

C.Φ.R.D. Biquarterly

Connexus Of Reformed Druids

A publication for the Reformed Druids of North America – RDNA

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3 Samradh, 64 Y.R.
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Beltane



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

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Note: Click-navigation might only work if you download the PDF.

Happy RDNA New Year!

Welcome to Y.R. 64

Friday marked the beginning of *Year of the Reform* 64 in the tradition of Reformed Druidism. The Reformed Druids were founded on Beltane of 1963 C.E. as Y.R. 1. This means that Y.R. 0 can be considered the "pre-planning" time (perhaps on or around the Celtic festival of *Mwfydnfud*) leading up to Beltane.

This year then is the 63rd anniversary of the RDNA. Since it was founded in '63, then 2026 is therefore the *Golden Year* of Reformed Druidism! What will you do in Y.R. 64 to make this a golden year for *your* Druidism? Let this be an invigorating year for the RDNA and for the Earth-Mother!

News of the Groves

News from Oberlin Protogrove (Ohio)

Oberlin Protogrove had our Beltane ritual today, which Jean [Drum] came by for! Two of us were ordained to the Second Order!



News from Oakdale Grove (Minnesota)

In early April, we held our monthly casual hangout as our first *tree pilgrimage* of the year. We visited the Rockwood Oak, a bur oak in Minneapolis that was estimated to be an acorn in 1698. It was already an old tree by the time America gained independence. We ventured forth under occasional droplets of rain. John the Verbose orated a chronological timeline of Minnesota history, beginning with the names of the indigenous tribes who called this land their home. In 2011, the tree lost 40% of its canopy in an EF-2 tornado, but it is resilient and still very much alive. We adorned the bark with yellow carnations, and gave an offering of coffee ground fertilizer to bless the tree with what *we hope* can be a few more generations of life. The city occasionally considers cutting it down because the remaining branches pose a liability risk, as it is right next to a park trail.



In two weeks we *embark* on our next tree pilgrimage to Rushford, Minnesota. There we will hold a memorial for the 5th largest oak tree in the state. It was destroyed by a storm last summer.

On Earth Day and on Arbor Day last month, Oakdale Grove donated to *One Tree Planted* and to the *Arbor Day Foundation*. This has been a continuing tradition for several years now. With wildfires becoming more common, more widespread, and more severe, we feel an urgency to pitch in to mitigate the damage done to the environment. The thing I like about *One Tree Planted* is that for every dollar donated, their teams will plant one tree to match. This is a worthwhile endeavor, and sometimes we'll even donate at times besides holidays because we're Druids and there's something flippin' awesome about trees!



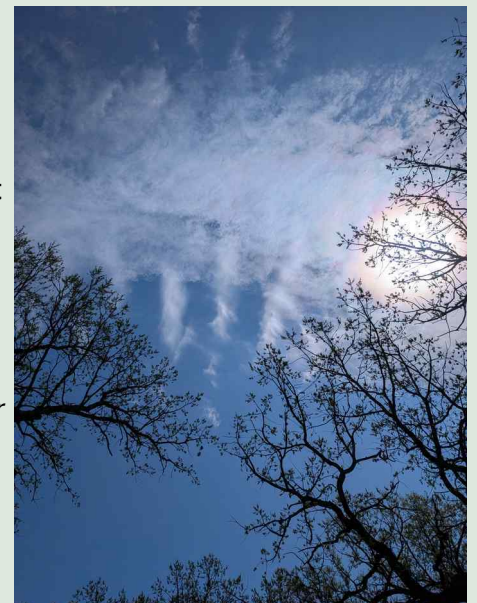
We held our Beltane ritual yesterday at Como Park in Saint Paul. The breeze was cool, and the temperature was 17°C (62°F) with mostly clear skies. We actually met on site two hours before the ritual started, because usually when the weather is nice, the park fills up fast and parking becomes scarce. Despite the amazing spring weather, it was not as full as we've seen in the past, but we had a great time meeting a number of newcomers who were very interested in Druidry. We brought donuts and a 96 ounce catering box of hot coffee for our social time.

The fire pit was actually still hot when we arrived, as if it was used earlier in the morning already. It was hot enough that we did not need a lighter or fire starters; we just put a log and some bark on the ashes, and it ignited in a few minutes by itself. That doesn't say much to the responsibility of whoever used it first, but it sure was convenient.

We had 18 attendees show up for Beltane yesterday. The omen on the winds was good, and the offerings of evergreen and flowers were duly accepted. We had a lightly smoky fine bourbon for our Waters-of-Life this time, mostly because it's what fits in a new padded travel box we acquired. And a hearty welcome and congratulations to the five new First Order Druids today! And there was much rejoicing.

At right: Skies Over Beltane by Johanno Sycamore Bear

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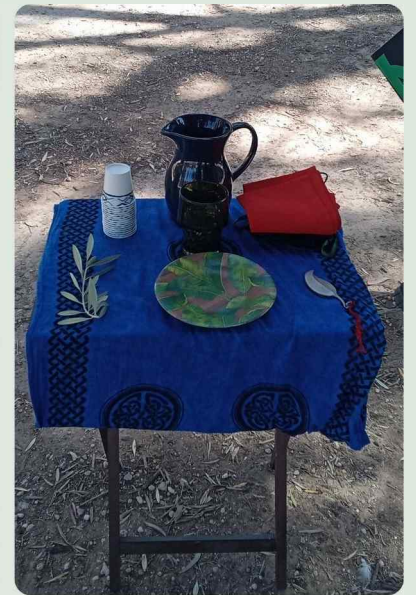


News from Tucson Grove (Arizona)

Tucson Grove gathered for Beltane on Saturday, May 2nd. There were five present (four humans and a canine). We used a slightly modified version of the Beltane ritual from the Black Book of Liturgy. In addition to the normal liturgy, we marked the 63rd anniversary of the Reformed Druids of North America, and the 6th anniversary of Tucson Grove.

A momentous occasion, indeed. For the Waters of Life, we used Welch's Sparkling Passionfruit Mango to mark the occasion (very good and highly recommended, by the way). Blessings of spring to all....

Meirneal
Archdruid Emeritus
Grove Preceptor



Campfire Colloquy

Overview

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

The Beltane Bannock by Ellen Evert Hopman

A large oatcake was baked with nine raised knobs on it. It was carried out to the fields where each knob was broken off and offered to an animal that might harm the crops and herds such as crows, ravens, eagles, and foxes, asking the animal to leave the flocks and fields alone. The proper way to do this was to throw a piece of bannock behind you, in the name of the animal you were petitioning. You might say; “This is for you raven, please spare my corn” or “this is for you foxes, please leave my chickens alone”, and so on.

Bannock Recipe

Ingredients

- 2/3 cup coarsely ground organic oats
- 2 tsp. melted organic butter or lard
- 1 pinch baking soda
- 1 pinch Sea Salt
- a handful of ground organic oats for kneading
- 1 cup hot water

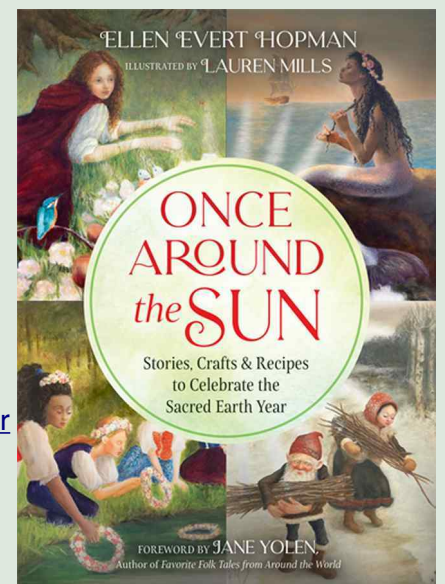
Method

1. Combine the oats, salt and soda in a bowl and stir together.
2. Make a well in the center of the bowl with your fist.
3. Pour the melted shortening and water into the well and stir until a stiff batter forms.
4. Cover a board with ground oats and empty the batter onto the board.
5. Cover your hands with oats and knead the batter into a ball.
6. Roll out to 1/2-inch thickness with a rolling pin (or a glass bottle).
7. Sprinkle with ground oats and cook on a griddle or flat surface until the edges are curled and slightly toasted.

In ancient times the bannock would have been rolled thin and stuck to a sheepskin which was placed on a wooden stretcher near the fire until the bread was toasted. It was considered very unlucky and an offense to the Fairies for iron to touch the bannock if it was intended as a bread for ritual purposes.

[Once Around the Sun at Simon and Schuster](#)

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Review from John the Verbose of *To Be a Druid: A Synopsis on the History of the Druids and a Guide to Current Day Practices* by TJ Armstrong

I downloaded this as an eBook and curiously dove in since it was written by someone that I am unfamiliar with in the realm of Druidry. TJ Armstrong is a member of OBOD in Appalachia. This book is one of his projects he undertook as part of his creative expression assignments while in the *Bardic Grade*. He is currently in the *Ovate Grade* in OBOD. He name-drops all the big money-seeking Druid orders, but alas, not the Reformed Druids. Not too surprised there; we are still overlooked by a lot of people in the other Druid orders despite the RDNA being quite large.

This book is definitely the author's first foray into writing. Or maybe it isn't; the author has a few other writings not pertaining to Druidry that may be older. But in terms of content and formatting, it feels painfully amateur... and not in a fun way. Every now and then you get a wall of text that is a paragraph as big as a page, and in one case, two pages long. I turn the page to continue reading the content but I get yanked out of my immersion of the subject matter when I see the size of the paragraph. There are also countless nascent wrong-word typos. In parts they average one or two per page. It's in phrases like "rough *sees*" instead of *seas*, "*out space*" instead of *outer*, "utilizing the tools at our *disposable*" instead of *disposal*, and missing words on occasion like "Don't me wrong" instead of don't *get* me wrong.

It took all my effort to prevent myself from going into *editor mode* to seek out the next typo. I was starting to get the impression that the book was primarily written using voice transcription software. I noticed there were a few doubled-up words. It was as if the author had a vocal pause, and then repeated the last word as his continuation of the thought. At one point the author refers to the book as "this podcast." It derailed my attention and made me wonder if he was transcribing his own web show (that he mentioned in the book's preface).

I had a problem with the section on herbalism. Of course, herb lore and knowledge of medicinal plants was extremely significant to the ancient Druids, and that importance has carried over into Neo-Druidry as well. Most authors will have a safety disclaimer when they start talking about handling and using herbs. Some of our plant friends are very potent and aren't always friendly if we don't fully know what we're doing.

A standard disclaimer can really help readers understand that some herbs are toxic and that they need to be careful and consult professionals. This book doesn't have one in the herbalism chapter. However there's a careless disclaimer in the publishing information page that says he "assumes no responsibility... for damages resulting from the use of the information contained herein." The chapter on herbalism is also too short and reckless. He invites the reader to explore herbalism through podcasts and YouTube. In all my mentorship, I have *never* recommended that people learn herbalism via podcasts or YouTube. That's right up there with directing people to buy snake oil supplements from

manosphere influencers. The whole chapter on herbalism is just one major disservice to the book and the author.

The chapter on *Ceremony* gets off to a decent start, but then the author veers off into discussing and promoting *skyclad* ceremonial practices. It's totally fine to talk about, and yes it will be enlightening for people to learn the purpose and intention behind it, but it starts to get old. Nude ceremony takes over the main topic of the chapter and keeps on going. Then the author clarifies that he has *never once tried* any personal ceremony *skyclad*. Yet he's getting pushy in favor of it. He describes the effect of being *skyclad* in different settings, and I'm shouting back at the book "but you've *never once* tried this yourself?!"

All I could think of for the rest of the chapter was the hypocrisy of the lesson. It actually started to feel creepy, especially with the last word in the chapter. For a moment he was bringing *ceremony* back as the original main topic. The penultimate sentence was great, but then at the end the creeper vibes just snapped right back in place with an awkward sentence fragment:

"Some druids don't use ceremony in their practice at all, but I would encourage you to explore it at least a few times to see if you find it beneficial to your practice.

Nude"

With that last word in the chapter indented and without any terminal punctuation, I couldn't tell if the author was trying to be sassy, or if it was supposed to be a first word of an entirely incomplete or missing paragraph.

around us. How you decide to perform ceremony is up to you. You can follow written outlines by druid or other pagan organizations or develop your own to fit your own style and needs. Some druids don't use ceremony in their practice at all, but I would encourage you to explore it at least a few times to see if you find it beneficial to your practice.

Nude

The end of the table of contents indicates an "About the Author" section, but the whole book just ends cold with an unfinished valediction in chapter 50. There is nothing thereafter. There is no "About the Author" section as promised by the table of contents, no bibliography, no references or acknowledgements. It is simply the final page and nothing more.

In retrospect, the *title* of the book didn't correlate very strongly to the *content* provided. I realized after I got to the end that the "...Synopsis on the History of the Druids..." only encompasses a very tiny fraction of the content, and more than 90% is the "...Guide to Current Day Practices." I was expecting a better balance of the two. To the book's credit, it's a great primer on the modern practices, at least. Overall it was very hastily edited, and maybe only used a spell-check that wasn't equipped to identify wrong or missing word typos. Could this book serve as a helpful *Druidry 101*? Yeah I suppose. Am I going to recommend it to new Druids as a 101 book? No.

Seeker's Corkboard

Overview

Here you can state that you are seeking others to form a protogrove. Long has it been said, "*In the proper way, at the proper time, at the proper place, may another Druid cross your path.*" Well, here is a little nudge to help this happen! These bulletins will be in each newsletter until you ask otherwise.

To submit a Seeker's Corkboard request, email the editor with **your preferred name, location, and email address** that you check at least weekly. Any information you submit to this section becomes public. Your email address in the newsletter will have characters swapped: & and / instead of @ and '.' to prevent roving address harvester/spam bots from mining them.

Standard Safety Disclaimer

We advise Googling *safety tips for meeting people from the Internet* or something to that effect. Furthermore, this is not intended as a section for personals ads or soliciting hookups.

Bulletins (alphabetically by country, state/province/region, then by town name)

Germany: Bavaria: Munich: from Clelia-Maria

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

USA: District of Columbia: Tyler Vanice on behalf of *Potomac Protogrove* in Washington DC. If interested, please reach out. Email tyler.vanice&gmail/com.

USA: Georgia: Savannah: Hey this is a PSA from the editor. There are Druids in your area seeking other Druids (like, at least three, and I don't think it's the same person), we just don't have names or contact info. I can't even remember where I've been seeing references to this (probably somewhere on Discord). Email the editor if you wanna put in a bulletin here!

USA: Massachusetts: Central MA: from Avery Vreeland

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

USA: North Carolina: Boone: from Maddox Main: I am in the early stages of forming a proto-grove to serve this area. I have name ideas, but I would prefer it be a group consensus. Fellow Druids or anyone interested, please get in touch with me at RDNA_Maddox&proton/me.

Videos of Interest

"What Were Stone Circles For?" by Pete Kelly



Stonehenge, Avebury, The Ring Of Brodgar, Callanish . Why did our ancestors go to all the effort to make this incredible places?

"Stone Age Temple Mystery" by NOVA



Surprising evidence at the world's oldest temple overturns our understanding of human history.

Augur's Intuition

Overview

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

Submission by Jax K.

Methodology: Astragalomantic Bibliomancy, in ARDA

About this method

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



The Roll

Page number: 372

Column: 1

Paragraph: 9

Text of the Verse, Sentence, Phrase, or Line

“As brollach na Domhain-Mháthar, Uile Mháthar gan athrú”

(Pronunciation: Ahs bruhluh nuh DOWin MAW-hir, ILeh MAW-hir gahn AHroo)

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

From whence does this divined verse flow? Why, the Irish version of the Common Order of Worship, originally translated by Robert Larson in 1975. The phrase, specifically, is “From the bosom of the Earth-Mother, the never-changing All-Mother.”

Anyone who has perused the variety of liturgy within ARDA will note the lack of consistency in how we refer to the Earth-Mother during the call-and-response, and she is referred to as both “never-changing” *and* “ever-changing,” depending on the liturgist.

At this time, it is difficult to determine who penned the original Common Order of Worship, though it is likely Fisher or Nelson. Either way, it seems that “never-changing” might have been the original preference, as evidenced by the “Samhain Chant” (p. 238) and “Service at the Winter Solstice” (p. 240), both presumed to have been written in 1964.

Yet, Reformed Druids who prefer their Earth-Mother unchanging might be in the minority. In fact, there are 14 liturgical uses of “*ever-changing*” and 11 uses (including two in Irish) of “*never-changing*.” And even Oakdale Grove's *Black Book of Liturgy* exclusively uses “*ever-changing*.” Only one version in ARDA presents both as a mid-ritual choice, which was composed by Katya Luomala for Lughnasadh in 1978 (p. 249). How very Reformed to have options!

For Druids who prefer one over the other: Why do you have that preference, and why do you think others might prefer the opposite? Or do you use both interchangeably throughout the year and why? Bonus contribution: For students of Gaelge who prefer an *ever-changing* Earth-Mother, a potential translation might be “an Uile Mháthar ata ag athrú i gcónaí” (pronunciation: ahn ILeh MAW-hir ati eg AHroo ih GOOni). If someone more skilled in Irish than I has a better translation, please do correct me!

Other Blogs & Social Media Links

Blogs Curated By Druids (accumulative each issue)

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

Social Media and Links

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

Reformed Druid Resources

Overview

The Reformed Druids of North America is probably one of the few major druid orders that provides all resources for learning about our style of Druidism at no cost. We might not have all the answers, but here is a list of resources we *do* have.

Grove Finder

Everyone wants to know: is there an RDNA or NRDNA Grove in _____? Well, the most current source of truth is the [Grove Listing](#) on Oakdale Grove's website. It tracks Reformed Druid, New Reformed Druid, and Reformed Druidic Wicca (MOCC) Groves & Protogroves.

RDNA Year Conversion Chart & Calendar

The RDNA Calendar began at Year of the Reform 1 on Beltane (May 1) 1963. It's unapologetically half a year off from the Celtic New Year. As of Beltane 2024, the 62nd Year of the Reform (Y.R.) began on the first day of Samradh, which is one day after the 90th day of Earrach. It simply counts the days of each season as well.

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

Oakdale Grove's RDNA Druid Training Program

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

Books From the Reformed Druids of North America

- [A Reformed Druid Anthology](#), 2nd ed (also known as ARDA-2) – this is a monumental collection (almost a thousand pages long), and it comes in various forms and formats due to its sheer size. **The PDF versions are always FREE**, but hardcover prints are available from Lulu print-on-demand.
 - [ARDA-2](#) complete (**FREE PDF**) (Volumes 0-10, excluding vol 6)
 - [ARDA-2](#) complete ePub format from Lulu (99¢)
 - [ARDA-2 Volumes 0, 1, & 2](#) in one tome (hardcover purchase from Lulu)
 - [ARDA-2 Volume 3](#) in one tome (hardcover purchase from Lulu)
 - [ARDA-2 Volumes 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, & 10](#) in one tome (hardcover purchase from Lulu)
 - [ARDA-2 Volume 6: *Green Books of Meditation*](#) (**FREE PDF**) – this alone is almost a thousand pages long and intentionally set apart from the other volumes. The Green Books are only available in PDF and contain inspirational writings from all religions.

ARDA Derivative, Condensed, or Adapted Works

- [Unofficial Welcome Pamphlet \(FREE PDF\)](#) is the original 22 pages of the main written works plus introductory info on the RDNA and how to start your own protogrove
- [Black Book of Liturgy \(FREE PDF\)](#) is Oakdale Grove's recommended readings from ARDA-2 plus many scripts of RDNA ritual variations and rites of passage)
 - [Black Book of Liturgy](#) (hardcover purchase from Lulu)

Top recommended books by authors in other Druid orders

- [The Druidry Handbook: Spiritual Practice Rooted in the Living Earth](#) by John Michael Greer (Ancient Order of Druids in America – AODA)
- [The Rebirth of Druidry](#) by Philip Carr-Gomm (Order of Bards, Ovates, & Druids – OBOD)
- [A Legacy of Druids: Conversations With Druid Leaders Of Britain, The USA And Canada, Past And Present](#) by Ellen Evert Hopman (Tribe of the Oak)

Books on ancient Druids (scholarly quality)

- [Druids: A Very Short Introduction](#) by Barry Cunliffe
- [The Druids](#) by Stuart Piggott
- [The Druids](#) by Peter Berresford Ellis
- [The World of the Druids](#) by Miranda J. Green

Newsletter Info

About C.O.R.D.

Connexus of Reformed Druids – C.O.R.D. Biquarterly is a free and publicly available newsletter for the Reformed Druids of North America, its branches, and for anyone else who might be interested. It follows in the footsteps of prior publications such as *A Druid Missal-Any* and *Druid Inquirer*. *Connexus* is an homage to the late Emmon Bodfish, who petitioned the Council of Dalon Ap Landu to update RDNA liturgical nomenclature to make it less churchlike and more unique. *Connexus* is Latin for *connection* (not exactly druidic, but I'm not complaining). Emmon's petition never gained traction (plus it was difficult to communicate with the Council at the time), but it seemed fitting to adopt this word for a publication that connects Druids around the world.

Past Articles

[Click here](#) to access all prior *C.O.R.D. Biquarterly* articles and the content contribution forms.

Meet the Editor

Greetings! I'm John "The Verbose." I've practiced generic forms of Druidry since I spent a semester in Ireland in 2004. I began interacting with the RDNA in 2011, and in 2013 I was ordained as a priest of Dalon Ap Landu and formed Oakdale Grove in Minnesota with 5 other grovemates. In 2015 I had the rare opportunity to become a priest of Belenos and in 2017 the even rarer honor of becoming a priest of Sirona, as well as the new curator of her Order. In January 2020 I began developing the new RDNA style Druid training program, and established an honor society for those who complete it called the Order of Bradán Feasa.

I am absolutely committed to my oath of Service and wish to help others explore Reformed Druidry by a diverse array of means. That includes assembling and issuing these newsletters. Anything in this publication that doesn't have an attribution and is written in the first person is pretty much me sharing my opinions and experiences. That's where your help and contributions are so helpful; we have a newsletter with crowd-sourced content to appeal to a broader druidic audience. I sincerely hope you find this periodical to be a worthwhile investment of your time. I always welcome constructive criticism and suggestions or other feedback.



Photo courtesy of I Talk To The Trees.

Peace, peace, peace! ☪

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Contribute Content to the Next Issue!

Submission Process

Issues will be released on the day of the RDNA Wheel-of-the-Year high days. That's more or less the deadline if you wanted to submit any content for the forthcoming article. Anything received a bit late might end up on the draft of the next article thereafter.

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

Example:

From: sender@snailmail.com

To: MNdruids@gmail.com

Subject: Submission for **CORD**

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

_____ [use a string of underscores to separate unwanted content]

"A Cosmic Haiku"

Sun shines on all things,

Yet some things still can't be seen,

Dark matter floats by.

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

What Does C.O.R.D. Look For? Content that is PG-13 or tamer in the following categories:

- News of Reformed Druidry Groves, Protogroves, & Solo Druids
- Poetry and Short Stories
- Druidic projects, tutorials, arts, crafts you are making
- Personal milestones, editorials, druidic book or product reviews, critiques
- Seeker Bulletins like "Solo Druid looking for other Druids in _____"
- Your own photography
- Links to videos of druidic interest (need not be your own) or Druidry-related memes
- Links to your Druid blogs or social media
- Divinations and their summaries
- Propose a topic; you can help make this newsletter be a success!

The *Thank You* Photo!

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



Falls at Minneopa Creek, Minneopa State Park, Mankato, Minnesota