

C.Φ.R.D. Biquarterly

Connexus Of Reformed Druids

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Autumnal Equinox



Photo: Council Fires Overlook at *Oh yawah*, a very sacred place in Mendota Heights, Minnesota that translates to "A Hill Much Visited" in the Dakota language. In volume four of this newsletter we will gain Awareness of seven indigenous tribes who were here before us to honor their legacy.

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The Seven Council Fires of the Dakota

Honoring those who were here before us.

This section of the newsletter was added after great deliberation. In the previous three volumes of this newsletter, three different stone circles have featured on the front cover: The Druid's Circle at Carleton College, the Meditation Garden at Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley, and a stone circle in dedication to Oak Savanna Park in Elk River – all in Minnesota where the newsletter editor lives. My greatest concern was cultural appropriation of a modern Native American stone circle for use as a cover image on a *druidic* publication.

I am in fact, part Native American. It shows rather prominently in my multiethnic appearance, but my indigenous ancestry does not include any local tribes, and I'm positively certain of that. A key factor is that my family is disconnected from their ancestral traditions, which are still living traditions today. Therefore I can't just start exploring or practicing them unless I was first invited to do so from within those communities. My ancestors had their indigenous identity stripped away when they assimilated into American culture and religion generations ago. Their cultural erasure was likely the only way to survive, but I digress.

The stone circle on the newsletter cover page is located in Mendota Heights at a sacred place called *Oheyawahi*, meaning "A Hill Much Visited" in the Dakota language. It overlooks the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, which they call *Bdote*. In their oral traditions, that is at the tip of *Wita Tanka*, or "Big Island" (which is marked as Pike Island on our maps) where the ancestors of the Dakota descended from the sky. Bdote and Mendota both linguistically refer to the confluence of the rivers, with Mendota either as a dialectical difference or a spelling variation that stuck after it was first transcribed into writing.

Over four months of meditating on *not* choosing that site as a cover feature, I sought out the input of local indigenous voices. I also found various resources provided from their perspective. I learned more about my own state's history, including re-learning about the Dakota War of 1862, which I never would have learned about *at all* except after taking an elective course on Minnesota history back when I was in college. In the end, I decided there *is* a culturally sensitive way to include this stone circle as a feature of volume four of this newsletter.

The Dakota people *want* more people to learn about this place, about their history, about their voices. From our perspective as druids, we understand the importance of sacred landscapes. We have our own ways of expressing reverence for the land, and particularly places of power. As a druid however, I am **not** going to perform druid rituals at their stone circle. That *would* be culturally appropriative. It is far better to show you this sacred space so that it can be inwardly appreciated, so that we can all learn something from it, even if we are thousands of miles apart, and so that we can therefore honor the

legacy of those who have called this land their ancestral home, long before us. The Seven Council Fires stone circle is actually a ring of limestone benches. All are invited to sit there when they are not in use. All are invited to Oheyawahi for reflection and learning.

One other note of importance is some terminology worth learning. This sentence is the only place you will see me use the word *Sioux* to refer to these tribal nations. Most people aren't aware that it is a disparaging term, and not even a word in the Dakota language. It is an Ojibwe word meaning *Snakes*. Dakota, and the dialectical variations Lakota and Nakota mean *Friends* or *Allies*. This section of the newsletter may sometimes collectively use Dakota since it is the most common dialectical variation, though there is another term that some of today's tribal nations are pushing for people to learn and use: *Oceti Sakowin Oyate*, or *Seven Council Fires People*. (Source: lakotatimes.com)

This article's featured Oceti Sakowin Nation: Titonwan

The Titonwan nation consists of a handful of tribes who speak the Lakota dialect. Around 1680 when exploring New France, Father Louis Hennepin indicated that the Titonwan Oyate were present in (what would eventually become) west central Minnesota. Their territory also encompassed lands to the west in the High Plains.



The origin story of the Titonwan people says their ancestors lived in the underworld, and at that time the people called themselves the *Pte*. A wolf guided them through a labyrinthine network of caves where they eventually emerged into our world. According to tradition, that was the cave that is now Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota. Their different tribes eventually organized into a nation who called themselves the *Dwellers on the Prairie*, or Titonwan.

Nineteen generations ago, one of their tribes, the Itazipco Oyate, or *People Who Hunt Without Bows*, were once met by a legendary figure, *White Buffalo Calf Woman* who gave them a special pipe. She told them it was crafted by their ancestors, the *Pte* people. It is a sacred artifact that still exists today, and could be between 400-2000 years old. The pipe has miraculously been in safe keeping by medicine men through all the strife suffered by the Lakota peoples over the ages. It is currently kept in the care of Arvol Looking Horse. Arvol is an outspoken spiritual leader for the Lakota peoples, an advocate for environmentalism, and has taken strides to protect Lakota customs from cultural appropriation by outsiders. The White Buffalo Calf Pipe is used in seven different ceremonies for the Titonwan nation.

News of the Groves

News from Carleton College Grove (Minnesota)

The druids at Carleton are making a buzz! The 60th anniversary gathering had provided some momentum for Awareness to spread. Carleton College recently had their Student Activities Fair at which there was an info table for the druids. Pamphlets were distributed among the curious. One prospective druid said she wasn't sure what she was getting into, but was definitely interested in learning more. That was the case for many of us though, wasn't it?

News from Oakdale Grove (Minnesota)

On August 9, 2023, one of Oakdale Grove's members, Mera Colling passed away after battling glioblastoma for some time. I had done hospital chaplaincy for people for a few years leading up to the pandemic, but just about a week before her passing I was notified that she was in hospice. That was the first time I was even aware that something was wrong, so it came as a shock to me. It was also my first time being called upon for *hospice* chaplaincy, and would be a strong test of my dedication to my oath of service as a priest of Dalon Ap Landu.



Our visit was actually very gracious. Mera was considerably collected, almost as if it was any other day. When asked about her ordeal, she said "it's all been very interesting," which is quite spot-on for her curiosity of all things throughout life. That attitude is also very druidic. She continued to bring those life experiences into her Awareness all the way to the end. I think she would have liked for all of us to carry on, chasing our own adventures in life, making every moment count, with an optimistic curiosity even in our darkest moments.



I'm honored to have known her. Yes, I will forever wish I could have known her for longer, but that's exactly why I need to keep going: to help others in any way I can to make their life experiences more fulfilling as well. Oakdale Grove arranged to have a grove of trees planted in her memory.

September has been a more upbeat month for the Grove. At the Twin Cities Pagan Pride Fall Festival, the druid booth shared representation for Northern Roots Grove – a local independent druid group, and Oakdale Grove, and ADF. The biggest question I received over the day was something along the lines of "What makes a druid *Reformed*?" It made for quite the conversation, and seemed to invoke a lot of wry sarcastic humor lamenting the RDNA's ban on human or blood sacrifice. Another common question was "What is the difference between the different druid orders?" That's always a fun question

for me to field as well, when I contrast the primary areas of focus between orders like the RDNA, AODA, ADF, and OBOD. I also vouched for solo druids, emphasizing the diversity of druidic thought.

I consecrated one new druid to the First Order at the Fall Festival. I had my emergency druid kit with me, and we held a simple RDNA service in the festival's ritual circle with about 20 spectators in attendance. Congratulations to Austin, who gave permission to use his name. As it turns out, he's with Carleton Grove now, which is in the process of building back up again after the graduation of the previous Arch-Druid.



The following weekend after the Twin Cities Pagan Pride Fall Festival, Oakdale Grove's September "casual meetup" was litter removal volunteerism at the Carleton College Arboretum through Clean River Partners. The students at Carleton are actually amazing at keeping their beautiful campus clean. It's the people who fish along the Cannon River and who chuck stuff out their car windows along the roads that make a mess of things. It's always gratifying to help make the Earth-Mother a better place to live, and not *just* having rituals that talk about it. The morning was cool, and the trees were already turning their fall colors. We had no ticks or burs, but we were very wet from wading through the dew-laden weeds.

Lastly, Oakdale Grove just celebrated our 10 year anniversary as a formal RDNA Grove! We met together at Oakdale Nature Preserve, our fellowship's founding namesake from when I established a solo protogrove. If you count the protogrove years then technically we're 12, but it was 10 years ago that we held the right ranks and had the requisite elections for the three offices of Arch-Druid, Preceptor, and Server to become a legitimate RDNA Grove.



Our framed Grove Constitution stood on display upon the altar, which is our little custom each Autumnal Equinox. We cast our paper ballots in a reused oats canister. The three main officers of the Grove retained their incumbency, and we have a new elected Bard, an informal office that individual Groves have the autonomy to opt into. We had our ritual, and our Bard also entered the Second Order (to much rejoicing). After the ceremony, we celebrated with cake, conversing for another hour and a half before going each our separate ways until we convene again.

Bardic Column

Summer of Chilly Dew by Edward of Northfield

This gentle season landed like a dragonfly and lingered like a heron. It was so mild and unobtrusive it nearly failed to earn the appellation "summer" from me at all. A majority of days never even reached 80°F and nights routinely fell into cozy 60s, allowing my easy and comfortable movement at all hours. Clear skies stagnated with the studied practice of wading birds, seldom deviating to remind us of their presence. Heat was rare and fleeting as the heron's preening, and it brought on the sparse rains that kept any green in the world. The only moisture that glistened on my toes came from dew, rediscovered water as chill and clean as we could wish.

This coldest summer of my experience nested inside my house, exposing me to every change of smell. Generations of flowers overstayed their itinerary, coloring every meadow like a dawn that never paled. Grass both fresh and mown wafted through June, prairie luxuriously laggard in its verdancy. Timid trees delayed unfurling their leaves until they claimed their own scene on the stage. The bitter hint of vegetation and vegetables ripened together. Dust from dry fields, driving tractors, and dog days choked throats ready for rain. And sojourning smoke from distant provinces tainted sunsets. Oh, what sunsets! Each evening, a couple coy clouds assembled themselves in glad raiment to dance disappearing into cool nights of liting luminescence.

Clouds were few and sluggish, hovering in a dusty fresco facade. Sparse storms raged afar in roving incandescent pillars, and their vicious voices screamed so forcefully that they joined woodpecker efforts to level former lords of the Grove. Sudden deluges duly disappeared, leaving ponds and rivers to expose their bottoms to the tidying attentions of creatures, for life bloomed more in animals than plants. Low water corralled clusters of ducks and geese all season long, and stalking these fish-traps came more herons than any season since the Summer of Hovering Herons. Even pelican and loon appeared privately on local lakes, dwelling and drifting through peaceful afternoons. And with deer thick as weeds in the woods, sunlight fell in steady streams upon forest floor bared of its brush.

Nature, cruel and loving mother, kept her balance all the same. In time of thirst, stunted crops stood struggling to show fruit. Air cold, ground without puddles, I forgot of the existence of biting bugs, whose absence joins my pathetic garden to predict a long, hungry winter begun under birds' early flight. My vicinity is quieter by night, for a trio of the family of foxes have fallen, all on the selfsame road. This season of life brings its frame of death, the endless cycle preserved by huge, open skies as steady as stars. If joy and light are found this summer, they shimmer in the precious beauty of each drop of dew. They sing with the endlessly laughing, lusty voice of grasslands. They float gentle and free as the thin, fleeting cloud, unreally ethereal – a floating world that is more real and nourishing than we could create.

**This summer, my beloved Mera returned to the Earth Mother. Though her restless feet shall not touch the prairie soil and marveling eyes no more catch the stars, her sense of wonder and her compassion for all creatures shall survive with us. As she gave back her body to the earth and breath to the wind, to the heavens return the fire of her joy and light of her love. Let them surround us as radiant sun by day and cherished scintillae of night.*

Lugh's Seeds by Sarah Taylor

*The anticipation of a bountiful harvest greets me
After months of planned discipline, my crop is eager and ripe.
Each step on the soil reminds me of what's within my control.*

*Patterns of drought and disaster teach me resilience and fate;
Two things that twine together through the rhythmic seasons of life.
For now, I'll sit back and humbly bask in nature's abundance.*

Joyous Times We Are Living In – The Weather by I Talk To The Trees

*Weather,
Marks the time,
Season of Change,
I scream,
I cry,
I laugh,
I love,
I'm nervous.*

*Weather,
Oh you have so many emotions,
We miss them,
And now oh dear Mother Earth,
You are grieving,*

*I'm sad.
What can I do?
What is **your** one thing to help Mother Earth?*

Campfire Colloquy

Overview

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

Book Review from John the Verbose of Practicing Peace by Pema Chödrön

If you need your books to be a quick read, and you want to enhance your compassion for others, this book is for you. It's as wide as a pad of sticky notes and only one-third taller. Easily it fits the definition of a pocket book. It is just shy of 100 pages, but the font size is like any other paperback. You might want to take some notes as you read because Pema makes frequent references to Buddhist terminology, which she defines once upon introduction, but then continues to use throughout the book. I had to frequently flip back a few pages when I thought *what did this mean again?*

I quickly learned that practicing peace is not as easy as it sounds. When we get upset at something or someone, it is easy to feel a sense of righteous indignation. Regardless of whether our anger is rooted in an ideological, religious, political, or other belief, at that moment we are experiencing the textbook definition of a *fundamentalist mindset*. We tend to close our minds and then our hearts, pushing the chance for compassion and empathy out of the way.

The Second Tenet of Reformed Druidism shows up in a section... indirectly of course. When we suffer, it becomes easier for us to empathize with others who suffer. It also gives us the opportunity to grow in humility. Suffering can also motivate us to seek out resolutions or understanding. This thought process edges toward the druidic when we replace the word understanding with Awareness. Then in Reformed Druidism we consider *...even as we struggle through life do we come face to face with [Nature]*, which is the last phrase of the Second Tenet. There it ties in a quest for peace in with our own spiritual understandings.

Pema describes a phenomenon of the Awakened Heart, or "a longing to wake up from ignorance and delusion in order to help others" (p. 62). This notion of awakening made my mind circle back to *Awareness* again. Awareness is another way to overcome ignorance. It also immediately evoked the concept of "wokeness," reminding me that Reformed Druidism is precisely a form of wokeness: through learning of other philosophical and religious customs together, we expand our Awareness, our *Awakening* of the heart, and therefore *empathy* of the various struggles we and others face in our lives. With this book as a quick guide, we can coach ourselves to achieve greater empathy and compassion, which will lead to peace. And as Reformed Druids, isn't *peace* also one of our persistent goals? For this one I wanted to give it four and a half stars, but the half star unicode symbol doesn't render correctly. If you're good at memorizing Sanskrit words on the first read, then it's five stars.

★★★★☆ / ★★★★★

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The Seeker's Corkboard

Overview

This is the place where you can state that you are seeking other druids to form a protogrove. Long has it been said, something to the tune of *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 sooner! These bulletins will be cumulative on each issue of C.O.R.D. until you send a stop request. They will be arranged alphabetically by country, then by state/province/region, then by town name.

To submit a Seeker's Corkboard request, email the editor and **provide your preferred name, location, and an email address** that you check at least weekly. Just remember that any contact information you submit to this section does become public. Your email address in the newsletter will be split apart and we will use different characters (& and /) instead of @ and '.' to prevent or mitigate roving address harvester bots from scanning them for spam.

Standard Safety Disclaimer

I 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

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. 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), but hey, reach out to us if you wanna put in a bulletin here. Contact the newsletter editor!

Vivid Visions Gallery

Contributions from Sunset ProtoGrove



Homemade *Sugo Pomodoro*



Homemade *Sugo Pomodoro*

Contributions from John the Verbose



New spears for *Order of the Morrigan* rites



Ripening bittersweet nightshade berries

Contributions from John the Verbose (continued)



A bumblebee on verbena



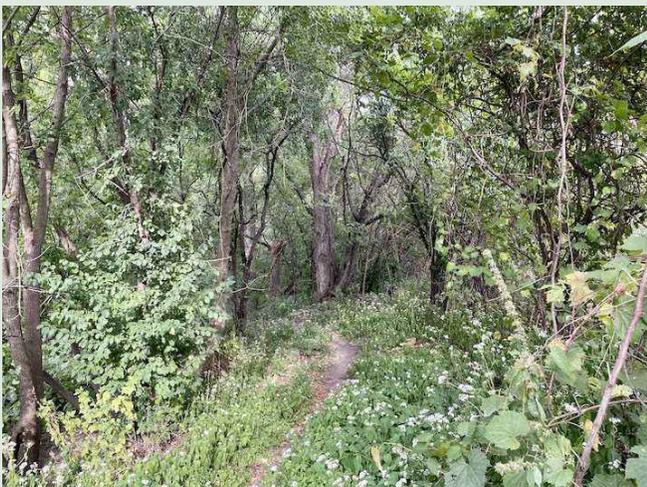
Restored prairie at Oheyawahi



Minnesota River at Shakopee, Minnesota



Burial mound in Shakopee, Minnesota

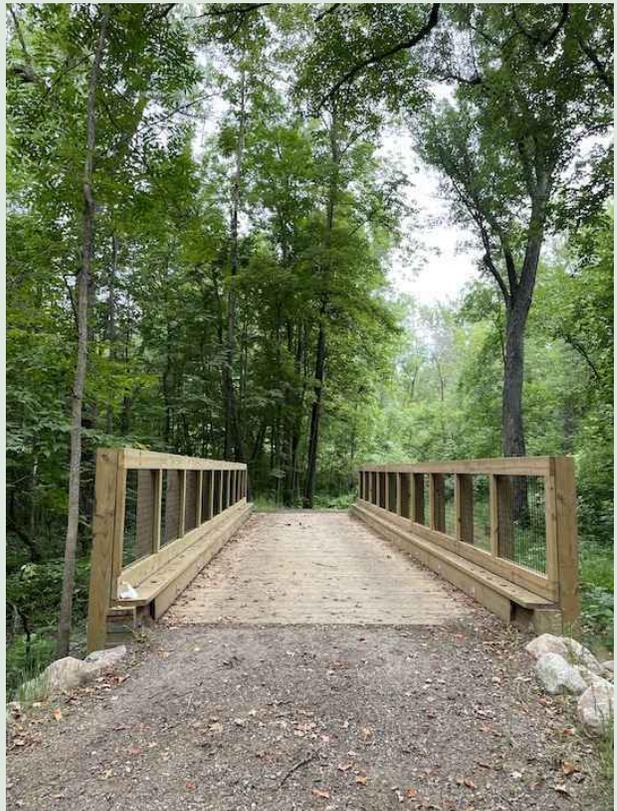


Enchanted path in the woods



Part of red oak acorn forage amid big mast year

From John the Verbose (continued) "The Trail Goes On," a story in four seasons



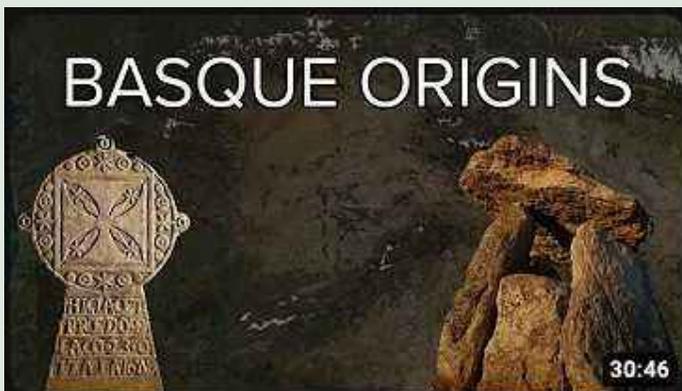
Videos of Interest

Göbekli Tepe – The First Temple On Earth?



A longer documentary by History Time with host Pete Kelly, taking a look at the broader historical context of life in the late Mesolithic and early Neolithic periods.

Basque Origins | DNA, Language, and History



The Basques have an enigmatic background, and this documentary takes a look at how their history ties in with the landscapes and cultures around them.

The Right Rites For Rampant Ritualists

Overview

This section is for sharing rituals, devotionals, meditations, or other liturgical contributions.

Not Really a Ritual, but Musings on the RDNA Second Order Rite of Passage

Is the Second Order of Reformed Druidism actually a level of the priesthood? Customs 6:7 plainly states that the Third Order, the Order of Dalon Ap Landu, is the order of the priesthood. However, the rite of passage known as the Consecration to the Second Order implies otherwise, and I never noticed it until this weekend. Two of my Grove members had been studying for the Second Order for a while now. One felt prepared and entered the Second Order during our Autumnal Equinox ritual, and the other is continuing their studies for the time being.

The RDNA never codified a set minimum requirement of time or study regimen for candidates to the Second Order. That is at the discretion of the ordainer. Though the Book of Customs does imply the candidate must be *invited* to the Second Order through its frequent use of the word *chosen*. In fact, it reiterates that the candidate shall be *chosen* across six occurrences throughout the chapter. So I suppose the Book of Customs is written in a way that prevents candidates from *demanding* the Second Order. Usually if we've had charlatans, they tended to demand the *Third* Order, claiming that they're already clergy in a different druid organization and that they therefore somehow deserve clergy status without going through the customary RDNA steps. They got a quick *no* from us.

Some might claim that's gatekeeping. It really isn't though, not when someone refuses to abide by the customs of our druid order. Such a candidate is being disingenuous. There's a guideline that the candidate should be pure in spirit and humble. If the ordainer has such an *in-bad-faith* experience with a candidate, how can the ordainer reasonably conclude that the candidate is either pure or humble? They cannot, and should not proceed.

Let us circle back to my very first question. Is the Second Order a *priesthood*? Customs 3:5 indicates the Second Order "is in succession to the priesthood of the Druids." As much as the US Vice Presidents are *in succession* to the Presidency, they are not *the* president. However, Customs 3:7 quotes the rite of passage: "**Do you, in full consciousness, promise to serve faithfully the Earth-Mother, ministering to her followers, and following your duties as a Druid of the Second Order to the best of your ability?**" That question right there is asking for an oath, a vow, an attestation, that the candidate *is* entering into a *ministry* at that very moment.

This portion of the Book of Customs was written by David Fisher, so this could be going in one of two ways (or the gray area of *both* ways because that seems more Reformed). First, we know that Fisher was in the Order of DeMolay, or "Freemasonry for kids" as I like to put it. A Druid Grove has a

Preceptor. A DeMolay Lodge has *seven* Preceptors with different areas of focus. The Druid Sigil could possibly be inspired by the Masonic symbol *Point Within A Circle*. A DeMolay Lodge also has two Deacons. The Deacons help DeMolay candidates go through their initiations.

Second, and perhaps slightly more relevant, is that Fisher was a devout Episcopalian, and went on to seminary and is still an ordained Episcopal priest to this day. There certainly are Deacons in the Episcopal Church. Not all deacons are ordained ministers. For some, being a deacon is training for the ministry. Some deacons *are* ministers. Deacons and Second Order Druids have near-identical responsibilities in some respects. They have a liturgical role, often concerning, but not limited to, religious readings. They also have a few secular responsibilities to the congregation.

I previously mentioned a Preceptor. That is an elected office in Reformed Druid Groves. Preceptors must be a Second Order Druid or higher. In addition to assisting in liturgical services reciting the *precepts* of the Waters-of-Life, they are also responsible for the secular duties of the Grove. That can include providing guidance to First Order initiates, or training them somewhat allegorically to an experienced hospital nurse that is a *preceptor* to new nurse trainees. RDNA Preceptors are also a spokesperson for outsiders who have questions about general druidry or Reformed Druidry. Technically that spokespersonship is *not* the responsibility of the Arch-Druid, who is only supposed to see to the spiritual needs of the Grove.

In Oakdale Grove, I expect all of my Second Order candidates to be able to take on the role of a Preceptor if need be. Therefore I ask that my Second Order candidates first familiarize themselves with the history, laws, customs, and meditations of Reformed Druidism from the Early Chronicles through the Isaac Affair in the Apocrypha. They should be able to lead a hypothetical hourlong RDNA 101 seminar at a public library. Don't worry, I haven't made anyone do that... yet.

So, is an RDNA Second Order Druid comparable more to a Masonic Deacon or an Episcopal Deacon? It seems to be a blend! Druidry loves those gray areas; almost nothing is black and white (except their preferred brand of Scotch in the 1960s, but I digress). **So is a Second Order Druid therefore a level of the priesthood? Yeah, why not?** That's my opinion, and other Third Order Druids are certainly welcome to disagree with that opinion. If there's anything that is clear about interpretation of the Book of Customs, is that the Second Order is indeed a ministry.

Interestingly, Customs 6:8 outlines the responsibilities of the Third Order: "Unto it shall be given the consecration of the Waters-of-Life. There is no mention in the Book of Customs about who gets to (or who can't) consecrate the Waters-of-Sleep in the winter months. There is no mention of any *rule* regarding who consecrates of the Waters-of-Sleep in the *Chronicles of the Foundation* at all. There's an even more important esoteric place where the Waters-of-Sleep are completely omitted. I can visualize other Third Order Druids checking their references right now, but they'll see it is true.

There was an *interpretation* by the Council of Dalon Ap Landu (not a *vote*) on 27 January, 1965 that the Waters-of-Sleep shall be used in the winter half of the year, except when an exception is needed. The council also interpreted that a priest should wear their white liturgical ribbon when consecrating the Waters-of-Sleep. However, by omission, there's no vote or interpretation that says Second or First Order Druids *can't* consecrate the Waters-of-Sleep. Should Second Order Druids have a white ribbon? Richard Shelton, the eighth Arch-Druid of Carleton Grove, tried to codify rules for who gets to use red or white ribbons and when, back in 1969. He likely wanted to clear up the omissions. He called his changes "The Codex of Form Missive." It was quickly referred to as "The Massive Missive Mistake." The Missive tried to bundle too many things together, and it was shot down by the council before ever getting close to a vote. These days it is simply referred to as "The Codex Affair." David Frangquist (the Chronicler) even responded with the question "Does one need a ribbon to consecrate waters?"

So it would seem that there is no *voted-on* restriction on who consecrates the Waters-of-Sleep specifically, and no *voted on* restriction of who gets a white ribbon. Other Reformed Druids might say some tired line like "what you do in your Grove is your business," citing the *Grove Autonomy* clause as if I don't know that already. But Grove Autonomy doesn't even need to apply in this situation, it is meaningless. I could turn it around on them and say that Grove Autonomy lets them tyrannically *forbid* their non-Third Order Grove members from consecrating the Waters-of-Sleep, because they'd only be forbidding something that was never formally brought to a vote by the council, while simultaneously claiming that the Council already forbids it. But yes, Grove Autonomy does permit a lot of interpretational freedom in the way Groves are allowed to operate, though there are some restrictions where Groves and Third Orders need to abide by certain *voted-on* customs and laws. We'll cover that in the future.

Winter: the Season-of-Sleep, from Samhain to Beltane, is when the Reformed Druids consecrate the Waters-of-Sleep, which is plain spring water (or sometimes anything non-alcoholic that is slightly more exciting than water). In Minnesota our winters can be harsh. Attendance drops notably for our always outdoor ceremonies. Well that's a great time for your Second Order Druids to start practicing the liturgy! Would you really want a brand new Third Order Druid to be ordained without having led any rituals at all? In some cases, yeah why not, it sounds comical. If their attendance is good, they've been immersed in numerous ceremonies by now, so it's merely a matter of a role shift and reading different parts of the script. If you're finicky about the white ribbon thing, then one custom I've done a few times is drape one end of my own ribbon over the Second Order's sleeve while they consecrate the Waters-of-Sleep. So perhaps that's still the Third Order vicariously consecrating the Waters anyway...

But yeah, do what you want. Grove Autonomy & stuff.

Augur's Intuition

Overview

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

Submission by John the Verbose

Methodology: Lorraine Anderson's Gratitude Deck of Appreciation

About this deck

Lorraine asks that you allow this deck to shift your perspective. This isn't an oracle deck, nor a form of divination. Nevertheless, meditate on these cards as a form of guidance. Do they feel intuitively relevant? Are you experiencing any synchronicity regarding what the cards say? Above all, are they helping you and/or others to have a more fulfilling life? Each card has unique imagery on the back. The text from each one will be transcribed here, with the imagery shown on the right.

Cards drawn

- Take a deep breath. Being alive is the greatest blessing of all.
- Future thankfulness. Say a prayer of thanks for things you'd like to have.
- Acknowledge understanding. Say "thank you" instead of saying "I'm sorry."



The "Carletongny" Calendar

Overview

Did you know Reformed Druidism has its own calendar system? There are different ways of calculating RDNA time, but here is the method that this newsletter uses. Carleton Grove called 1963 the *First Year of the Reform* (Y.R.) which for them began at Beltane. They had no year zero. That's why 2023 was Y.R. 61 at Beltane for the 60th anniversary, not year 60. Beltane (May 1) is when **summer** begins, or **Samradh** (SAU-rah) which lasts 92 days. Lughnasadh (August 1) is when **autumn** begins, or **Foghamhar** (FOE-war), lasting 92 days. Samhain (November 1) is when **winter** begins, or **Geimredh** (GEV-rah), lasting 92 days. Oimelc (February 1) is when **spring** begins, or **Earrach** (ARE-rock), lasting 89-90 days. The term "Carletongny" Calendar is merely a play on words from the *Coligny* Calendar, an archaeological discovery of a fragmented Celtic calendar.

C.E. (Beltane)	Y.R.						
1963	1	1993	31	2023	61	2053	91
1964	2	1994	32	2024	62	2054	92
1965	3	1995	33	2025	63	2055	93
1966	4	1996	34	2026	64	2056	94
1967	5	1997	35	2027	65	2057	95
1968	6	1998	36	2028	66	2058	96
1969	7	1999	37	2029	67	2059	97
1970	8	2000	38	2030	68	2060	98
1971	9	2001	39	2031	69	2061	99
1972	10	2002	40	2032	70	2062	100
1973	11	2003	41	2033	71	2063	101
1974	12	2004	42	2034	72	2064	102
1975	13	2005	43	2035	73	2065	103
1976	14	2006	44	2036	74	2066	104
1977	15	2007	45	2037	75	2067	105
1978	16	2008	46	2038	76	2068	106
1979	17	2009	47	2039	77	2069	107
1980	18	2010	48	2040	78	2070	108
1981	19	2011	49	2041	79	2071	109
1982	20	2012	50	2042	80	2072	110
1983	21	2013	51	2043	81	2073	111
1984	22	2014	52	2044	82	2074	112
1985	23	2015	53	2045	83	2075	113
1986	24	2016	54	2046	84	2076	114
1987	25	2017	55	2047	85	2077	115
1988	26	2018	56	2048	86	2078	116
1989	27	2019	57	2049	87	2079	117
1990	28	2020	58	2050	88	2080	118
1991	29	2021	59	2051	89	2081	119
1992	30	2022	60	2052	90	2082	120

Foghamhar Y.R. 61 Date Conversion Chart

Foghamhar	Autumn	Foghamhar	Autumn
1	Tue, Aug 1, 2023	47	Sat, Sep 16, 2023
2	Wed, Aug 2, 2023	48	Sun, Sep 17, 2023
3	Thu, Aug 3, 2023	49	Mon, Sep 18, 2023
4	Fri, Aug 4, 2023	50	Tue, Sep 19, 2023
5	Sat, Aug 5, 2023	51	Wed, Sep 20, 2023
6	Sun, Aug 6, 2023	52	Thu, Sep 21, 2023
7	Mon, Aug 7, 2023	53	Fri, Sep 22, 2023
8	Tue, Aug 8, 2023	54	Sat, Sep 23, 2023
9	Wed, Aug 9, 2023	55	Sun, Sep 24, 2023
10	Thu, Aug 10, 2023	56	Mon, Sep 25, 2023
11	Fri, Aug 11, 2023	57	Tue, Sep 26, 2023
12	Sat, Aug 12, 2023	58	Wed, Sep 27, 2023
13	Sun, Aug 13, 2023	59	Thu, Sep 28, 2023
14	Mon, Aug 14, 2023	60	Fri, Sep 29, 2023
15	Tue, Aug 15, 2023	61	Sat, Sep 30, 2023
16	Wed, Aug 16, 2023	62	Sun, Oct 1, 2023
17	Thu, Aug 17, 2023	63	Mon, Oct 2, 2023
18	Fri, Aug 18, 2023	64	Tue, Oct 3, 2023
19	Sat, Aug 19, 2023	65	Wed, Oct 4, 2023
20	Sun, Aug 20, 2023	66	Thu, Oct 5, 2023
21	Mon, Aug 21, 2023	67	Fri, Oct 6, 2023
22	Tue, Aug 22, 2023	68	Sat, Oct 7, 2023
23	Wed, Aug 23, 2023	69	Sun, Oct 8, 2023
24	Thu, Aug 24, 2023	70	Mon, Oct 9, 2023
25	Fri, Aug 25, 2023	71	Tue, Oct 10, 2023
26	Sat, Aug 26, 2023	72	Wed, Oct 11, 2023
27	Sun, Aug 27, 2023	73	Thu, Oct 12, 2023
28	Mon, Aug 28, 2023	74	Fri, Oct 13, 2023
29	Tue, Aug 29, 2023	75	Sat, Oct 14, 2023
30	Wed, Aug 30, 2023	76	Sun, Oct 15, 2023
31	Thu, Aug 31, 2023	77	Mon, Oct 16, 2023
32	Fri, Sep 1, 2023	78	Tue, Oct 17, 2023
33	Sat, Sep 2, 2023	79	Wed, Oct 18, 2023
34	Sun, Sep 3, 2023	80	Thu, Oct 19, 2023
35	Mon, Sep 4, 2023	81	Fri, Oct 20, 2023
36	Tue, Sep 5, 2023	82	Sat, Oct 21, 2023
37	Wed, Sep 6, 2023	83	Sun, Oct 22, 2023
38	Thu, Sep 7, 2023	84	Mon, Oct 23, 2023
39	Fri, Sep 8, 2023	85	Tue, Oct 24, 2023
40	Sat, Sep 9, 2023	86	Wed, Oct 25, 2023
41	Sun, Sep 10, 2023	87	Thu, Oct 26, 2023
42	Mon, Sep 11, 2023	88	Fri, Oct 27, 2023
43	Tue, Sep 12, 2023	89	Sat, Oct 28, 2023
44	Wed, Sep 13, 2023	90	Sun, Oct 29, 2023
45	Thu, Sep 14, 2023	91	Mon, Oct 30, 2023
46	Fri, Sep 15, 2023	92	Tue, Oct 31, 2023

Blogs & Social Media Links

Blogs Curated By Druids (accumulative each issue)

- Courtney's blog [Corey Adventures](#)
- Ellen Evert Hopman's blog [A Druid's Blog](#)
- John the Verbose's [Tumblr](#)
- TheMageiboLine's [Tumblr](#)

Social Media

- C.O.R.D. Biweekly's [Facebook page](#)
- "Official" Reformed Druids of North America (RDNA) [Facebook group](#)
- [*Editor's note: if you request to join there are four vetting questions. Please answer all four; they're really easy.*]
- New Reformed Druids of North America (NRDNA) [Facebook group](#)
- Ron Stonemage's [Instagram](#)
- Oakdale Grove's [Twitter](#)
- Oakdale Grove's [Facebook page](#)
- Oakdale Grove's RDNA Druid Training Program Development [Facebook page](#)
- Tribe of the Oak Celtic Reconstructionist (non-RDNA) Druid Grove [website](#)
- White Rabbit Grove's [Facebook page](#)
- Oakdale Grove's [Instagram](#)

Artisan Promo Page

Overview

Each article of *C.O.R.D.* will contain up to two pages of featured artists, craftspersons, or small online storefronts that may be of interest to the druid community in some way. There is no cost involved; anyone can request that their content be promoted here on a first-come-first-served basis.

Hazel Oak and Yew Handcrafted Spiritual Goods

Hello and welcome to Hazel Oak and Yew, my space to share my love of witchcraft and my pagan practice with you all. Here I share my handcrafted goods for practicing along with sets of things for you to learn to practice on your own, in your own way. This Etsy shop offers altar supplies, handmade décor, divination tools, and grimoire materials. Custom orders are available!



Ron Stonemage's wire art and wrapped stones

I think we originally discovered each other's Tumblr blogs about a year and a half ago. Not only is the wearable artwork intricate and beautiful, but Ron often has a lot of thought provoking questions that really invoke critical thinking in my responses that keeps me on my toes!



Reannag Teine Pottery

Historically Inspired Pottery: Islamic, Greek, or Italian Renaissance... skulls, squashed fairies, or Viking kitties, we are devoted to creating unique pieces of historically inspired ceramic art--a touch of the unique you can use all the time. Hand-thrown and hand-painted yet safe for food, dishwasher, microwave, and oven. Reannag Teine, Gaelic for "star fire," is a mother-daughter team with six degrees and a myriad of art awards between them... and a healthy amount of humor to bring it all together. Find us on Facebook, YouTube, Twitch, Instagram—and of course at www.ReannagTeine.com!



Book Reviews for Works by Author Ellen Evert Hopman

Once Around the Sun at [The Hearth & Hedge](#) and at [Pagan Pages](#)

Priestess of the Forest at [Portland Jones](#)

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, and unfortunately we don't have a mentorship or official training program (yet), however there is something major in the works on an unofficial capacity. For now, 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 Listings](#) on Oakdale Grove's website. It's been updated *en masse* in January 2019 & 2020, but it can be updated any time on an ad-hoc basis. 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 2021, the 59th Year of the Reform (Y.R.) began.

- [RDNA Gregorian/Year of the Reform Conversion spreadsheet](#) can be a helpful tool.
- [RDNA calendar \(FREE PDF\)](#) current through April 30, 2024 can help you learn what day of the four seasons it is, because you'll see the RDNA calendar system is all over this publication.

Oakdale Grove's RDNA Druid Training Program

This is a work in progress. So far the draft is 114 pages long, and I'm only half way into adding the *basic* content I want to put in it. I am not an educator, so I'm concerned about its flow and efficacy. If anyone wants to help develop it with me, I would greatly appreciate the assistance.

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

Books to Avoid

- [The 21 Lessons of Merlyn: A Study in Druid Magic and Lore](#) by Douglas Monroe (fraudulent sources, numerous inaccuracies passed off as historical facts, and other junk wrapped in a shiny literary bowtie)

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 the Council had lost its ability to gain a voting quorum and it had no chairperson 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 work on developing an RDNA style druid training program, and as of now that is still a work in progress.

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.



Peace, peace, peace! ☸

Contribute Content to the Next Issue!

Submission Process

Issues will be released within a day or two 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.

Gmail Users Can Use Our Full-Feature Google Form to Contribute!

We have a [convenient form](#) that allows Gmail users to enter text-based contribs as well as attach files or photos! A Google account is only required for sending attachments through the form.

Non-Gmail Users Have Two Ways to Contribute

There is a [lite version of the same form](#) for those who don't have a Gmail account, which allows anyone to submit text-based contributions only.

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
- Events you're willing to announce publicly
- Do you have a druid-oriented Etsy shop or similar online store? One page of the newsletter will be reserved for artisan promo space
- Propose a topic; you can help make this newsletter be a success!

Thank You!

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



A standing stone in Casket Quarry, Duluth, Minnesota