C.Φ.R.D. Biquarterly

Connexus Of Reformed Druids

A publication for the Reformed Druids of North America – RDNA

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1 Gemredh, 64 Y.R.
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John the Verbose, editor
MNdruids@gmail.com

Samhain



Photo: Shelby Boardman Memorial (college dean & geology professor) Carleton College Arboretum, Northfield, Minnesota.

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News from Oakdale Grove (Minnesota)



On the weekend of October 9th, we held another spiritual retreat (The One With the Crows). We set up camp at Baker Park Reserve, just west of the westernmost suburbs of Minneapolis. The nights were chilly, but the days were hot. Unlike the 2022 “Recharge Retreat,” this time it was a little closer to *glamping* with electricity, 60 feet of rope lights strung overhead in the tent, an electric kettle for tea and instant coffee, and phone charging. There were no Third Order Vigils this time, so no need for tech restrictions.

We had ten attendees present and only one no-show. They would have been our token OBOD Druid in attendance, so I lament the missed opportunity. It was a really *windy* weekend, too. Gusts frequently approached 35-40 MPH, even through the night. The smoke from the fires billowed in every direction. None who gathered ‘round the fire ring were spared from the mundane saining.

Just before sunset on Saturday, we processed to the lake and set up the Morrigan’s spears. Grove Preceptor Jax was to be ordained to the priesthood of the Order of the Morrigan beneath the spears. In 2023, Jax had been initiated as an *Acolyte* of the Order of the Morrigan during the October solar eclipse. After three years of preparation, October’s new moon was the appointed time for completion of the process that had been started. There were perhaps half a dozen non-Druid spectators strolling by and pausing to observe us Druids and our mysterious rite at any given time. At the time of seeking the omen, sudden waves crashed upon the shore of the still waters of the lake behind us, as the winds had fallen silent during sunset. There was no boat, and it was taken to be a sign. Congratulations to Jax, first in the priesthood of the Order of the Morrigan!



We returned to basecamp, and prepared for the evenings programming and festivities. To ensure that we could see what we were doing, for our mead tasting party, we gathered our camp chairs inside the mostly empty 10-person tent with the overhead rope lighting. Together we sampled two meads by Rebel Hive: one flavored with mango, hibiscus, and hops, and a second one that was flavored with elderberries. We tried a run-of-the-mill local honey wine as a general basis of comparison, but lo and behold most of us enjoyed the bog-standard mead!

We tried the Redstone Meadery. Redstone is one of my favorite brands, and they have a few dozen varieties, but this particular one was vanilla and cinnamon flavored, and each and every one of us thought it was disgusting. It tasted like drinking synthetic potpourri oil. One mead that was a pretty solid hit was the Bunratty Irish Mead. That one was the first mead I ever had when I was 20. It

definitely had a notable positive reaction among the attendees. We passed the meads around and segued into the programming topic of cleansing techniques for self and objects.

Key takeaways from running our second spiritual retreat:

- Don't schedule meal slots for just one hour if cooking over a *fire*
- Combine discussion-based programming (that doesn't need notes or activities) *with* meal times
- A team of 4 Druids working together makes an epic dozen scrambled eggs of mountainous curds in a cast iron skillet all at once
- Make scheduled programming time slots much more "gelatinous"
- Bisquick dough probably cooks faster than pillsbury croissants for making bread on a stick
- Consider ordering pizzas for a meal, lol



For our Samhain ritual, we returned to our usual winter haunt: Roseville Central Park, where the fire pits no longer need to be reserved from mid-October through mid-April. There were nine of us who gathered around the fire. No visitors this time, though. We hd a very gentle rain greet us for the start of our ceremony, and it lasted for five to eight minutes. I was on auto-pilot again, reciting the hybrid RDNA/NRDNA ritual script from memory, and I skipped an important custom invocation (again).



Fortunately, I doubled back to recite the invocation after I realized it, and the flow with the rest of the ritual was just fine. Well, except for the fact that I pointed out my error to everyone first. I made up for it. I had my consecrating nutmeg in a little tin, and tossed it into the fire as I declared "The time has come to kindle the flames of Samhain." This resulted in an aromatic fireball about three feet wide, which rose about four feet from the base of the fire in an instant.



The east wind whispered that the Earth-Mother sleeps. Our second sacrifice was met with a similar steady breeze, but it died down immediately after we called upon it. The Earth-Mother sleeps. Our libation of the Waters-of-Sleep extinguished the already dwindling flames. After our rite concluded, the logs became ablaze again, and we roasted leftover s'mores from our spiritual retreat and shared cider for about another hour. When dropping off Jax afterward, there was a 14-point buck beside the road, not far from a doe. Urban deer are common in the Twin Cities, but this one has the most points!

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

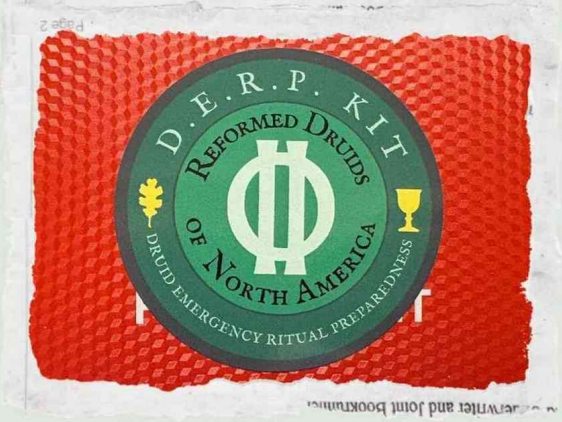
D.E.R.P. Kits: A Sneak Peak Into Unit 3 of the OBF Druidry Training Program, by John the Verbose
Hey Third Order Druids! Remember the time you went to ritual, and you left your Third Order ribbons at home? Or a lighter to start the bonfire? Or even (gasp), the *Waters*? That's why I would recommend always having a D.E.R.P. or *Druid Emergency Ritual Preparedness* Kit with you!

If you drive to your ritual locations, you should keep a D.E.R.P. Kit in the back of your car. In theory, you could even design a kit to fit tucked into the spare tire compartment. If you carry your ritual supplies in a backpack or satchel, it could be a challenge to fit in a backup of everything you need, but still possible. They key is to keep it somewhere that always goes with you to your RDNA COW (Common Order of Worship). Don't bring it into your home from the car except to restock it.









So what goes into a D.E.R.P. Kit? Basically a spare of everything that you would typically utilize in a C.O.W.

- Third Order ribbons
- Ritual script that fits into a folded pamphlet the size of a church or wedding bulletin
- Tiny durable chalice
- Druid Sigil pendant
- Small folding knife for cutting a sacrifice
  - Or a small herb jar to hold preselected sacrifices
- Lighter (helpful for when your current one runs out)
- A sampler bottle of the Waters-of-Life or Waters-of-Sleep

Then slap a nice vinyl decal onto your container that has become your designated D.E.R.P. Kit! First Aid Kits are swell for this purpose, but any small container can be good too. It all comes down to what you want to fit into it.

Carleton College Needs an Annual "Quest for the Grail" by John the Verbose

When I was a student at the College of Saint Scholastica (CSS) in Duluth, Minnesota, there was an annual tradition to hunt for a ball of aluminum foil. The campus lore was that in one year of the 1990s, Halloween hall decoration contests in the dorms resulted in a very large wad of aluminum foil that had been used to line the walls and ceiling. After being taken down and rolled up, the wad had so much character that they wanted to keep it. Some students wanted to name it Bob, others wanted to name it Al, the elemental symbol for Aluminum. It became "Al-Bob." Not wanting to throw Al-Bob away, Campus Activities at CSS decided to hide Al-Bob somewhere on campus. Each week, thinly veiled clues were posted in the Student Union until students found it. A $100 reward was the prize.

As Al-Bob became an annual tradition, one student created a forgery ball of aluminum foil and turned it in. It wasn't the same size, so there wasn't a reward for the fake. However, the fake wad was *added* to the real Al-Bob, and together it weighs over 100 lbs. Each November it is hidden somewhere on the vast campus. It is secreted to a place where nobody needs to trespass, get permission, or damage anything to find it.



From Duluth News Tribune, 09/09/2012

The first clue is always the most vague: "Al-Bob is missing. Your task at hand: Search for him on CSS land." Each week a clue is released, it is slightly more specific, often rhyming, and often referencing something obscure. Juniors and Seniors might understand the clues best, if they are very familiar with the campus and its history. The longer it takes, the more specific the clues become.

Carleton College Grove had a situation that would merit a perfect allegorical treasure hunt for their whole college campus. The Druids had a "quest for the grail." Let's venture down the rabbithole of history. The Reformed Druids established themselves at Carleton in 1963. Norman Nelson was one of the four founders, and was ordained in May of 1964. He was then elected as the second Arch-Druid of Carleton Grove, serving until commencement in June. Norm *loved* the Druid ceremonies. He had a prized chalice that he enjoyed using in rituals. He continued practicing Reformed Druidry across his lifetime. When he passed away in 2009, his prized chalice went to Mike the Fool, who was the 30th Arch-Druid-Emeritus of Carleton Grove.



Nelson with Frangquist and Fisher, Spring 1964



At the 50th anniversary gathering of the Reformed Druids in May of 2013, Mike knew in advance that he would be unable to attend. He mailed Norman's chalice to me in April, to be used at the 50th anniversary gathering, and then entrusted to the 50th Arch-Druid of Carleton to deposit it in the Carleton Druid Collection in the Archive after it opened the following Monday. I was consecrated to the Second Order with that chalice at the 50th anniversary gathering. We handed off the chalice in a lockbox we called "the reliquary."



In August 2013 I visited the Archives to verify that the chalice had been deposited there as a donation on behalf of friends of the estate of the late Norman Nelson. No such objects had been added to the archive. We had tried texting, emailing, and sending Facebook messages to the 50th Arch-Druid of Carleton to follow up periodically after May, but he had not returned communication. The other Carleton Druids also stopped hearing back from him altogether.



The "Maybe Norm Nelson's Chalice"

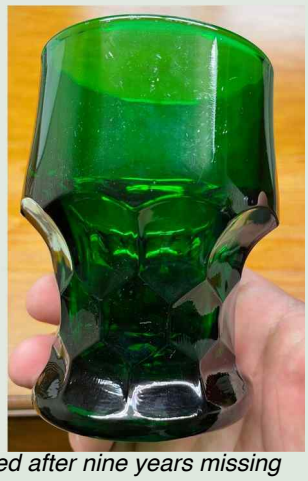
That same August afternoon, I spent some time browsing local antique stores. I found myself face-to-face with an identical chalice in *Antiques of Northfield*, all by itself among the drinkware. I was worried that the chalice had been sold for quick cash, and that it was only being resold for $8. I had no way to verify if it was truly Norman Nelson's prized chalice, or a coincidence that there was an identical one (and *only* one) in Northfield a few months after its disappearance. I bought it and made a new reliquary for it. Oakdale Grove of the Reformed Druids in the Twin Cities then *revered* it as the "Maybe Norm Nelson's Chalice."

I felt shame that I possibly had misplaced my trust in the 50th Arch-Druid of Carleton. I imagined he was incommunicado with the shame of selling it. Yet we continued to use the identical chalice on special occasions, while *never* definitively claiming it was the real one nor simply a matching cup.

Across the years, Oakdale Grove has assisted Carleton College Grove when they asked for guidance on how to run a Reformed Druidry Grove, share in a seasonal ritual, or assist in conducting a formal ordination. It is gratifying to be invited as a guest to the chapel lounge and to see the book collection that the Druids have, and the other objects that they use from time to time. On one visit in 2022, I was speaking with the Druids when I noticed something unexpected on their bookshelf. It was the reliquary with the combination lock still on it. I gasped and asked if I could open the box. The combination was the same as what I had set it to in 2013.







Norm's chalice rediscovered after nine years missing

There inside the lockbox was Norman Nelson's prized chalice! I was in tears that it had finally been found. Apparently the reliquary had been in the safety of the chaplain's office for about *nine years* before it was moved to the Druid shelf in the lounge. The 50th Arch-Druid was exonerated from any accusation and shame. In my elation, I shared the good news with the Reformed Druid community. I was happy that the other identical chalice in my keeping was definitively *not* Norm Nelson's. I gifted the "Not Norm Nelson's Chalice" to *I Talk To The Trees* when she was ordained to the Order of Grannos the following Beltane in 2023.

All this is precisely why Carleton College needs a "quest for the grail" style annual treasure hunt. This could be a collaboration of various student organizations. I think it would be fitting if the Carleton Druids serve as the "keepers of the clues," which could be released through the weekly newspaper *The Carletonian*. The Student Activities Planning Board would definitely have to take point in helping to make an idea like this an official one though. The perfect tagline would be "Every Knight needs a quest," because the Carleton College athletic moniker is "the Knights."

When I was a student at the College of Saint Scholastica in the early 2000s, the reward was a flat $100 (back in my day, that was a lot). That still sounds like a great incentive to go questing. Granted, if there's a team of three friends who find the chalice, the reward would just have to be split three ways. Carleton Grove could also dole out honorary "knighthoods," or the winners could just be photographed in *The Carletonian* grasping the chalice. The quest is its own reward sometimes!

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!

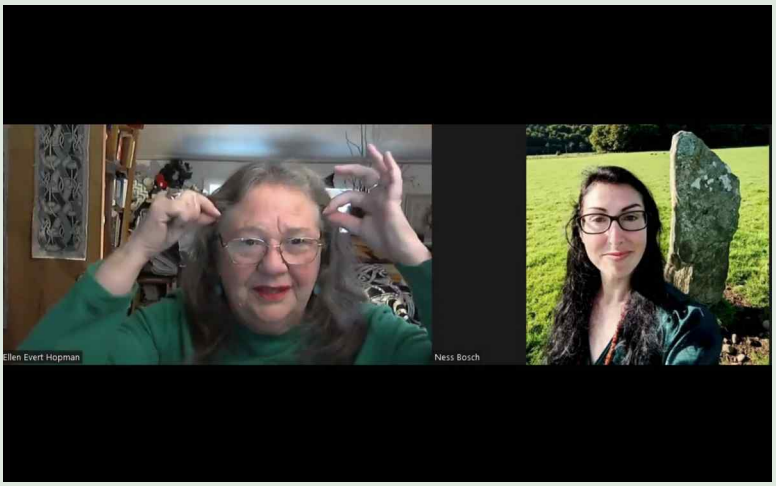
USA: **Massachusetts: Central MA:** from Avery Vreeland

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

“Contacting the Fae” submitted by Ellen Evert Hopman



“Plants to Contact the Spirits of the Dead” submitted by Ellen Evert Hopman



Augur's Intuition

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



Submission by NAME

Methodology: Néaladóireacht (Irish *Cloud-Gazing* or Nephomancy)
Néaladóireacht, (*NYAL*-a-dor-akht), is a method of cloud divination. It's *not* merely looking at shapes of clouds. The diviner must factor the type, origin, direction, altitude, texture, behavior, density, and more to form a cohesive reading. Some of the interpretations incorporate classical nephomancy elements to fill the gaps from medieval Irish sources. Sometimes spelling is simplified to *neladoracht* (NEL-a-dor-akht), but is often misspelled *neldoracht* without the necessary "a" after *nel-*.



Location In Sky: West
Direction of Movement: High clouds: southeast, low clouds: northeast
Speed: Moderately slow
Cloud Behavior: Gently increasing overcast

The Interpretation:
The thin high clouds represent the veil between the worlds. The feathery portions pertain to the spiritual, the presence and behavior mean there will be a minor change in the spiritual landscape. We are in a state of liminality which is about to end for now. The big-picture is still being developed, and it's hard to state anything definitively, but the short term mystery will have lasting effects. We can still make a difference individually to affect the whole. The broken overcast skies indicate a possible intervention of the status quo.

With the northeastern movement of the lower clouds, something in the short term is going to move towards a clean slate and a period of dormancy where it will benefit from soul-searching and introspection in tandem with a fresh start. The high clouds moving southeast indicates the long term with significant confrontational changes, with the easterly direction still nudging towards a long-term new beginning.

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
- 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 2026, the 64th 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.

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). **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)

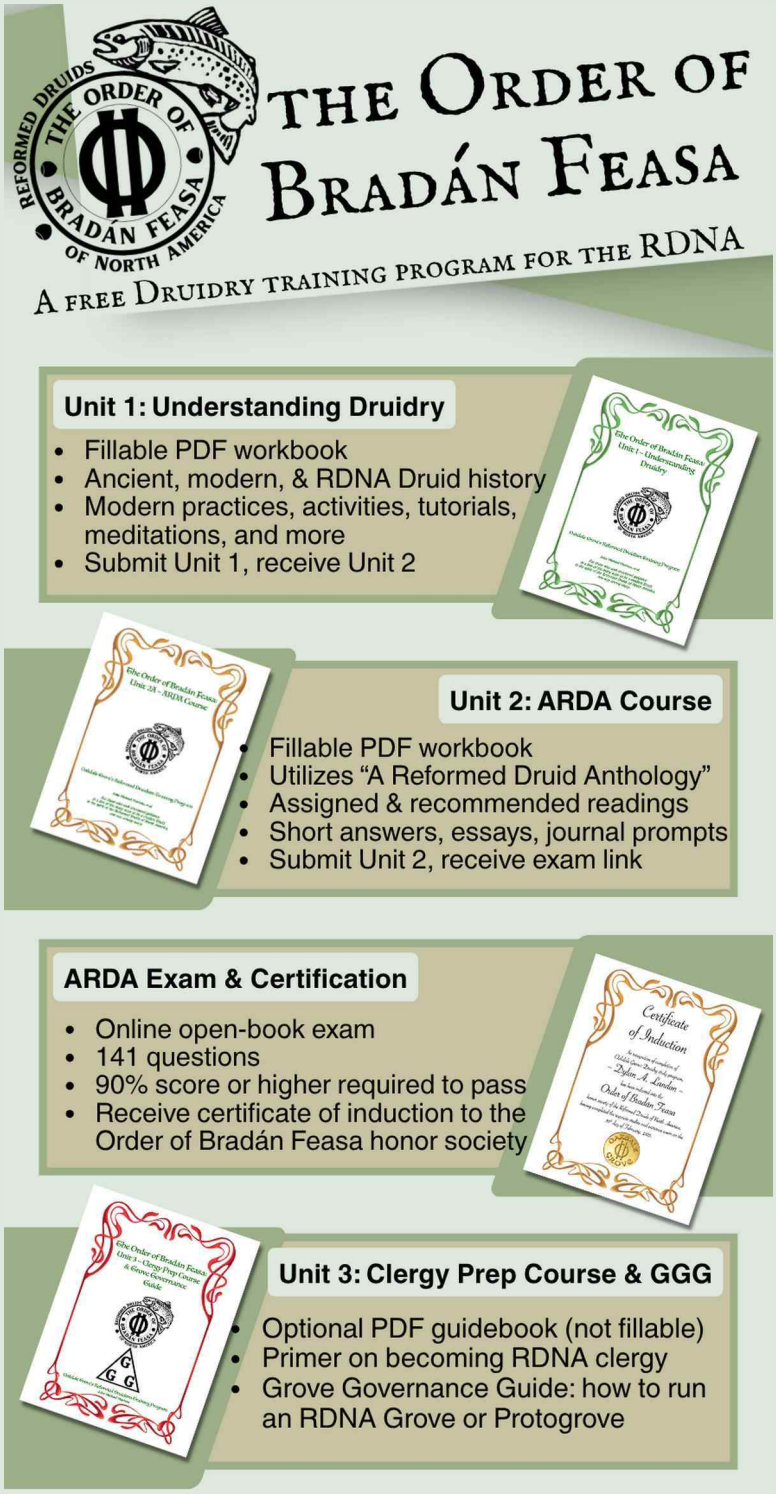
OBF Druidry Training Program

The Order of Bradán Feasa (OBF)
Prescribed training programs are technically antithetical to the independent learning philosophy as promoted by traditional Reformed Druidism. However, over the years, so many of you have asked if there was a training program, and you were turned away downtrodden when you were told to "Just go talk to a tree." For so many people, they felt that their sincere inquiry was met with a curt and dismissive canned response. Rest assured, the Order of Bradán Feasa Druid training program will also tell you to do that.

Launched in 2024 by Oakdale Grove, this is a free training program for the RDNA. For those who complete the program, they will be inducted into 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. Bear in mind that *induction* into the honor society does not constitute initiation into any of the ranked Orders of the Reformed Druid hierarchy.

While initiations to the RDNA's First, Second & Third Orders are conducted *in person*, induction to the Order of Bradán Feasa works for distance learners. Induction is less formal than initiation, and is more of a "You did it, and now there's a record of it" moment.

The first workbook can be found at Oakdale Grove's website here:
OBF Unit 1: Understanding Druidry



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 *Pentalpha Journal*, *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 churchy and more unique. *Connexus* is Latin for *connection* – not exactly druidic, but we're 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 his preferred word for a publication that connects Druids around the world.

Past Articles

Click here to access all prior *C.O.R.D. Biquarterly* articles.

Meet the Editor



Greetings! I'm John "The Verbose." I've practiced Druidry since I spent a semester in Ireland in 2004. I self-dedicated as a Reformed Druid in 2011 and founded Oakdale Protogrove in Oakdale, Minnesota. In 2013 I was ordained as a Third Order Druid priest in the RDNA. As a protogrove of six members, we voted to formally upgrade, becoming Oakdale Grove.

While sheltering-in-place during the pandemic, I was inspired to create something lasting in case I should die from a poorly understood virus. First, my magnum opus was the *Order of Bradán Feasa* Druidry training program for the Reformed Druid movement. Yet even then, so many of us yearned for *community*. So secondly, I established this newsletter so that Druids the world over could read about what we're all up to beyond social media.

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. 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.

Peace, peace, peace! 

Contribute Content to the Next Issue

Submission Process

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

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

Example:

> From: sender@snailmail.com
>
> To: MNdruids@gmail.com
>
> Subject: Submission for CORD
>
> Hi, this is my submission to the newsletter. Credit me as Jitterix the Caffeinated.
>
> _____ [use a string of underscores to separate unwanted content]
>
> "A Cosmic Haiku"
>
> Sun shines on all things,
>
> Yet some things still can't be seen,
>
> Dark matter floats by.
>
> _____
>
> PS: See also my attached photos for the Vivid Visions gallery.

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



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

The *Thank You* Photo!

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



***Inyan Bosndata* (Rock Standing on End), Castle Rock Township, Dakota County, Minnesota**