druid groups, and decide that they would like to have services and pursue Druidical pursuits with new friends. They'd gather three or more people together and vote on a local constitution, often similar to the Carleton Constitution. Then the Third order would ordain a First and Second Order Druid at a service to take the usual elected offices. Then a copy of the constitution was sent to the most current Carleton Archdruid (as the Chairman of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu; the overseeing body of Third Order activities), who always approved. A permanent fixed site and altar might be consecrated, or the Grove may use the most convenient site for each season. Annual elections would naturally follow and updates were sent to Carleton, where they are promptly misplaced or put in the Archives. That's a very simple system, although there were some procedural debates of the chicken/egg sort of whether a Third Order Druid can consecrate Waters for ordination of First and Second Order Druids without already having a pre-existing Server (of First Order) and Preceptor (of Second order) at the service. The general consensus is that they can, when necessary, in such situations as Grove formation and emergencies. (See early Apocrypha for the debate.) We have guidelines, but rarely are we sticklers.

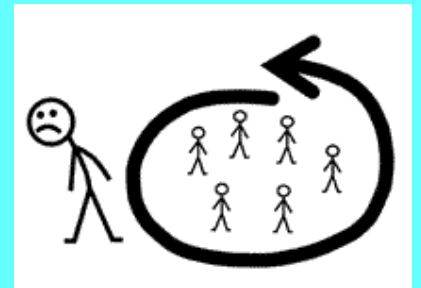
So how about Protogroves? The missionary model worked fine for 13 years, then in the 1970s with the rise of neo-pagan and Celtic reconstructionists, the RDNA faced the novel problem of many people popping out of the woodwork in distant locations wanting to start RDNA-style Groves with no Third Order Druid present. It was a perplexing problem to many Third Orders, since how can we tell them they can't be Druids, when we started our own tradition from scratch without any prominent lineage? We naturally encouraged them to start new strains of Druidism, but they were persistent about joining, so Brother Isaac Bonewits devised and promoted the Protogrove model. Now, in Protogrove system, you'd make a temporary constitution (perhaps the President, Secretary, Treasurer model) and would hold diminutive versions of the Order of Worship

services, omitting or reworking the wording of the sacrifice and consecration of Waters of Life, until the arrival of a Third Order. This Protogrove model allowed them a pseudo-grove status to advertise more members, feel a sense of belonging, and they could devise their own side-services to meet their needs until one could be trained to the Third Order during visits to the nearest full Grove, or if a wandering Third Order passed through their area. Technically, since only an Archdruid can ordain, the visiting Third Order would have to be temporarily elected as an Archdruid before ordaining the local members. Once the Third Order existed in the Grove, and after a Server and Preceptor were ordained, a full Constitution was enacted and a copy sent to the record keeper of the Carleton Archdruid. They were then a full Grove in good standing. It's a little confusing the first time you read through the process, but after a few re-reads and some adjustments for reality, it tends to work out well.

Grove hiving is when an existing Grove splits its membership apart into two or three pieces for reasons of enormous size of membership or internal faction fighting. This notably happened in the Berkeley Grove in the late 1970s which split into the Berkeley Grove of the Bay Area, the Clann na Bracheta Grove, the Hazelnut Grove of San Jose and the Live Oak Grove of Orinda within a few miles of each other. Berkeley was an old Grove, with long-term, consistent membership and a slow build-up of several Third Order Druids, each with their own visions and developing agendas. Eventually personalities, organizational differences and revisionism rent the group apart. Usually in a hiving model, one Grove keeps the originally title and the other Groves establish new constitutions and elect new officers, although they may use the same ritual/meeting site, using it in turns like a timeshare arrangement. This is not unlike a separation agreement in a marriage.

The Go-It-Alone Option and Telephone Option

But when access to a Third has proven impossible or resolutely impractical, the ordination system traditionally ground to a halt and Grove formation stopped at the Protogrove stage. Some Groves, like Carleton (1985-1993) did self-ordinations, and devised their own services "until such time as we are blessed by a wandering Third." Naturally, some of the self-made RDNA Protogroves eventually preferred their self-devised non-order-dependent services (originally temporary fill-ins) to the traditional ones, and often the Earth-mother seemed to respond equally favorably. A few went off to form their own religions, like MOCC/RDW, without ever becoming a functional RDNA grove, and they seem happy enough. So that's always a fourth course to consider, although you might not be surprised if the "Ordered" Arch Druids get huffy about other self-initiated Arch Druids. Hierarchies tend to be self-supportive and very particular about membership rules, even the best of the RDNA get some twinges of conscience in these matters.



A fifth option is the telephone. Telephone ordinations were first performed in the 1960s by David Frangquist to ordain a Carleton AD during the breakage of succession in the 1967-1968, due to unannounced study-abroad shenanigans of the previous AD. I've done a handful of them myself, due to reasons of extreme distance, where the likelihood of meeting was scarce in the next few years (e.g. people at Thule AFB in Greenland on a three-year tour of duty). In fact, I did one in August for Sister Colleen in Alaska. I see them as equally effective and sufficient, but aesthetically less than half as enjoyable or memorable, as some traditions are best enjoyed in the subtle gestures, the shared sights and physical mannerisms that occur during an in-person ordination.

My general strategy in those telephone cases is to have a long period of written and telephonic conversation with the new person beforehand; to better understand their needs and style. After that, I have a service at my grove, and retain some of the successfully consecrated Waters-of-Life and reseal them in a bottle. I then mail the consecrated whiskey, a sealed copy of the services, reading material, ribbons and a Druid Sigil necklace to the ordainee-wannabee. I discuss a few final matters with the ordainee at sunset (their time), ordain them to 1st and 2nd (with part of sent Waters), send them off to start a fire and vigil away the evening. Myself, I bide my time in late-night walks in DC's nearby forests until I am contacted by them by cell-phone at sunrise



(their time). I bless the phone and the Earth, establishing a contact with them through the planet and air itself (we're all just out of sight of each other, you know) and perform the services and pack them off to get some sleep. It's not my preferred aesthetic style, because I'm quite ornate in my ways, but I do it that way when necessary and its proven minimally sufficient.

My only concern is that the newly ordained folks, as mentioned before, will miss the visual stimulation and gestures and mannerisms, unless they see a service in person, and the way I prepare sacrifices and set up the site. To alleviate that problem, I'm thinking of making a "training video tape" to accompany long distance ordination; but my other alternative for now, is to recommend that when circumstances later permit, the ordainees should visit CA, MN or DC and attend one or two traditional services to enhance their understanding of Druidism further. Certainly they might wish to continue correspondence with active groves during the initial start-up periods when those predictable mini-dilemmas will arise.

The Third Order Factor

As you can see, the key factor to Grove formation is a Third Order. Like the Catholic and Anglican models, the RDNA Orders are laid out in a sort of "top-down" hierarchy. First, Second and Third Order Druids are ordained by an Archdruid (who was ordained herself by a previous Archdruid of another Grove into the Third Order; and so on back to David Fisher in 1963 whose ordination is a mystery.) However, there is a "bottom-up" democratic element, in that the congregation must elect a Third Order Druid into the position of the Archdruidcy. If they are unsatisfied, they can vote another viable candidate into the position or they can abandon the grove; leadership and grove are dependent upon each other for purpose. No Grove, no Archdruid. No Archdruid, no Grove. So, In a sense, part of a Third Order Druid's ability to consecrate ordinations or hold services comes from his or her elected position in the Grove, in addition to their innate possession of the title and experience, and the blessing of the higher powers.



All Third Order Druids are automatically members of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu (headed by the Carleton AD) and must follow their simple rules for ordination, but each Third Order Druid (who is an Archdruid) may ordain whomever they wish without seeking permission from the Council (or they may decline on their own criteria). There is no known council for First or Second Druids as yet, although the higher orders (4-10) and side orders have councils (higher orders often require permission of the Patriarch or Matriarch of the Order for the ordinations, out of courtesy). Perhaps those two orders should also organize themselves?

If you can't convince a Third Order to visit your Protogrove in a reasonable period, then you must select a member to visit a nearby existing Grove to become ordained; or roust up an old "retired" Third Order Druid to do the work. (If Mohammad won't go to the mountain, then the mountain must come to Mohammad.) Now each Third Order Druid has a free hand in how they choose people to be ordained. Some, like myself, will ordain quite quickly, on the spot even, if the ordainer finds the ordainees to be sincere, honorable, reasonably sane, of good humor, witty, benevolent in manner, reverently irreverent, possessing that deep vocational love for the Earth and bearing some good whiskey. Other Arch Druids are slower to warm to a stranger and may require attendance at several services, spend a while in residence, or require lengthy correspondence before a grudgingly granted mutually-agreed meeting. Actually, some people like to work hard like this for their ordinations, "earning them" through sweat equity in RDNA activities, although I also tend to take in previous experience before joining the RDNA. Your best bet is to ask around to the different Groves or seek out retired ADs (I keep a guarded list) of a compatible nature. The Carleton Grove in MN and myself in DC are usually of the former method, which tends to be most conducive to ordainees from distant locations.

Naturally Carleton has history-drenched beautiful scenery, lots of young perky members, and great camping options. I would highly recommend that every Third Order Druid visit the campus at least once in their lifetimes. I call it the Mecca of the Middle-West.



Ordinations only occur during the Season of Life [i.e. Beltane (May 1st) and Samhain (Nov 1st)], except in periods of disaster or pressing emergency. This is because, it is only during that time that the Waters of Life, crucial to ordinations, can be consecrated. During the Season of Sleep (i.e. Samhain to Beltane) only the Waters of Sleep are usually consecrated in our tradition. Therefore, there is only a six-month window for ordinations every year, and you must plan accordingly. First and Second ordinations can conceivably be inserted into a standard Order of Worship service on the same day, although some Druids like to separate them. Third Order ordinations take place only after a supervised (but solitary) vigil of

at least seven hours duration (usually sunset to sunrise) by a fire (if possible), with the ordination at dawn the next day by the Archdruid, and attended by any other Third Order Druids in the Grove. Some Groves have made the ordinations more complicated, so they might not closely resemble the services in the ARDA liturgies. Some Groves send out emissaries to visit and discuss matters for a short while with the vigiler during the night, others play pranks on them. There is a lot of room for invention here, and few traditionalists will object to adding, but may hesitate if you remove material.

I could go on for hours longer on matters related to Groves, but I think I've laid a recognizable framework for making a decision "to grove or not to grove" and my next article will address the important factors to contemplate before making the choice to enter Orders or to vigil for the Third Order. Please refer to the following recommended resources if you want to make a Grove or contact me at mikerdna at hotmail.com. As always Druidism can be as simple or complicated as you want it to be, but always leave the same option to your other members.

Further resources:

<http://orgs.carleton.edu/Druids/ARDA2/doc/2part4.doc> [Locations of Known Groves and Protogroves](#)
[Example of a Grove Constitution](#)
[Example of a Protogrove Constitution](#)
[Example of a Protogrove Service](#)
[General History of Reformed Druidism](#)
[Apocryphal Debates on Missionary Groves and Druidism](#)



Motivations for Third Order Ordinations

By Mike Scharding, DC Grove

A discussion of Grove formation would not be complete without a discussion on the process of seeking Ordinations, particularly the Third Order when setting up a Grove. How does being an ordained Druid differ from being an associated Druid in the RDNA tradition? I can not speak definitively ex-cathedra on the matter of ordination, and these are only my observations based on my research, interviews and practice. However, my words might bring some aspects of the process into clearer focus, and assist you in making your own decisions about ordination.

Some Lengthy Background Notes

You might wonder at why the various Orders even exist. The Orders in the RDNA were probably devised as a result of several factors common to the Founders at Carleton College four decades ago. One was that the college required elected officers for the group's constitution. Second, several members were from hierarchical religious backgrounds like Episcopalianism with a clear structure of laymen, deacons, priests, bishops and arch bishops (although there were no Orders at the original services). Third, more than a few of the Founders had been members of fraternal organizations, or were clearly familiar with the general structure of Masonry or the U.S. Senate. Fourth, although Greek fraternities and sororities were banned at Carleton at the time, (I guess Celtic fraternities were okay?) first-year students were regularly hazed, and there were clear differentiated barriers between members of different class-years in the 1960s. Fifth, ordination was a fun way to "pass the torch" off to carefully selected leaders who had "jumped through the right hoops" of the departing leadership (although I can point to few examples of refused members).



Things have changed over the years since the counter-culture revolution, and I think Americans, in general, have become less enamored with hierarchical rankings in the four decades since the Druids were founded, especially after the decline of fraternities, fraternal organization, recent church scandals and conservative reactionary activities by church leadership, Watergate, the increasing casual style of treating colleagues as equals despite differences in age, wealth or experience. This has naturally influenced the RDNA structure in recent years, giving new options and possibilities of interaction, along with the proliferation of non-hierarchical liberal offshoots of monotheism. (On the other hand, other parts of our society, of course, are seemingly more willing than ever to hand over spiritual authority to charismatic or dogmatic church leaders.)

When I first started Druidism in the Carleton Grove in 1990, it was particularly anarchic there since the loss of Third Order continuity in 1983 and the graduation of the revivalist Druid of 1985-1989 left a new generation of Druids who did not share communal quarters on a nearby farm. The group was searching for a new stable base, and would settle on different off-campus houses and dormitories every two years or so; while often dining or attending folk-dance, SCA or sci-fi club meetings together. The grove was definitely leaning towards Wiccan and Native American themes, but still open to members of different traditions. After becoming interested in the older lost traditions of the RDNA, I thought about bringing back the Order of Worship and traditional ordination patterns. The Order of Worship was not well received, considered to staid and churchy, with people preferring more creative methods of worship, but the Ordinations seem to have struck a resonant chord and taken root again. It seemed to provide a stronger sense of continuity for a constantly mutating college Grove. In the revival period, people initiated each other at Carleton to the First and Second Orders, and simply vigiled on their own for a Third Order, which was recognized by others as a sort of an individual vision quest. I did so likewise, and found it very empowering and sufficient in many ways; but yet there was still a small doubt that I might be missing out on something else, although I couldn't put a finger on it.



Finally, in 1993, I found Richard Shelton (AD 1969-1971) who came to Carleton to re-establish the "Apostolic Succession." Afterwards, being historically inclined by nature, I felt a great sense of comfort from belonging to a line of succession and the influence of a strengthened sense of common mission, not unlike joining a police or boy-scout squad. It motivates me to live up to my oaths when I'm down, and restrains me when I'm tempted to excess in my roles. I feel a sense of being watched and guided by Dalon (or Something) and felt the presence of the other members of the Order, in a healthy supportive manner; like a school principal or the U.S. President feeling the weight of her predecessors. It might have been possible to have reached this state without ordination, but perhaps it came easier with a little structure and tradition? It certainly turned out to be a memorable rite of passage for me that I've enjoyed sharing with many people over the years.

Since 1993, I've been present or officiated at about 25 vigils for Third Order (including four telephone

ordinations), dozens of First and Secondnd ordinations, and a handful of higher orders (a whole discussion in themselves). Self-initiations still sometimes occur at Carleton (and in a few other Groves), but regular ordination still seems the general rule, although Carleton often wildly embellish the traditional services to make it more amusing and powerful for the ordaine. I've seen many different people enter First, Second, and 3rd Orders for many different reasons, although the Book of Customs in the Druid Chronicles gives good summaries that I like to follow. What follows may not make sense to some, but each person chooses/refuses Orders for unique reasons that have to be thoughtfully weighed.

Hesitation on Ordination



Ordination is not for everyone, and many RDNA Druids get along just fine without it, or choose only to do First Order at most. I pushed Orders rather hard in my grove at Carleton and St. Cloud, but few decided to enter them, possibly because of varying reasons of interest in organizational power, distaste of liturgical activity, "speed," "old ties," "gravity," and "plain disinterest". As for the last, disinterest, mature groves with 16 people and eight years of stability will certainly have different dynamics motivating ordinations than a missionary start-up grove as described in the earlier essay.

Regarding power, many Druids want to jump to Third Order quickly. This is quite understandable, as the Third Order has many well-known attributed rights, and far less-well-known responsibilities. However, I believe a First Order Druid is equally as "good" a Druid as a Third order Druid, but I feel a Third has undertaken greater responsibilities and dedication to the "organization" and members of the RDNA, little as there is in this group. I personally think the Earth-Mother will hear a devout heart regardless of their Order at a service, but tradition exists in most Groves for Third Order Druids to preside at a service. I have to acknowledge that each Order (1st-10th) has their own traditional organizational/liturgical/spiritual roles which, if followed in succession with proper performance, will deepen the spirituality and experience of those Druids. As an ordainer of a simple, flexible tradition, I try to balance and adjust the ordination to meet the needs of the ordaine as much as possible, without losing all traces of tradition and continuity. I then always instruct the ordaine to give their next ordainees options of strict ordination and the possibility of some flexibility, according to a mutual decision of what's most proper. I believe in options.

Although some people see the Orders as spiritual rites of passage, the Orders predominantly exist to fill liturgical roles. A Server in the Order of Worship must be of the First Order, a Preceptor of the Second Order, and an Arch Druid at a service of the Third Order. In practice, First Order sometimes doubled as Preceptor in a bind; and sometimes a Second or another Third Order has led a service when the Arch Druid didn't show up. There are always exceptions, but the traditional pattern is the most often the preferred pattern in many Groves, so far. As you can tell from perusing the Apocrypha and interviews with "retired" Druids, RDNA Druids have always had issues on whether liturgy is more conducive than distractive from the core goals of Druidical activity; the observation and contemplation of Nature's enlightening aspects. In what ways are you less of a Druid if you never partake of rituals? Is life itself a long series of religious moments, that Zen-like, are of greater importance than our attempts to verbalize or sacralize them through short periods of liturgy? For those who eschew liturgy and tend towards contemplation and sacred living, ordination may not seem an important goal.



There are different "speeds" in the ordination process for varying reasons. Some people are glacially ponderous in making the decision to enter another order, taking many years in one case (like Sister Stacey),

weighing each aspect of the responsibility and feeling out whether they have the "gravitas" or Je-ne-sais-quoi involved, and who already made the choice and are just trying to find the person to do the ordaining (it took two years for me to locate someone). In some groves, people take at least a year between orders (slow-and-steady model), other groves do them in rapid fire succession as needed to fill out the liturgical roles or when suddenly presented with a mature candidate. Some egalitarian groves (i.e. Amon Sul Grove and Swamp Grove) don't believe in orders at all (as did Carleton from 1985-1993), and those who could lead there, did so, and without titles. You might argue their traditional legitimacy, but can you argue with their results?



"Old Ties" hesitations refers to enduring links to previous religions among members. Reformed Druidism doesn't require abandonment of previous beliefs; it merely encourages an honest re-evaluation and thoughtful contemplation of them. Certainly, some other beliefs systems do not accept any association with Reformed Druidism, and some members decline to enter Orders for fear of being shunned by the jealousy of the old system. This concern kept me back for a year as I worked out my personal relationship with Catholicism in 1991-92. Taking Orders, like in Christianity, is a major step for some people who take oaths and ministry very seriously, because it involves a change of identity at some level inside; one that is hard to reverse or decline without losing a bit of honor.

Originally, a grove usually only had a single Third Order member (often the Arch Druid), and only ordained more when someone was leaving/graduating to go form a new Grove or succeed a retiring Arch Druid. This impending "grovity" led to vigiling activity, for aforesaid practical missionary activity reasons. In some Groves, however, you may have many core members in the Third Order due to varied reasons of protecting continuity in a rapid turn-over environment (like Carleton), or for the fact that a grove has been around for a dozen years (like the Berkeley Groves) and many long-term members have eventually seen a need to vigil themselves over the years.

Rights of the Third Order

Although the 1st and 2nd Orders have no defined particular defined "powers", a Grove or individual appear to be welcome to encourage, assign or assume powers to them; such as to devise separate liturgy formats for just 2nd Order, weather working, blessings, do Bardic performance at service, do divination, gather sacrifice or purify a site or props. The more comfortable you are with your Order, the more creative you can become, and reduce the gulf in popularity, that encourages the rush to the Third Order. I theorize the power comes from the Earth, the Grove members and their own experience. Recently I've been awarding clear-tape ribbons to 2nd Order Druids, to remind them of the need to think clearly, be pure and adapt to the coloration of society. I might also permit services to be done, while under supervision of an attending Third Order. I'll keep you updated.



A nice aspect of ordination is the mentorship relationship usually involved both before and after the ordination. Depending on the people and personalities involved, it may vary from a short period with a few wise suggestions and simple factual answers, to a deeper life-long bond that might broach advice on other aspects of life like choosing a job, finding a companion or other life issues. The Third Order also has a number of prerogatives that they have granted unto themselves; the most widely known are namely:

1. Right to vote in the Council of Dalon Ap Landu, which is more-or-less defunct now in a legislative sense due to numbers and unanimity traditions, but still possesses a sense of camaraderie.
2. Right to be elected as an Arch-Druid and start a grove.
3. As an elected Archdruid, you can ordain people to First, Second, Third order, or to the Archdruidcy, although in practice some Thirds choose to ordain regardless of being an Arch Druid, which they see as a ten

minute formality (to construct a temporary grove).

4. May enter the Fourth or higher orders, if invited.

5. May conduct almost any rite or service of the Reform (excepting ordaining people to higher orders to which you don't belong).

6. Consecrate the Waters of Life and Waters of Sleep.

7. Wear a red ribbon for summer services and a white ribbon for winter services.

8. Employ really bad puns, sarcasm, irony and witty comments to the amazement of one's friends and foes.

9. Use of fancy titles, like:

Priest/ess of the Third Order

Priest/ess of the Reform

Priest/ess of the Order of Dalon Ap Landu

A Reformed Druid Priest/ess

Grand Poobah

Sign the letters O.D.A.L. or write a sigil after your name.

Call yourself "Reverend", or whatever is appropriate. I might consider the First and Second as Orders of priesthood also for this title.

Responsibilities of the Third Order

And of course there are even heavier responsibilities among the Third Order, although they are less simply laid out than implied, and each person tends to enunciate them in a different manner. I have devised my own nine rules that have mostly governed my actions, since I was a 1st Order Druid, with a few tweaks. You are welcome to borrow some elements.

1. Study widely, keep skills honed, and contemplate deeply.
2. Live a wholesome and respectable life according to a stable code of ethics.
3. Follow the general customs and practices of the Druids.
4. Encourage the best performances from others.
5. Assist all who come in search of Druidism onto their correct paths.
6. Be available for consultation, assist, and visit with vigilers in your area.
7. Revere Nature and protect it (and the weak) from unbridled predation .
8. Avoid the fossilizing touch of dogma, mandatory traditions, and unnecessary organization.
9. Keep a strong sense of humor.

Conclusion

So you can see that there are a number of issues with pros and cons to consider when choosing an ordination or considering an alternative course of leadership or spiritual initiation. Take the time to complete an honest self-evaluation of whether and how you would like to undergo an ordination. If you are thinking of entering the First, Second or Third Order, feel free to confer with your nearest Arch Druid, or give me an e-mail to me to discuss the matter at mikerdna at hotmail.com. In any case, I hope that your path will be ever clear and full of bright promise and rewarding challenges.

The Heart of the Spiral: A Story in Two Parts

By Brian Jeffries

(Editor's Note: Here is the final segment of the short story that was begun in the Yule issue.)

* * *

Dylan was awakened in the morning by a gentle shake from Dana. "Didn't you make plans to go skydiving with Swoop today?" she asked.

Rubbing his eyes, he answered, "As long as I'm at the airport by the crack of noon, I'll be on time to jump with those late night partiers." Then his eyes narrowed as he remembered the late night poetic experience. "I wrote a poem last night after being inspired by ancient writings, Dana. I was going to call it 'The Hurricane,' but I think that 'The Dance of the Wind and the Wave' would be better."

Dana picked up the spiral notebook and slowly read the rhyme. At length she looked up with curiosity in her brown eyes, saying, "Honey, I'm not a poetry critic, but I think you are really on to something. To me, this is an excellent poem, and I think you should continue your quest for inspiration."

"The sky realm has shown me incredible beauty over the last twenty years," Dylan reminisced with a far off look. "Maybe I'll be inspired again today."

After breakfast, Dylan and his children strolled across the dune and down to the beach for some body boarding. Toward the end of their session, the shorebreak started gaining power, tumbling them about in the shells and sand. There might be some better waves later on, he thought.

Arriving at the airport at a little past twelve, Dylan saw that the parking lot was full next to the drop zone hangar. Out on the ramp next to a Douglas DC-3, the skydivers were donning their gear. There were Fat John, Silly, Dogeater, Beanpole, Spam, Ma Death, and the rest of that wild bunch. Wild, but they could fly like gods!

"Hey, Dylan!," his friend Swoop shouted, "get it on! Ya snooze ya lose."

"I'm not packed," Dylan answered.

"Pack it on the plane," came the offhand reply.

The engines were already rumbling when Dylan threw his gear bag on board and then scrambled through the narrow door. The plane immediately began to taxi out, and after an engine run-up, the thirty skydivers were airborne. After he finished up his pack job at about six thousand feet, Dylan took a seat on the floor next to the open aircraft door. Looking out across the landscape to the west, he saw dozens of lakes, mirror-like across the subtropical peninsula, reflecting brilliant summer sunlight. A scattering of cottony cumulus clouds between two and three thousand feet would tip off alert divers that it was time to 'air out the laundry,' slowing their breathtaking speed at terminal velocity to a pleasant parachute ride. As they reached an altitude of fifteen thousand feet, Dupes, the pilot, banked the venerable old aircraft in on jump run. Dylan knelt at the threshold of the portal, spotting for the drop zone. As they passed over the airport, slightly off the wind line, he gestured up to Dupes for a correction to the left, then drew a finger across his throat to signal a cut in the engine power. The now familiar ecstatic feeling suddenly flowed up his spine, covering him with gooseflesh, while 'The Song of Amergin' began to echo in his mind from across the millennia:

I am a hawk: above the cliff

The throbbing, vibrating power of the DC-3 engines dominated his perception, and as he gave the signal to exit, motion turned to poetry:

In Douglas doorway crouched
Positioned, fetal, poised
Pratt and Whitney heartbeat
Pulsing, radial noise
Propelled, and then expelled
Howl of terminal birth
Flight...
Fantastic freefall!
Back to Mother Earth



Returning home that evening, Dylan related his afternoon experiences to his family at the dinner table. "This poetic power seems to come from all the natural realms," he said between bites of salmon. "I feel that the oak trees and the lightning, which are so common between earth and sky here on the peninsula, are important elements too."

Tired from the four skydives and pack jobs in the summer heat, he soon bade his wife and children goodnight and made his way to bed. Around midnight, as the tide began to ebb, the grumbling, thrashing sound of the shorebreak changed its tone to a muted roar. Tossing uneasily, but not quite conscious, Dylan began to dream. First it was of the ocean; vast, maternal, embracing the earth. Then he became a small impulse in its immensity, rolling toward a moonlit shore:

I'm a wave of the sea
On a reef in a dream
Alight from a circular moon
A sparkling scene with a glittering gleam
Tonight as I roll toward the dune

Radiant trails on my shimmering sides
Are blazed as he surfs through his dreams
A rhythm of motion in time with my ocean
Reflecting the opal moonbeams

Ghostlike he glides on my face as he rides
I break with a rumbling roar
He's covered by night, disappearing from sight
I carry his dream to the shore



Dylan's eyes slowly opened. The rays of the full moon poured through the bedroom window, bathing his face in their radiance. Dana lay next to him, breathing in the slow rhythm of deep sleep. Quietly, he arose and wrote down his vision. Then, coffee in hand, he went out to his old red truck. Loading his surfboard, he was soon driving down the deserted coastal highway toward South Inlet. When he arrived, he unloaded and climbed to the top of the dune. The brilliance of the full moon at its zenith cast short inky shadows from the rocks extending out into the dark water. Five foot, well-formed waves curled away from the jetty and across the sandy shallows. Low on the horizon, a line of thunderheads was sporadically illuminated by lightning flashes. As he stared into the moon's reflection, he felt a subtle change in perception, and the words in his mind came unbidden:

I walk in the dreamtime
Without and within
'Cross a moonbridge I wander

Forget who I've been
I behold then the Muse
Mesmerized I draw near
My vision is vibrant
My thoughts become clear

Dylan rubbed his eyes and drew a deep breath, wondering if Dana or his friends would doubt his sanity if he spoke those words to them.

Bringing back visions
To our world so mundane
Dilutes them with pleasure
Dilutes them with pain
Perceived through a mist
If remembered at all
A life can be lived
Just to follow the call
To walk in the dreamtime
Without and within
'Cross a moonbrige to wander
Forget who you've been



With a little smile, Dylan gave himself to the warm August waters, and he surfed by the light of the night. Once, he was given a fright by a very large, dark form rising slowly next to him in the clear water close to the jetty. With his heart on high alert, Dylan hastily backpaddled, then expelled his breath in a relieved laugh. It was just a friendly manatee out for a moonlight excursion. "Hi, there," he called out, glad for the companionship, "It's nice to see a fellow mammal in this fishy sea." The ponderous creature dilated its round nostrils and gave a gentle snort, then submerged and slowly undulated its way into the surrounding darkness. As he continued to ride the night waves, Dylan again felt himself entering the poetic dream state, where he consciously dreamed of larger, more powerful waves. Under the spell of the serene glow above him, he made a request of the Muse.

Back at home, Dylan went straight to pen and notebook where he wrote of his experience, ending it with his desire:

Mirrored moon rides in a late summer sea
Nimbus clouds flicker their embers at me
Stroking into the mysterious light
I'm drawn like the tide to the waves of the night

Ducking and chasing and riding and racing
With dark spiral feelings of flight
I'm craving a boon of the full August moon
As I carve through the waves of the night

O take on the form of a circular storm
Your tropical swells will delight
As they tumble and roar
Embracing our shore
I'll remember the waves of the night



The next afternoon, the weather service advised that a strong tropical wave had moved offshore from the Dark Continent and was rushing westward across the Southern Sea. For the next seven days, Dylan tracked

the storm's progress. As it swirled across the open ocean, it became a powerful hurricane. On the eighth day the sea began to swell, and reports indicated that the storm would strike the Lower Coast, some two hundred miles to the south. Dylan, standing on the dune at sunrise, raised his arms to the heavens, heard the music of wind and wave, and saw the glory of the natural world unfolding before him. Overwhelmed with inspiration, he cried out over the rising wind:

Typhoon swiftly spinning
Blue swells sweeping eastward
Song of the westwind beginning to blow
Plumes of the breakers fly over the sandbars
Whiter than egrets' with sun painted rainbows
Invisible air waves the pelicans ride
With soaring escapes as elements collide
The call of the music is wild, strong, and free
Earth sea and sky—three part harmony !



The ninth day came and the surf was raging. Dylan stood on the beach with his big wave board and tried once again to understand what was happening to him. Then, the cliché that you should be careful about what you wish for came into his mind.

Seething, sinuous, relentless
Silver scaled with numbers
Beyond counting
Roaring, with winding coils
Waiting to encircle
Golden knights of the sun
Whose sharp spears penetrate
But never vanquish
Fleeting, shining, eternal
Serpents of the sea



Shrugging his strong shoulders, he sprinted for the water's edge, pushing his way into the maelstrom.

As he paddled through the turbulent shallows, Dylan's mind was clear, and he moved among the waves with a confidence gained through thirty years of experience. He surfed long and well that day, and at last, too tired to stay out any longer, he cast his eyes about for a last wave to ride in on. Finally, it came, a partner worthy of Poseidon himself! After paddling to intercept the peak, Dylan turned toward shore and stroked down the swiftly steepening face. He stood up and dropped over the edge, feeling a momentary sensation of freefall. With the wind roaring in his ears, he reached the wave's trough, and leaned body and board into a long, sweeping turn. The wave became hollow and he received a high speed barrel ride for fifty yards. Inside, Dylan was in a realm of suspended time, and he marveled at the fluid beauty there.



Down the line, however, the wave had already broken and was spiraling toward him in an ominous looking close-out. Too late to pull out over the top, he tried to turn straight in front of the wave and ride it out on his stomach. Instead, tons of water struck him across his head and shoulders, driving him deep into churning chaos. Time passed—out of air—the surfboard leash was stretched to its limit, holding him down. The leash broke, and he fought for the surface. As his head came up, there was time for only half a breath when the next wave came down on him. Another

eternity of seconds passed, and it was almost with surprise that Dylan found air again. Out on the horizon, a great blue wall of water appeared and moved shoreward. It crested, and the spray capped peak pitched out in agonizingly slow motion, falling into its cavernous trough. A white explosion occurred fifty feet from where

he was desperately trying to tread water and catch his breath. Seconds later he was buried by a twenty foot avalanche of ocean. Powerful tentacles of turbulence snatched and tumbled him, and in his fading consciousness, Dylan imagined that he was being drawn down into a deepening spiral vortex.

* * *

"You have come," said a slightly echoing voice. "What is it that you seek?"

Dylan opened his eyes. He was standing in a large, gray domed room of stone, perhaps in a castle. Covering the floor was a marble spiral pattern in black and white, and there, at the center, stood the Master Poet. He was pale and gaunt, and was clad in vestments of many colors. Dylan could feel himself slowly orbiting the ancient one, and yet they remained as motionless, facing each other.



"How is it that I have been moved to write in verse when it was never my intention to be a poet?" asked Dylan impulsively. "My life has been spent working and playing in the natural world, not in writing or in studying the great literary works and those who wrote them. Is there a reason, a purpose for this sudden change?"

The Master traced a circle in the air. "As the great and the small cycles rise and fall in their natural ways, there has come again a time for one such as you. The poetic art has need of those who love the Muse in her many aspects, and who know well Her realms. You have been chosen to celebrate Her mystery and glory, for the raw stuff of poetry surely resides in your soul. Go you back now, to the Realm of the Living. The Goddess has work for you."

"Tell me who you are!" called Dylan, staring into glacial eyes as light faded from the room.

"I am yourself, O son of the wave, and many others as well:

Little Gwion have I been
Now we are...Taliesin

* * *

Through shimmering blue light, Dylan reached up and broke through the sea surface. Struggling, he gasped hoarsely in short, desperate breaths. Seeing another surfer paddling nearby, he called out weakly with his last remaining strength, "Help! Please help me!"

* * * * *

Safely home that night, as he listened with Dana to the reports of widespread destruction on the Southeast Peninsula, Dylan began to wonder what his part was in all that had happened. A copy of 'The Old Testament' caught his eye from the bookshelf. Opening it to the first chapter of 'Genesis,' he scanned the first page. Seemingly highlighted to his eyes were the words he remembered reading many years ago.

...the spirit that moves
upon the face of the waters

With a sudden revelation, Dylan understood the meaning of the strange events that had come to pass. The otherworldly Master Poet had given him a purpose and a mission, and the Goddess had bestowed upon him

the priceless gift of inspiration. Once again he entered the dreamtime:

Spirit of patterns as old as the sea
By wind and by wave they have brought Her
Free flowing grace shows Her pathways to me
And She moves on the face of the water
Waves quickly change but Her call is the same
It beckons Her sons and Her daughters
Spirit that moves is the reason I came
As we dance on the face of the waters



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MAX DASHU SLIDESHOW: Woman Shaman

Date: Saturday, Feb 12, 2005

Title: Woman Shaman: A Max Dashu Slideshow

Leader: Max Dashu

Place: Change Makers, 6536 Telegraph Ave, Oakland, CA 94609

Time: 7:30pm

Cost: \$5-20 Sliding Scale

For Info: [maxdashu at LMI.net](mailto:maxdashu@LMI.net)

Feminist Historian and Independent scholar Max Dashu founded the Suppressed Histories Archives in 1970, back in the days when Women's Studies departments had not yet come into being. Since then, she has photographed over 10,000 slides and created 80 slideshows on international women's history, including Women in Power, Witch Hunts, Racism, Goddesses, and Priestesses. Max has done extensive interdisciplinary research on the European witch hunts and folk traditions about witches. She is also an artist who publishes prints and notecards highlighting powerful women (which are available at Change Makers). Visit her website for more information <http://www.suppressedhistories.net>



Ancient Ways Events

February 18-21 Ancient Ways is hosting its annual pagan convention PantheaCon in San Jose, CA, with workshops, rituals, special guest, vendor area, and parties galore. PantheaCon is the only annual pagan convention in the western US. The Norther California Bay Area is the mother lode for pagans and nature religion ideas. Again they have the best events and most knowledgeable speakers that the West and beyond has to offer. They have many well-known published authors along with unpublished local talent. They are keeping with two 90 minute sessions in the morning (9am - 10:30 am and 11am - 12:30pm) and two in the afternoon (1:30pm - 3pm and 3:30pm - 5pm), with a

one-hour lunch and a two-hour dinner break. The evenings have plenty to choose among with rituals, music, discussions and workshops along with room parties.

Registration opens at 12 noon on Friday. We start the Conference with a small Opening Ritual with Glenn Turner and friends at 2 pm. (Hotel room check in is typically at 3 pm, but bags can be left with the hotel Bell service people.) There will be strong set of 6 workshops from 3:30pm to 5pm.

During each day on Saturday and Sunday we have as many as 60 different workshops and subjects to decide among. On Saturday they will have the Costume Contest at 7 pm. Pick up your Costume Entry form at the Info table.

Dress up, have fun. (A word of caution from the presentors: we will be sharing the hotel including the elevators with the rest of the hotel guests. Please, be covered as if for the street when traveling through the public areas of the hotel. This is not to discourage dazzling costuming.) "Hall Award" prize ribbons will be presented again for wonderful costuming wandering through the Con as in other years.

<http://www.ancientways.com/pantheacon/>

June 8-12 2005 The 22nd Annual Ancient Ways Festival, at Harbin Hot Springs in Middletown, CA. One of the oldest and most beautiful hot springs in California, Harbin Hot Springs is now operated as a non-profit retreat and workshop center. They are located north of San Francisco, above the Napa Valley wine region. Ancient Ways offers ritual, workshops, a magickal marketplace, mineral pools, several options for food including restaurants, a health food store, a meal plan, and making your own food, and camping in this a "new age" community and retreat center, is located in a 1000 acre secluded valley, 2 1/2 hours north of San Francisco.

<http://www.ancientways.com/festival/>



The 27th Annual California Celtic Studies Conference

at the University of California, Berkeley,
March 17-19, 2005, 370-371 Dwinelle Hall.

In honor of Proinsias Mac Cana

PROGRAM

Thursday March 17:

1-1:50 p.m.: Registration

1:50-2 p.m.: WELCOME. Joseph J. Duggan, Associate Dean of the Graduate Division.

First Session: 2-5:30 p.m.

2-2:30 p.m.: Kristen Lee Over (Northeastern Illinois University). "Peredur vab Efracw: The Delay of Romance and the Vengeance of Rhamant."

2:30-3 p.m.: Rebecca Blustein (UCLA). "Pillars of History in Cath Maige Tuired."

3-3:15 p.m. Break (15 minutes)

3:15-3:45 p.m.: Lawrence Eson (Denver, CO). "Voices from the Grave: The Conveyance of Poetic Knowledge in the Myrddin Poems and 'The Finding of the Táin.' "

3:45-4:15 p.m.: Anthony Buccitelli (UC Berkeley). "Seal-ent Green: Seals as People and Food in Greenlandic Inuit, Irish and Scottish Folklore."

4:15-4:30 p.m. Break (15 minutes)

Keynote Speaker: 4:30-5:30 p.m. Joseph F. Nagy (UCLA). "What's Branwen doing in the Tristan Legend?"

5:30-7 p.m. RECEPTION. Buffet and wine (Rick and Ann's Catering).

Keynote Speaker: 7-8 p.m: Charles Wright (University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana). "Journeys of the Soul: The Interim State between Death and Judgement in Medieval Irish Literature."

8-9 p.m. Aqua Film. Presented and discussed by Michael Rubenstein (UC Berkeley)

Friday, March 18:

8:30-9 a.m. Coffee and pastries

Keynote Speaker: 9-10 a.m. Robin Chapman Stacey (University of Washington, Seattle). "The Dangers of Performance."

10-10:15 Break (15 min.)

Second Session: 10:15-11:45 a.m.

10:15-10:45 a.m. Nichole L. Sterling (UC Berkeley). "Irish Royals and Icelandic Genealogies."

10:45-11:15 a.m. Pdraig P. O'Neill (University of North Carolina). "The Study of Boethius's *Consolatio Philosophiae* in Early Ireland: Some New Evidence."

11:15-11:45 a.m. Barbara Hillers (Harvard University). "Gaelic Storytelling and the Irish Literary Tradition."

11:45-12: Break (15 min.)

Third Session: 12-1 p.m.

12-12:30 p.m. Karen Burgess (UCLA). "Ruminations on the Three Reds."

12:30-1 p.m. Brenda Marion Gray (Glen Burnie, MD). "Eusebius, Augustine and Togail Bruidne Da Derga: Learned Portrayals of the Pagan Past in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages."

LUNCH: 1 - 2:30 p.m. [Local Restaurants]

Fourth Session: 2:30-4 p.m.

2:30-3 p.m.: Seán O Nualláin (Stanford University). "Copulas and Verbs in Irish and Ixpantaptec Mixtec."

3-3:30 p.m. Katie Ramos (UC Berkeley). "Following the Leprechaun: Theories of Diffusion through 19th and 20th Century Immigration."

3:30-4 p.m. David Fickett-Wilbar (Rockland, MA). "Ritual Details of the Irish Horse Sacrifice in Beatha Molaise Daiminse."

4-4:15 p.m. Break (15 min.)

Fifth Session: 4:15-5:15 p.m.

4:15-4:45 p.m.: Antone Minard (San Diego State University). "Boozy Babysitters and Wacky Werewolves: Adolphe Orain's Contribution to Breton Folklore."

4:45-5:15 p.m.: Ann Francone (The National Library of Wales). "Digital Mirror—The Treasures of Wales."

5:15-5:30 p.m. Break (15 min).

Keynote Speaker: 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Daniel Huws (National Library of Wales). "Bards, Scholars, and Anthologists: Collecting Welsh Poetry 1550-1650."

6:30 - 8 p.m. RECEPTION. Buffet and wine (Rick and Ann's Catering).

8-9 p.m. Celtic music presentation by Melanie O Reilly and Seán O Nualláin.

Saturday, March 19:

8:30-9 a.m. Coffee and pastries

Keynote Speaker: 9-10 a.m. Edgar Slotkin (University of Cincinnati). "Editing Fled Bricrenn."

10-10:15 a.m. Break (15 min.)

Sixth Session: 10:15-11:45 a.m.

10:15-10:45 a.m. Diane Auslander (City University of New York). "The Creation of a Composite Saint in the Life of St. Monenna by Conchubranus."

10:45-11:15 a.m. Jamie DeAngelis (UC Berkeley). "Boþe þat on and þat oþer: Bertilak's Wife, Morgan le Fay, and the Celtic Mythology of the Sovereignty Goddess."

11:15-11:45 a.m. Benjamin Bruch (Harvard University). 'Bridging the Tamar: Middle English Verse Forms and the Development of Cornish Prosody.'

11:45-12 p.m. Break (15 min.)

Keynote Speaker: 12-1 p.m. Geraint H. Jenkins (Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies).

"Rattleskull Genius : Iolo Morganwg and Proinsias Mac Cana."

LUNCH: 1-2:30 p.m. [Local Restaurants]

Seventh Session: 2:30-4 p.m.

2:30-3 p.m. Seamus Brennan (University College, Cork). "Contextualizing DNA with Historical Records, Maps and Oral Tradition: The Mac Branáin and ÓBraonáin Lineages."

Keynote Speaker: 3-4 p.m. Tomás Ó Cathasaigh (Harvard University). "Medb and Ailill: A Marriage of Equals."

4-4:15 p.m. Break (15 min.)

Eighth Session: 4:15-5:45 p.m.

4:15-4:45 p.m. Amélie Ghesquière. "The French Diplomatic Representation in the Irish Free State in the '20s: A 'Work of Propaganda' or a Revival of the Influence and Presence of France in Ireland?"

4:45-5:15 p.m. Lisa August-Schmidt (UC Berkeley). "The Writing on the Walls: An Analysis of Loyalist and Republican Murals in Belfast and Derry."

5:15-5:45 p.m. Brian O Conchubhair (University of Notre Dame). "The Contemporary Irish Short Story."

5:45-6 p.m. Break (15 min.)

Keynote Speaker 6-7 p.m. Fergus Kelly (Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies). "Trouble at Home: An Early Irish Law-text on Disputes within Marriage."

8:15 p.m. BANQUET-The Banquet will be held at 8:15 p.m. on Saturday, March 19, 2005 at Café de la Paz (1600 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley), a restaurant that specializes in Brazilian cuisine. There will be a no host bar. To be sure of having a place at the Banquet, as there is a limited amount of seating, IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT YOU MAKE YOUR RESERVATION IN ADVANCE by sending a personal check or money order in the amount of \$37.00 (tax included) by March 15, 2005, made out to Annalee Rejhon, to:

Dr. Annalee Rejhon
Celtic Studies Program
6303 Dwinelle Hall
University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-2690

Since mail may be delayed, we also strongly suggest that you confirm your reservation by e-mail to [ccc27banquet at yahoo.com](mailto:ccc27banquet@yahoo.com). A student discount in the price will be announced at the Conference, where tickets may be purchased as long as places remain. Students wishing to take advantage of the discount should still make an e-mail reservation ahead of time..]



INTRODUCTION TO DRUIDISM WORKSHOP

WHEN: Starts March 20, 2005

WHERE: Western Massachusetts, near Amherst

COST: \$900/12 months

DETAILS: Beginning approximately on the Vernal Equinox 2005 a once monthly Druid intensive will begin in Western MA, near Amherst. We will meet for one weekend (all day Saturday or Sunday) a month, for a year and a day.

Together we will learn topics such as "Who were the Celts?" and "Who were the Druids?". The Ogham alphabets, Brehon Laws, tree divination, basic meditation and spiritual healing will be covered. A comprehensive book list will be provided and students will be required to read and discuss one book a month. Druid ritual form will be taught. The Cost is \$900.00, payable in whole or in increments.

Ellen Evert Hopman (Saille/Willow) has been a Druid initiate since 1985 and has worked with all of the major Druid Orders. She is the founder of the Whiteoak Druid mailing list and a co-founder of the Whiteoak Order (Ord na darach Gile). Ellen is a Second Circle in ADF and Ring of the Oak in Keltria, as well as being an initiate of Whiteoak. Students who successfully complete the course will be eligible for initiation.

A deposit will hold your space. Mail it to POB 219, Amherst, MA 01004

[saille333 at mindspring.com](mailto:saille333@mindspring.com)

DruidCon
2005

August 26, 2005 is the date for DRUIDCON (Glasgow, Scotland) this year...

<http://www.druidcon.vscotland.org.uk/>

Following on the success of 2003's DruidCon - Glasgow's first Druid conference - Caer Clud presents DruidCon 2004. Join us for a day of interesting speakers and workshops, stalls selling all sorts of interesting items and books, a raffle, and relaxed fun with like-minded folk in a pleasant venue. Mead is being donated by the Scottish Mead Company.

Any profits from DruidCon 2004 will be donated to the SSPCA.

- a. Programme
 - b. Tickets
 - c. Location
 - d. Accommodation
 - e. The Future
 - f. DruidCon 2003
-

NEW ANTHROPOLOGY WEBSITE ANNOUNCEMENT



The Anthropological Association of Ireland has a new website:
<http://www.anthropologyireland.org>

If you run an anthropology-related website, please consider putting in a link to ours; or if you already have a link to our old site, please update it.

ABOUT THE AAI, ITS CONFERENCES AND JOURNAL

The Anthropological Association of Ireland (AAI) is a small, non-profit organisation which exists to promote social and cultural anthropology within Ireland. Our activities involve the organisation of, usually, two conferences or workshops per year, and the publication of the Irish Journal of Anthropology.

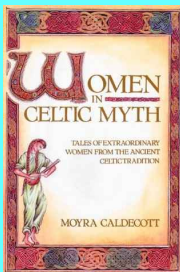
The website contains information on two conferences being organised in March:

- Social Thought and the Irish Question in Nineteenth Century Ireland, 18-19 March 2005, Headfort House, Kells, Ireland
- Talking Objects: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Material Culture Studies, 31 March 2005, UCD, Dublin

The site also contains information about the Irish Journal of Anthropology, how to submit articles to the journal and how to subscribe to it.

If you think your site might merit a link from the AAI, please let the AAI Website Administrator (drazina@tcd.ie) know. No commercial e-mails please.

BOOK REVIEW



Women in Celtic Myth **Written by Moyra Caldecott with Destiny Books**

Review by Mike, DC Grove

I picked up this collection of "Tales of Extraordinary Women from the Ancient Celtic Tradition" a few years ago during my study of Celtic women, but quite enjoyed the second reading this weekend. It has a very contemporary feel (first published 1988), compared to Lady Gregory's 19th century romantic translations of the original tales, from which the author has consulted. This 200 page volume has 11 chapters that has several well-known myths involving prominent women, boiled down a bit and retold from their perspective. Thus, even if a story from a super-saga continues afterwards, the reteller will cease when the woman in the story meets her end.

The book deals with the heroines such as Rhiannon, Arianrhod and Blodeuwedd, the Three Etains, Emer and Cuchulain's lovers, Macha, Morrighu, Deirdre, Findabair and Maeve, Grania, and the Sea Maiden. Although retold by a master story teller drawing for details on real texts, the author illuminates some of the inner turmoil of the protagonists in their tanging longings in a search for power, happiness, friendship,

independence and spiritual fulfillment. Each masterfully crafted ten-page story ends with a page or two of commentary on the spiritual and psychiatric implications of the symbolism.

The book is classified as belonging to the "Women's Studies" section of the book store, but I would hesitate to recommend it to a scholar in that field if they did not have any background in Celtic society. Although she does explain a few terms, she uses the character's most Celtic rendition of personal and place names. Also, due to the tight focus of the heroine's lives, the story hits the ground running midway through a complex saga, possibly confusing novitiates in the field. However, I think these renditions will encourage people to pay closer attention in the future to the heroines who often (but not always) get a back seat in the tales of these interesting peoples.



Oimelech as 15 degrees of Aquarius occurs on Feb. 3 2005 9:44 a.m. Pacific Standard Time or by the alternative method of calculation as 16 degrees 18 minutes of declination on Feb. 3, 2004 at 12:44 p.m. Pacific Standard Time.

The Ancient Celtic society was an agrarian one ruled by the seasons and didn't have the benefits of year-round foods that we have today. Ewe's milk was the first fresh food they'd had since Samhain. In honor of the Ancient Celts and their surviving the long winter, drink a glass of ewe's or goat's milk on Oimelech. If you are a member of a grove, be sure to have either ewe's or goat's milk in the chalice this service.

A Druid Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$8.00 and email subscriptions are free. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's post mail subscription free. Write to:

A Druid Missal-Any
P.O. Box 406
Canyon, CA 94516

Please note the new mailing address!

E-Mail: poppinjay@earthlink.net

This is the end of the Oimelech Issue



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Webmastered by Mike Scharding
