



Samhain Issue, Y.R. XLVIII

November 14, 2011 c.e.

Volume 27, Issue 7

Editor's Note

- It appears that the Facebook pages are accelerating (Reformed Druids of North America and Reformed Druids Gorsedd) and in a sense, this newsletter is becoming a scrapbook of what goes on there, the RDNAtalk website and whatever I pick up from newsfeeds and submissions. Things change, we change too! This Druid Inquirer still provides a form of historical record and a moment to pause and reflect over the last six weeks, and perhaps to look ahead a season or two.



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Sacred Groves

Halloween Gingerbread House and lots of decorations. This has been my prime venue for Druidism rather than ritual for this year, growing and teaching the ways organically as the kids become interested. I also put out two more episodes of Desperate Druids. I keep busy.

NEWS OF THE GROVES

Monument Grove: News from DC

Went to the Boo at the Zoo with my kids, and trick or treating which led me to appreciate how raw and powerful the season's festival is for children on their first encounter. I had been priming the pump with numerous books of scary stories, songs, discussions of mortality and magical adventures. I produced an Autumn Song Book (See below), made a

Raven's Grove: News from Quebec



[La Clairière du Corbeau - The Raven's Grove](http://rdnapontiacqc.blogspot.com)

rdnapontiacqc.blogspot.com

Parmi les Celtes et de nombreuses cultures à travers le monde, le corbeau symbolise l'esprit, la liberté et la transformation. Ayant le pouvoir de monter dans les cieux et de revenir en portant des messages des dieux. Il est également le médiateur entre les deux mondes. Son étendard est la prot...

If you want to know more about us... join us on facebook! :-)



[Clairière du Corbeau - Raven's Grove](#)

The Grove of the local woodland druids The Grove is a small assembly of local Druids, Eclectics, Celtic Christians and Neo-pagans. The aim of the grove is to create a community of people that wants ...

Three Stones Protogrove: News from Nevada

In the service of the Mother!

We are working a lot in Nature, clearing debris out and away from a local Protogrove gathering spot, before the coming time of waters of sleep arrive. As we reflect into Nature and the goodness thereof, we begin the journey within, by meditating amongst the juniper and scrub oaks, as the weather is still pleasant enough to do so.

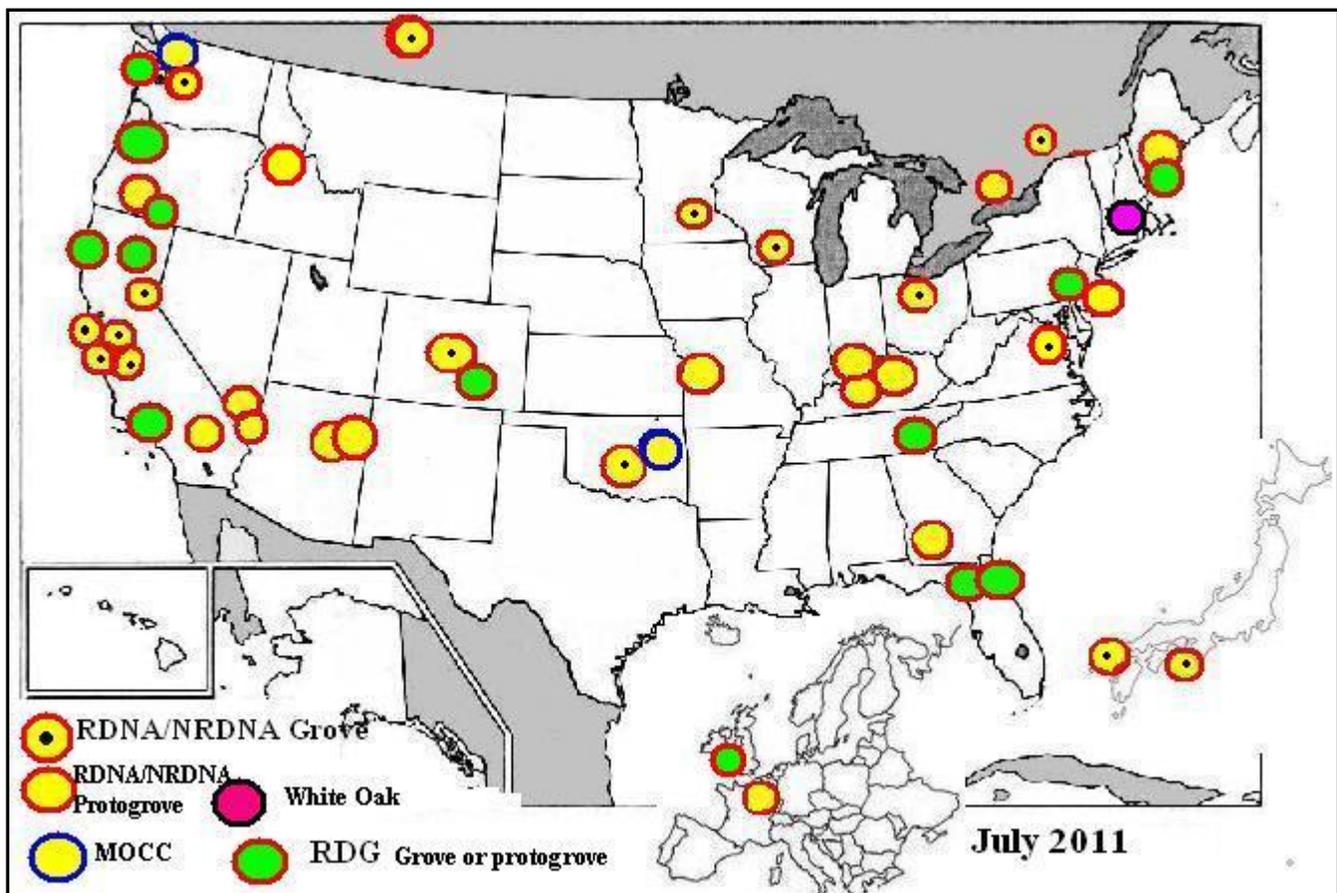
We are singing amongst the tree's and using loose stones to make a labyrinth about this place we hold sacred, and going within we are in thought of the Reform of before and now today, and see where it fits into daily life.

Merriest of seasonal times!

Brid the acting ArchDruid

SEEKING DRUIDS:

Bruceleonard1@yahoo.com in Boston is looking for Druids



Where the Druids Are: Perhaps.

<http://rdna.info/wheretrove.html>



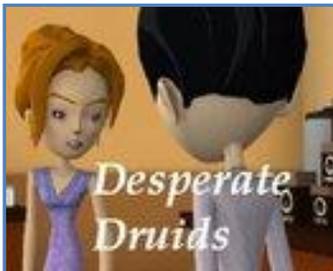
"It's just a calendar, who cares what it looks like?"

Reformed Druid Broadcasted Programming



NORTHERN DRUID PODCAST #6 Autumn Equinox
<http://www.northerndruid.net/northern-druid-podcast-6/>
One Hour by Scott Schumacher in Minnesota

Acheiving Balance on the Fall Equinox
Songs: *Are You Kind* and *Just Over Those Mountains*
Artist: Leigh Ann Phillips – www.leighannphillips.com
Wasafarm recording in the yurt
Speaking from the heart about life challenges, violence, desparation, and the seeking of balance.
Song: *Fall*
Artist: Katy Tessman – www.rhythmelodic.com/katytessman.html
Announcement about upcoming classes and meditations.
Check back soon!!
Ending Meditation on Balance with the elements of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water.



DESPERATE DRUIDS

www.youtube.com/user/reformedDruids

If you haven't seen the animated series, go back and take a new look.
The first 9 of a projected 60 episodes are done, about 120 minutes total.
Another 3 are coming out before Winter Solstice.

- Provide a glimpse of how groves operate and deal with festivals, recruiting, training and orientation.
- Put a human face on the many variants of Reformed Druids.
- Follow a new Reformed Druid through a cycle of the year, with developments linked to the season.
- Share the history, customs and stories of Reformed Druidism.
- Give a sense of the humor, timing, and interaction that makes Reformed Druidism special.
- Have an entertaining, intertwined series of sub-plots and story arcs.

Desperate Druids: Part 6 - Continuity
ReformedD... - 118 views
14:54

Desperate Druids: Part 7 - Simplicity
ReformedD... - 140 views
15:00

Desperate Druids: Part 8 - Identity
ReformedD... - 103 views
16:14

After 2 months, finally all new episodes are available.

Episode 7: Simplicity - Peter is off to the Spooky Woods to meet the outdoorsy Dan, and also bumps into the mysterious Zoe. Andrea and Jody review the current state of the Jackpine Grove and plans for incoming students. After some hesitation, Andrea finally broaches the question that weighs heavily upon her mind.

Episode 8: Identity - Amongst the threatened great trees of the arboretum, Dan describes to Peter his Druidic identity, one that is far simpler than all the other branches of Reformed Druidism. The ever strange Zoe is shocked to discover Peter's arrival at the Jackpine Grove. Jody gives advice on whether Andrea's daughter Anika should or should not come out of the closet during highschool; and how that decision bears similarity to how Wiccans, Pagans and Druids consider telling their family and friends about their religious views.



Awesome Autumn Song Collection

By Mike the Fool

I made a nice Druid singing book, especially for kids, for the Sept – Oct – Nov months of Autumn. If you'd like a copy, contact me at mikerdna@hotmail.com or find me on facebook at Mike.thefool .

A Druid-friendly Dec-Jan-Feb version is in the works (wanna help?)

HARVEST – AUTUMN- TURKEY

All I Really Need
Cook With Honey
Hearth and Fire
Barnyard Dance
Old McDonald
Over the River Through the Woods
Garden Song
Anti-Garden Song
She'll be Coming Round the Mt.
45 Years
John Barley Corn
Oats Peas Beans and Barley
Harvest Moon
California Dreaming
Last Time I had Autumn
Pumpkin Poems
Field Behind the Plow
The Dutchman
What a Wonderful World
Turkey Trouble
Thanksgiving
Earth is Good to Me
If Turkeys Thought
Thanks
Turkey's Song
Thanksgiving
Turkey Limerick
Pumpkin Poem
Thanksgiving Song

PIRATES – Sept 19

A Pirate Says ARR!!
Blackbeard, Redbeard & Bluebeard
15 Men on a Deadman's Chest
Monkey Island Pirate Song
Popeye the Sailor Man
Fiddler's Green

TIME & CHANGES & AGING

Grandfather's Clock
Circle Game
WYnken, Blynken and Nod
Matthew Mark Luke & John
River
Turn, Turn, Turn
Over the Rainbow

Brandy Tree
Puff the Magic Dragon
Holderkin Sheep Song
Broom of the Cowdenknowes
Call the Ewes
Good Night Irene
Hobo's Lullaby
Catch the Wind
Blowing in the Wind
My Favorite Things
Abide with Me
The Country Life
It's All Right to Cry
Where Have All the Flowers
Julian of Norwich
Let it Be
When I'm 64
Blackbird
I Shall Be Released
Tomorrow is a Long Time
Dona Dona

SAMHAIN & DEATH

Outlandish Knight – Child 4
Cruel Sister
John Henry
Paradise
The Elven Harper
Streets of London
Wayfaring Stranger
Barbara Allen
Black is the Color
Danny Boy
The Ash Grove
No Man's Land –Willie McBride
House of the Rising Sun
I Will Stand Fast
Burden of the Crown
Kilkelly Ireland
Lord Franklin
Nova Scotia Farewell
Geordie
Island Earth No More
Massacre of Glencoe
The Standing Stones of Orkney
Fine Flowers in the Valley
Well Below the Valley
Trees They Grow High
The Two Brothers

Ferry Man's Daughter
Banks of the Ohio
The Farewell Song
The Fox
Streets of Loreda
Eagles
Swing Low
Knock, Knock, Knocking
Adams Family

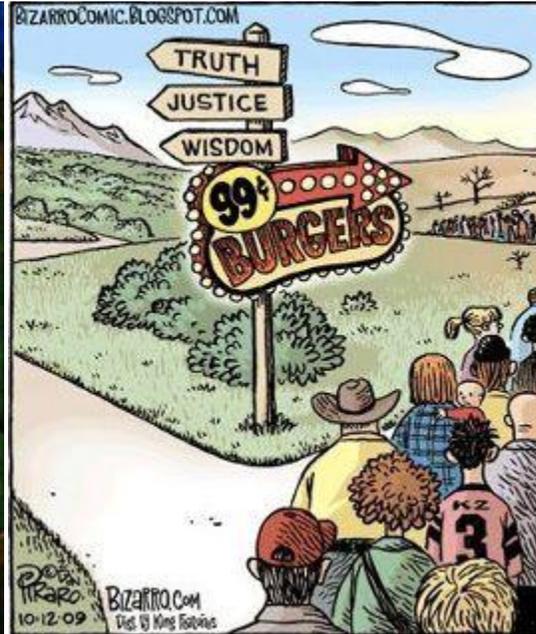
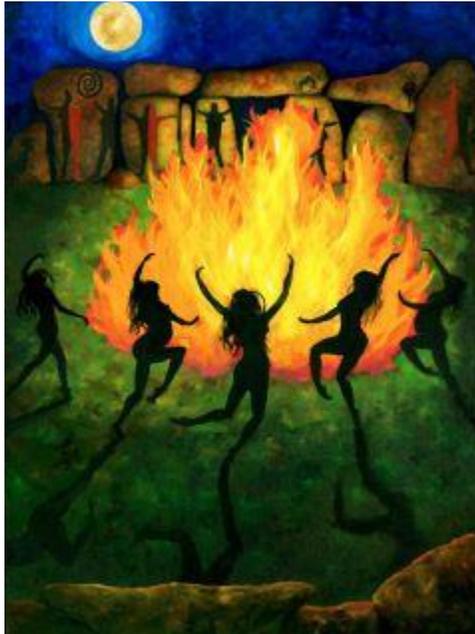
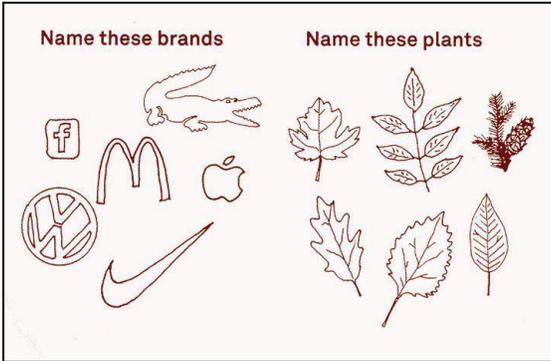
SILLY SCARY SONGS

Bunny Foo Foo
Hey Ho Nobody Home
I Know an Old Lady
Music Alone Shall Live
Cat Came Back
Waltzing Matilda
Ship Titanic
I Am An Acorn
I Circle Around
I'm a Nut
Found a Peanut
A Peanut Sat on a Railroad
The Crocodile
The Bear
Monster Lullaby
Big Rock Candy Mountain
Always Look Bright Side of Life
Sick Note
Irish Ballad
Night Paddy Murphy Died
Black Widows in the Privy
Do Virgins Taste Better
Reward of Virtue – Sir Gilbert
Musings on the Mesozoic
Dem Bones
Have You Seen the Ghost of John
Nobody Likes Me – Eat Worms
Worms Crawl In
I'm Going to Eat Worms
This is Halloween
Purple People Eater
13 Nights of Halloween
George in the Pumpkin Pathc
Good Night George
Monster Mash



DRUID PICTURES IN THE MEDIA

Things I've seen, that you might like. -Mike



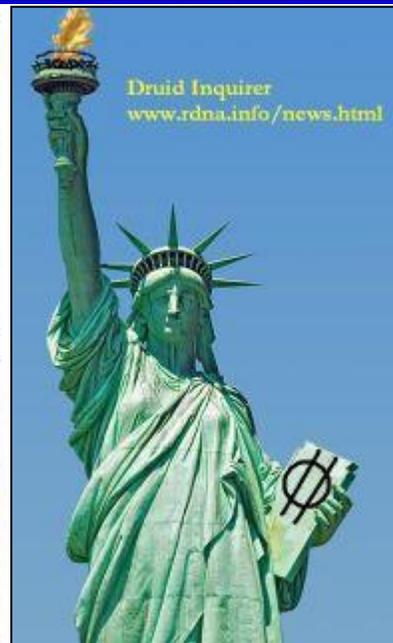
Mans Cathedral

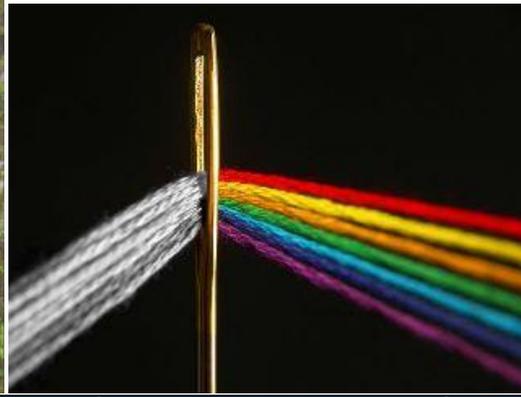


"I hate changing from Daylight Saving Time."



I like to post big text-only photos on Facebook to carry my clever quotes, because otherwise my wit gets drowned out by everyone else posting big photos to the news feed, instead of just typing them.





<p>ISTJ God, help me to begin relaxing about little details tomorrow at 11:41:32 a.m.</p>	<p>ISFJ Lord, help me to be more laid back, and help me to do it exactly right!</p>	<p>INFJ Lord help me not be a perfectionist. (Did I spell that correctly?)</p>	<p>INTJ Lord, help me open to others' ideas, WRONG through they may be!</p>
<p>ISTP God, help me to consider people's feelings, even if most of them are hypersensitive!</p>	<p>ISFP Lord, help me to stand up for my RIGHTS! (if you don't mind my asking)</p>	<p>INFP Lord, help me to finish everything I sta</p>	<p>INTP Lord, help me be less independent, but let me do it my way.</p>
<p>ESTP God, help me to take RESPONSIBILITY for my own actions even though they're usually not my fault!</p>	<p>ESFP GOD, HELP ME TO TAKE THINGS MORE SERIOUSLY- ESPECIALLY PARTIES & DANCING</p>	<p>ENFP God, help me keep my mind on one th..LOOK, A BIRD!...ing at a time.</p>	<p>ENTP God, help me follow established procedures today. On second thought, I'll settle for a few minutes.</p>
<p>ESTJ God, help me to try not to RUN everything. But, if You need some help, just ask!</p>	<p>ESFJ LORD, GIVE ME PATIENCE, AND I MEAN RIGHT NOW!</p>	<p>ENFJ God, help me to do only what I can, and trust you for the rest. Do you mind putting that in writing?</p>	<p>ENTJ God, help me to slow downandnot rushthrough whatIdoAmen!</p>



Make every Rite a GREAT Rite with

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Most Trusted at Pagan Gatherings

KARMA PACK Buy 1 Get 3 Free

Samhain Condoms

Pentacle Tip

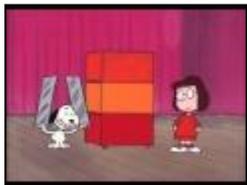
4 Premium Latex Condoms

When it's time to stir her cauldron with your wand, trust us to be the magick circle that holds in YOUR cone of power!

Samhain Condoms when you want the thinnest veil between your worlds.



RECOMMENDED VIDEO AND ITEMS FROM FACEBOOK CONFERENCES



It's Magic, Charlie Brown! (Part 1 of 3)

It's Magic, Charlie Brown is the 21st prime-time animated TV specials based upon the popular comic strip Peanuts, by Charles M.

Schulz.

Happy Halloween. I know all of you have seen "the Great Pumpkin" Snoopy movie, but have you seen "It's Magic! Charlie Brown" episode? It's less philosophical, but good fun, and fits the season too. In three parts: <http://youtu.be/tUu0FH2KniY>



Its The Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown

This is the other film I like to watch for Halloween. The great pumpkin is a stand in for addressing the reality of Santa Claus, Easter Bunny, Jesus, insert god-magical-

figure of your choice, and the attempt to curry favor by devotees in the face of skeptics. I find it a very Druidical treat, and its still fun for the kids.



Charlie Brown: Origins of Thanksgiving [Part 1/2-Full HD]

This is the OTHER Charlie Brown special on Thanksgiving,

a bit more historical, but noteworthy for a few points. One: there are plentiful adults in this one (normally they are off screen in the child-focused world of the series), Two: people die, and Three: the Peanuts cast are in living in the past. 2 parts. 20 minutes.



Age of not believing

Song 'Age of not believing' from the disney film Bedknobs and Broomsticks (1971)

Excellent pick by Lemeunier,

about the age of questioning as we grow up (perhaps I still am?). Great movie if you haven't seen it (Witches save merry old England from Nazis with help of kids and a flying bed.)



Led Zeppelin - Stairway to Heaven

Led Zeppelin - Stairway to Heaven
Lyrics There's a lady who's sure all that glitters is gold And she's buying a Stairway to Heaven

This great rock ballad was written at Bron-Yr-Aur (Wales) in Headley Grange manor.

"Page and Plant would come back from the Welsh mountains with the guitar intro and verse. I literally heard it in front of a roaring fire in a country manor house! I picked up a bass recorder and played a run-down riff which gave us an intro, then I moved into a piano for the next section, dubbing on the guitars."

Tyrics of the song reflected Robert Plant's current reading in 1970/1. The singer had been poring through the works of the British antiquarian Lewis Spence, and later cited Spence's Magic Arts in Celtic Britain as one of the sources for the lyrics to the song.



Spirited Away Trailer

SPIRITED AWAY - another Miyazaki movie, oscar winning story of a young girl whose parents are spirited away, and she enters

the bath-house spa of the gods, loses her name/soul, and struggles to free her parents by overturning the various curses on the other employees. Amazing, good for ages 6-600, strong role for young girls. Nothing too scary, but a few gulps.

Disney's trailer for the Studio Ghibli film, Spirited Away, that came out during the 2002 American release. UPDATE: Halloween is coming (and by whatever means you can view it) this film (originally from Japan) is simply one of the most positive films you can share with your kids about witches and become an independent young women. The scene with the zepelin rescue at the end still gives me goosebumps!



Kiki's Delivery Service Trailer

A young witch leaves home and starts a package delivery service while mastering her new powers, saving a city, and finding her first boyfriend.



Yellowbeard part1 -1983 Cheech and Chong.avi

YELLOWBEARD. Kind of like Monty Python (Graham Carpenter & Eric Idle) plus Cheech & Chong, with pirates, 1983. Stagger, lurch,

stagger, lurch!

Hilarious movie with cheech and chong included in the cast ... John Cleese,...Eric Idle with great one liners an absolute



Eyrrie

A young boy tries to kill a monstrous eagle, only to learn a secret about himself. 8 min.



Black Widows in the Privy
Black Widows in the Privy

by Heather Jones

Everyone knows someone we'd be better off without
But best not mention names 'cause we don't know who's about
But why commit a murder and risk the fires of hell
When black widows in the privy can do it just as well?

Now poison's good, and daggers, and arrows in the back,
And if you're really desperate you can try a front attack
But are they really worthy of the risk of being caught
When black widows in the privy need not be bribed or bought?

So if there's one of whom you wish most simply to be rid
Just wait till dark and point the way to where the widow's hid
And say to them 'I think you'll find that this one is the best'
And black widows in the privy will gladly do the rest!



A short weird song, that really gets visually odd, and I can't get that line "I don't like Candy corn" out of my head.

I Don't Like Candy Corn



Love this autumn-inspired ditty and animation. It's an earworm!

Noggin - Moose A. Moose "Falling for Fall" Autumn Song

Noggin - Moose A. Moose "Falling for Fall" Autumn Song



Wall Photos

WE HAVE ALL COME FROM THE ONE GREAT SPIRIT AND THIS PRECIOUS EARTH IS OUR COMMON MOTHER. LET US WALK IN HARMONY. NATIVE WISDOM



Water on Water's the Way – No Unsacred Place

nature.pagannewswirecollective.com

Everybody knows we're mostly water. But I remember the kind of mystic revelation that hit me the first time I read that scene in J.D. Salinger's short story "Teddy" where the ten-year-old describes watching his little sister drinking milk, how he suddenly saw that she was God and the milk was God, a...



The Irish Ballad (Tom Lehrer) - James Power

Written by Tom Lehrer © 1953
The best Irish ballads are always

written by Jewish mathematicians.<http://www.jamespower.net/http://www.my-space.com/themidnight...>



Fred Small - I Will Stand Fast - Soulgarden.tv

soulgarden.tv.ning.com

I believe this beautiful song, which for me epitomizes the feeling of comfort, was written for the victims of child abuse. Echoes of childhood...

<http://soulgarden.tv.ning.com/video/fred-small-i-will-stand-fast>

Fred Small is a Unitarian minister. Helga knows UU is compatible with healing and light work of all faiths, including mine.



13 Nights of Halloween (Part 1 - Nights 1-7) - For Kids of all Ages by In A World...

13 Nights of Halloween is an adorable video for kids and families featuring all of your favorite characters of Halloween! A delightful, funny video and song ...



acorn song

Autumn Song Quickie: I'm a little acorn round, lying on the cold hard ground. Someone came and stepped on me, that is why I'm cracked you see, I'm a nut! etc....



Disney Mickey Mouse-Haunted House (1929)

One of the oldest Halloween cartoons, before talkies, I suppose, all music and F/X.



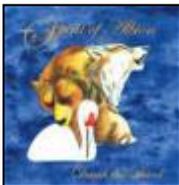
Samhain and the dead

druidlife.wordpress.com

There were a couple of witches on the towpath last night, off to a Halloween party. It's the time of year to play with macabre images, pretend to be a zombie, make a game out of death. In some

ways...

<http://druidlife.wordpress.com/2011/10/30/samhain-and-the-dead/#comments>



FolkCast ShowNotes - Interview 007 - Damh The Bard

www.folkcast.co.uk

Damh The Bard is a singer, songwriter and podcaster... and also the Pendragon of...See more

http://www.folkcast.co.uk/ShowNotes/shownotesInt007.html#_TqrNap0rP5Y.facebook



Damh the Bard - Wild Mountain Thyme - live

Damh plays the classic folk song Wild Mountain Thyme at the

Anderida Gorsedd Conference, July 19th, 2008.<http://www.paganmusic.co.uk>



Samhain Night by Jenna Greene

"Samhain Night" by Jenna Greene off of her album "Wild Earth Child" Check out her website at

<http://www.greeneladymusic.com/>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=fvwp&NR=1&v=B1n_WF-76dU

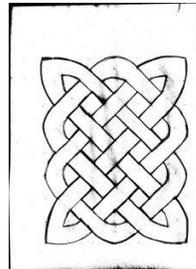


Nigel Tufnel on why aliens didn't build Stonehenge

Watch Nigel Tufnel's unorthodox theory on how Stonehenge was

built with the help of dinosaur saliva and why aliens didn't build the site.

Why does everybody care about this big ring of rocks anyway? This particular theory is as good as it gets IMNSHO and National Geographic made this interview. In case you don't know of Nigel, he's in Spinal Tap, whose film featured a knee-high Stonehenge.



Bardic Banter

My knot attempt, well lets just say patience is a virtue !!!!

by: [Penny Leyson Young](#)



<http://roguepriest.net/2011/09/29/getting-ready-for-my-own-death/>

Here's a Druid who's also a priest in the Church of England and his take on it.

Training for Death

www.patheos.com

So how do you meditate on your own upcoming death?



This strikes me as very Druidical.

Coffee Shop Religion: Interfaith of the Everyday

www.huffingtonpost.com

I was raised to be a priestess and was taught by learned scholars

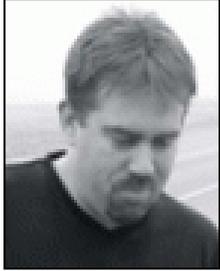
and mystics. But my religious education didn't begin until I started talking and listening to people from other ways of life.



It's a beautiful day xxxx

Omnia // Alive!

Paganfolk.



Northern Druid Podcast #6 today from Scott- from the autumnal forests of Minnesota to your heart. 36 minutes. Lovely, informative, engendering peaceful feelings. Take a listen at lunch time.

Northern Druid Podcast #6
www.northerndruid.net

Sep 21 2011



Brynneth N Colvin 's not the same sort of Druid I am. I'm RDNA and she's OBOD, but the international Druid Network links us and lists my Grove, and my outreach The Healing Line. And we are both erotic fantasy writers. As an Equinox meditation, I can't top this.

Sacred Inspiration

druidlife.wordpress.com

In modern Druidry, inspiration is sacred. To the best of my knowledge, this is one of the things that separates Druidry

from other modern pagan paths and so might be less familiar to non-druid read...

Samhain 2011: Celebrating our Ancestors and the Earth



mystery.



www.huffingtonpost.com

We are all going to die. Death is a transition into mystery, into spiritual realms, perhaps to feed ongoing life on earth, perhaps to journey further in spirit, perhaps both. Perhaps neither. It's a

This is what a Hassidic Druid looks like!

one day - matisyahu (official video with lyrics)



Spiral Dance - Ride the Wind
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2aVTBrZ9YU>

A harvest gift for all of you! I wanted to share this song, and found to my surprise no one had posted it anywhere yet... so I made my own vid so I could share it.

First time using this movie maker software though and couldn't figure out how to sync the music better.. I hope you all like it it is one of my favs!

..

Lord of The Dance

(Submitted by Daniel Lessin, author unknown)

She danced on the water, and the wind was Her horn
The Lady laughed, and everything was born
And when She lit the sun and its' light gave Him birth
The Lord of the Dance first appeared on the Earth

(Chorus): Dance, dance, where ever you may be
I am the Lord of the Dance, you see!
I live in you, and you live in Me
And I lead you all in the Dance, said He!

I danced in the morning when the World was begun
I danced in the Moon and the Stars and the Sun
I was called from the Darkness by the Song of the Earth
I joined in the Song, and She gave Me the Birth!

I dance in the Circle when the flames leap up high
I dance in the Fire, and I never, ever, die
I dance in the waves of the bright summer sea
For I am the Lord of the wave's mystery

I sleep in the kernel, and I dance in the rain
I dance in the wind, and thru the waving grain
And when you cut me down, I care nothing for the pain;
In the Spring I'm the Lord of the Dance once again!

I dance at the Sabbat when you dance out the Spell
I dance and sing that everyone be well
And when the dancing's over do not think that I am gone
To live is to Dance! So I dance on, and on!

I see the Maidens laughing as they dance in the Sun
And I count the fruits of the Harvest, one by one
I know the Storm is coming, but the Grain is all stored
So I sing of the Dance of the Lady, and Her Lord:

The Visit

My heart flutters with joy and magical thought, as i look into the portal of inner thought. I feel loves light encompassing thee, sparked by my portal, husband and me. Through the door inside i go, into the earths roots, to caverns deep where waters sleep and seems to have no floor. Making my way to the lantern bright, it flickers away in the night, casting the light and the shadows on the walls. I hear a hoot, what's that , that calls, looking to the inner walls, as the stalagmites do weep in this cavern of the deep.

Onward i go ever nearing the lanterns flow. I now feel the dampness in the air, as it cools the lanterns flare. I see a pool of silvery light, twinkling away like a starry night. The water runs so clean it reflects the inner scene. I hear the cavern boom, the echoe of the inside womb, the drips of water, that silvery delight, then a ripple sparks the lantern bright. Creatures whirl and twirl in my inner mind, for i have yet to be assigned. I feel a presence that is here to stay, but for a second i keep it at bay. Behind me a great-homed owl doth appear, waiting patiently, for me, i fear. Her eyes seeing right through me as i turn my head to view thee. She blinks and winks gazing at me, how very quizzical and funny, she then plucks away at her wing, oh my you itchy little thing. I reach to touch, it pleasures so much, the smooth silky feathers, slippy and sleek. Your eyes so infinitely intent full of thought and wonderment. I have harkened to your call, you are the beauty that that lies in us all. The blinking in your eyelid doth tell, stories of this place that i know well. So now you have come to befriend me gazing so intently. I feel akin so i fear not, for contemplation is now my plot. In this inner place i will visit thee, or perhaps near by a tree, you might like to converse with me. You can share the stories of your realm, when ever it be time to tell. With all the elements circling me, the magic weaved has nourished thee. So for now we will let it be, and i will visit you more timely. The echoes flicker my inner light, harkening to me the inner sight. By the rock pools in the caverns deep, the lanterns of old burn deep. There it will remain forever lit, kindled my my inner wil. Joyful now as my day has been, i reflect upon my altar scene the caverns deep and pools of light, with new eyes twinkling in the night. A new found friend, revealed to me, with stories of wonder for us to see.

By
Denelope Leyson Young



Time

Time of life, Time of death, Time of rebirth,

Time of dark night, the moon shining bright,
the bonfires ignite, welcoming the pagan rite.

Time the wheel of the year turns again, to
summers end, 'Samhain'.

Time the harvest brought home to the hearth,
away from winters bleak path,

Time the hearths are all lit, kindled by the
sacred bonfire pit. As the light gives way to
night, the winter returns with all its might.

Time of Herne god of the wild hunt, lord of
woodland and vegetation, he sacrifices himself
once more without any hesitation.

Time of the Cerridwen, aspect the crone, who
guides us through death and this life's
milestone.

Time now of ancestors and spirits, for the veil
of the realms is thin and sleek, for those of you
who dare and death to peak,

Time of offerings to the dead, as they pass on
the journey they tread.

Time of candles glowing bright, to abate the
beings of the night.

Time of life, Time of death, Time of rebirth,

An Anthem for Druids

Posted on June 29, 2011 by [Redwood.Eagle](#)

WE WANT TO LIVE

We want to live in a world that survives
On the planet of life with light in our lives
By the power of the moon and the strength of the sun

We are one on the Earth

We want a world where there is love for everybody

We want a world where there is no more war....

We want a world where there is hope for everybody

We want a world that's better than before

Give us a world where there is food for everybody

Water is pure; the air is fresh and clean

We want a world that is good for everybody

We want a world where everyone is free

We want a world (oh, say can you see...)

We want a world (there's a change in the wind)

We want a world (so proudly we hail)

We want a world (the new age, is dawning....)

We want a world where there is peace for everybody

We want a world where there is no more war

We want a world where there is truth for everybody

We want a world that better than before

We need a world where there is food for everybody

Flowers that bloom with trees green and tall.

We want a world that is good for everybody

We want a world with joy and peace for all

We want a world (The time has now come...)

We want a world (to heal....)

We want a world (the wounds of the world)

We want a world (Earth Mother is calling....)

We want a world that is good for everybody

We want a world where there is no more war

We want a world with food for everybody

We want a world that's better than before....

We want to live in a world that survives

On the planet of life with light in our eyes

By the power of the moon and the strength of the sun

We are one on the Earth....

We want to live in a world that survives

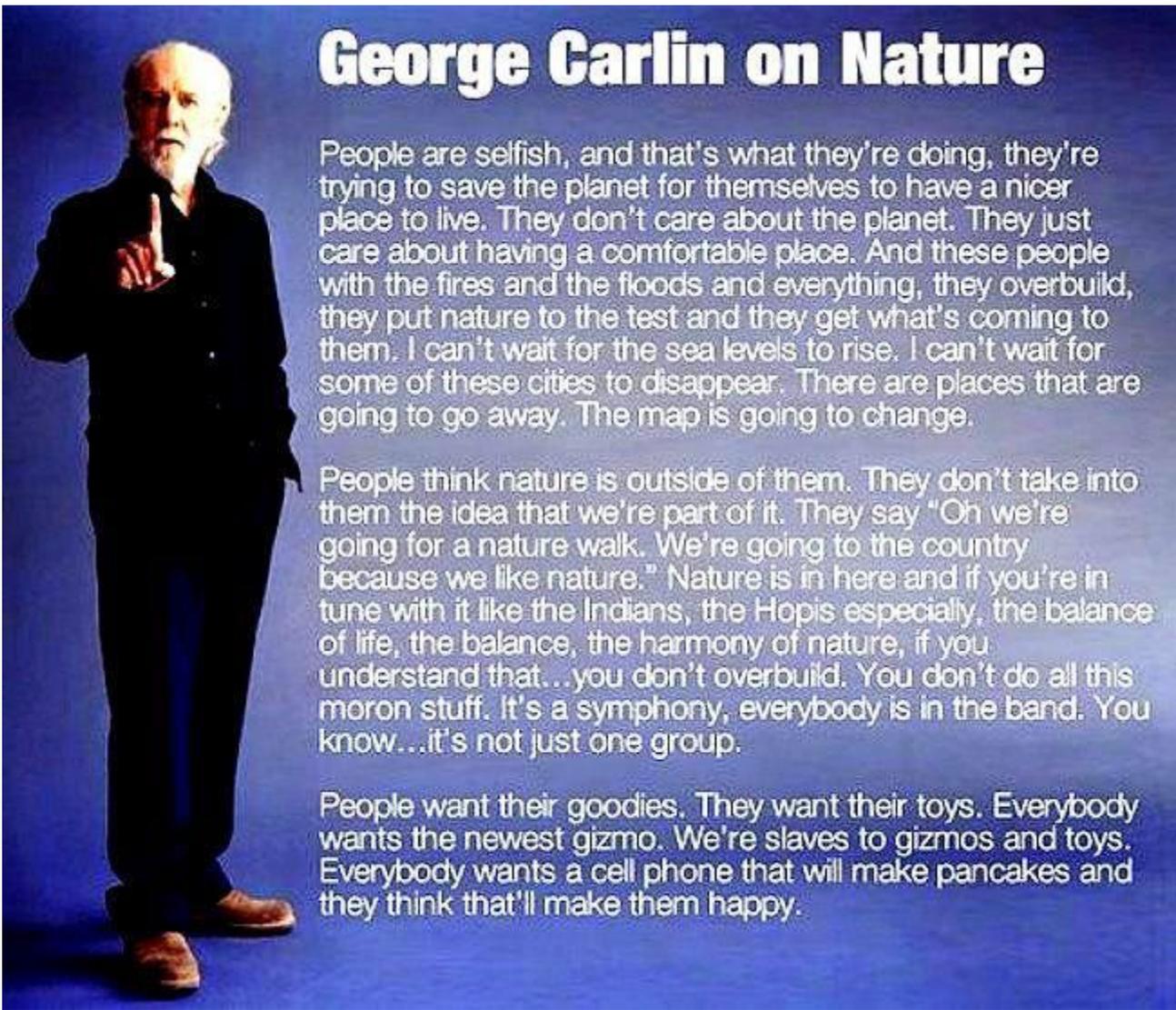
With love in our hearts and light in our eyes

So our children can sing when all battles are done

We are one on the earth.....

Gypsy, from the album, **Enchantress**

*Well, it was written and performed by Wiccans, but TRUTH is TRUTH and we Druids stand for ”
Y Gwir Yn Erbyn Y Byd – Truth against the World”!*



George Carlin on Nature

People are selfish, and that's what they're doing, they're trying to save the planet for themselves to have a nicer place to live. They don't care about the planet. They just care about having a comfortable place. And these people with the fires and the floods and everything, they overbuild, they put nature to the test and they get what's coming to them. I can't wait for the sea levels to rise. I can't wait for some of these cities to disappear. There are places that are going to go away. The map is going to change.

People think nature is outside of them. They don't take into them the idea that we're part of it. They say "Oh we're going for a nature walk. We're going to the country because we like nature." Nature is in here and if you're in tune with it like the Indians, the Hopis especially, the balance of life, the balance, the harmony of nature, if you understand that...you don't overbuild. You don't do all this moron stuff. It's a symphony, everybody is in the band. You know...it's not just one group.

People want their goodies. They want their toys. Everybody wants the newest gizmo. We're slaves to gizmos and toys. Everybody wants a cell phone that will make pancakes and they think that'll make them happy.

FALLEN LEAVES

The rain left a mirror by the base of the tree,
Which drank color from changeable skies;
I looked for you there, in that cradle of roots,
And the water that mirrored your eyes.

I looked for you too in the gold of the leaves;
But they faded from gilt to dull brown.
And the night closed in fast and the shadows grew strong,
And I'm falling, still falling, far down.

I dreamt that I saw you where the waves meet the shore,
As the twilight drank deep of the sea;
And when I awoke I could still hear the gulls,
But I knew you were so far from me.

I looked for you too in the etching of frost
As it traced the still leaves on the ground.
And the night closed in fast and the shadows grew strong,
And I'm falling, still falling, far down.



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HUMOR

How Big is a Unit of “Wales”



From the File of Non-Important Information:
By Mike the Fool

While my appreciation for Wales maybe without measure, apparently there is a unit of measurement called the "Wales". Much like how Americans might say something is "about as big as Rhode Island".

Now some Welsh might argueably state that the modern "Wales" unit, understates the true "Wales" unit, when good old Cymru was about 7 times bigger. Yes, before the less-than-loved Romans, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Normans, Scots, Irish, Vikings, Danes, and Germans etc. came in (mostly un-invited) and took away all the prime real-estate in Great Britain, forcing most now-called-Welsh to relocate to the less popular western portions France and Britain (parts they would have "sniffed at" in better times).

Wales (From the wikipedia)

Equal to 20,779 km² (8,023 sq mi), the country of Wales is used in phrases such as "an area the size of Wales" or "twice the area of Wales".^{[21][22]} England is 6.275 times the size of Wales, and Scotland is roughly four times the size of Wales. Ireland is four times larger

than Wales, and France is about twenty-five times larger.

The British comedy show The Eleven O'Clock Show parodied the use of this measurement, by introducing a news article about an earthquake in Wales, stating that an area the size of Wales was affected. The Radio 4 program More or Less introduced the idea of "kiloWales" - an area 1000 times the size of Wales. The Register introduced the nanoWales (20.78 m²).



How To Successfully Pull Off a Mistletoe Kiss

If you're finally ready to make your move during the Christmas party, this guide will help you steal that first kiss under the mistletoe.

MISTLETOE (I know it's not Christmas yet) but these things take preparation because it's too cold to climb trees in December (unless you are in Florida)

I'm sure there is someone you really hope to kiss soon, right? Yes, that one!

If you failed to Druidically gather the mistletoe and dry it at Midsummer, do not despair, it is an evergreen plant, and you should be able to spot it more easily in the trees as the leaves vacate the canopy. (Hint: Do not collect poison ivy.)

How to give your now gathered mistletoe a power up? Here's a few suggestions:

1. Ask your A.D. to bless it.
2. Carry it around in your boot (e.g. near your Druidic toes)
3. Build a love altar and let it air-dry over the altar.
4. Write the name of your target in ogham on the ribbon binding the mistletoe
5. Do not eat it, unless your devious plan includes your grieving target visiting your bedside at the hospital. The "all heal" translation of the gaelic is possibly an ancient marketing trick - see Eric the Red's "Greenland" scheme.

THE RECENT BIG DEBATES OF REFORMED DRUIDS



Debate #1 Reviving the HDNA.... Again!

Ellis Arseneau

I've been thinking, well, for a few years now really, about attempting to revive the HDNA. This would involve creating a web site of course, but what else? Any corroborators out there?

Teresa Reitan The Hasidic Druids of North America? Great! I don't know anything about creating webpages but I'm sure there must be a web developer out there with too much time and not enough to do in this economy.

John Martens It's funny you should mention that... the H is for Hasidic, isn't it? I'm not a Druish Druid, but just the other day, I devised the Druish equivalent of a Mezuzah.

Though instead of Hebrew letters on the outside, it should have something like "D-A-L" for Dalon Ap Landu written in the Ogham alphabet, and inside the Mezuzah should be a scroll containing either the Blessing from the Torah, or perhaps a scroll with just the two basic tenets.

I do calligraphy, so I would be happy to create the scrolls. Though technically, the person who writes the scrolls ought to be the equivalent of a Sofer. I would guess a 2nd Order Druid would be suitable for that, depending on how much one wants to take it that seriously, of course.

Luna Selene Sounds interesting. I'd certainly like to learn more.

Sayer de Wahull Put a check next to my name. I can corroborate with the best of them.

Tim Thompson What is the HDNA?

John Martens Hasidic Druids of North America - for Jewish Druids who wish to incorporate/blend aspects of both ideologies. Not just for Hasidic Jews, but it seems to be a term that stuck. They can refer to themselves as "Druish." Note: there are no anti-semitic undertones.

Mike TheFool The materials from the 1970s group are available but I'd recommend starting fresh with a new name but follow similar pattern of debate laws customs diets and incorporation of the most earth friendly aspects of Judaism, pre-Judaic traditions and neopaganism. I know there have to be a few other models too. That hdna was also a communal experiment but you should know that half of the druids in the writings are Isaac in various pseudonyms trying to round out the discussions. There was also a yahoo group for a hdna revival attempt around 2005, didn't go far though.

Mike TheFool There are enough terms to play with to find a new name that doesn't imply the strictness of the hassidic division. 20 minutes with 10 members should come up with a dozen suitable names better than hdna2

Teresa Reitan Sounds great, John.

Ellis Arseneau I'll start working on a website this weekend. Maybe I'll try one of those content systems (Drupal seems appropriate), rather than create from scratch. Uhm, "Hasidic Druids of Gaia"? Or should I stick with HDNA?

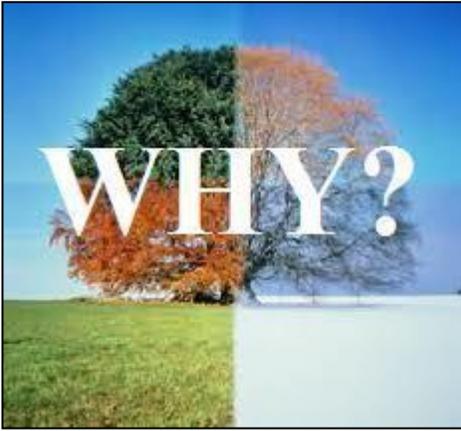
Joe Sroufe I am Jewish. Need input?

Ellis Arseneau Oh, wondering how this started? I had a dream the other night: Ceridwen and I were building a sukkah in our back yard. This is really odd because my family never celebrated Sukkot (probably my mother knew that getting my Catholic father to dine with us in what amounts to a tent wasn't going to fly), and Ceridwen is my shiksa with no interest in such (nor have I much interest in such). So, I've interpreted it as a message from Dalon or maybe Be'al. Or not. YMMV. LOL!

Ellis Arseneau Joe: I thought you might jump on this. Who else? Stacey?

Ellis Arseneau Just created a group for this. I invited everyone who has A) expressed an interest and, B) Has "Friended" me and C) Who is both (B) and whom I THOUGHT might be interested, or whom I know to be "Druish."

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/175256765887079/>



Debate #2 WHY THE EIGHT FESTIVALS?

This week is focused on a question, integral to Druidism, but rarely discussed: "Why do the 8 festivals matter at all?" along with "Why do we bother with them?" and "Why not something else." Tough questions, but rather important to address.

Future episodes 10, 11, 12 of Desperate Druids series will be focus on the Why? of the seasons rather than the How? So I will need lots of insight in this subject to fill that programming, and fill a hole in my education.

1st thread of responses

Jenn Ninjakitten In my humble opinion (with the further disclaimer of your mileage may vary), in ancient times it was important to follow the seasons and having holidays was a good way to remind people to do that. If a lot of people are celebrating the seasons and doing something together to acknowledge the very thing that allowed us to tend our crops, properly care for livestock, deal with births, seeding, and other life sustaining natural activities, we are more likely to be able to work in harmony with such things, act upon them, and even exploit them for our survival (these days more than just for survival, unfortunately).

These days, with our scientific advancements, it is less important for simply survival to acknowledge the seasonal events that we celebrate in the 8ish festivals (9 if you want to cheat and include the American Thanksgiving feast holiday :-p), but now it is important for our survival in the sense that if we don't reconnect to the cyclical nature of life sustaining processes, we are more likely to forget that we are destroying nature's ability to create such processes little by little. It is also important to remember them should we in the future reconnect to nature more than to our cities and decide to sustain our lives in harmony with nature's processes. Celebrating these holidays allow us both ancient and modern ways to reflect on both ancient and modern methods of doing this.

Mike TheFool So jenn your angle that we need to reestablish touch with nature for our longterm survival as a species even if our short term survival as individuals are not threatened by nature? I suspect such longsighted people are few in society, being a bit cynical myself. That would make some sense in a self interest model rather than "because nature is pretty" argument. Some people need carrots others need sticks right?

Mike TheFool Nick, do you think Europeans are as far from nature as most Americans in the u.s.?

Mike TheFool Has religion abandoned nature because it no longer is an "unknowable mystery" that we fear and seek to placate in our current first world culture? Has religion retreated to just the last line of irrational fear, our mortal death and what lays beyond, and has radicalized that last position into an all or nothing position of salvation to retain control and power in society? Rather than allow reincarnations more moderated take of a guaranteed afterlife a little better or worse, but nothing awful (like hellfire etc)? I wonder...

Mike TheFool Exactement! Et je suis le plus grande ane!

Lemeunier Nicolas eat carrot or hit by baton

Jenn Ninjakitten Yes, Mike, that is one of my primary assessments for the need to get back into nature, and unfortunately I have to agree that people are typically too shortsighted to do that without having it in some way thrown in their face. I work for the San Diego Zoo Safari Park and have a Bachelor's in Zoology with a minor in Wildlife Management, so I admit some bias, however I also admit that places like zoos these days exist not to be the king's menagerie as they were as recently as 20 years ago, but are now there to throw into the face of common people what they collectively do to other species. I see less need for that to happen in many people who have taken on religious beliefs that are nature and future oriented.

Jenn Ninjakitten Oh and zoos are also there to preserve species while humans collectively try to figure out how to "get their crap together" for the common good.

Jenn Ninjakitten Also, where religion in general is concerned, I do think we are drifting from religion being a means of observation of the natural and social world to being more of a philosophy on how to make due with what we are learning in the natural and social worlds. My belief is that one day we aren't going to see such a disconnect between religions, science, or other philosophies and come to realize they are all just a means for us to quantify what we see and understand, and try to use what we see and understand for the greatest possible advancement. I also think as we grow as a species (so long as we don't destroy ourselves first) are going to redefine "the greatest possible advancement" to further use our greatest evolutionary advantage (our brains) in a way that is good for all, not just for what we want to think is good.

Jenn Ninjakitten One day we'll come full circle and science will say what religion already has in a way that the masses can understand... that we are all connected.

Helgaleena

Dear Mike,

please don't 'should' yourself. Whether you do any of those earthy things or not is beside the point. Like it or not, we are all a part of Nature.

Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, in his book Flow and its sequel, examines the neurological underpinnings of not only the experience of happiness, but the amount of instinctive behavior we cannot avoid. Much like manufacturing our own vitamin D by absorbing sunlight, accepting our unavoidable links to Nature simply is common sense and to be encouraged.

And to quote the two Tenets-- Nature is Good.

Thus it follows that the eight festivals, whether we engage in actual agriculture or not, continue to have their effects upon us as we all live upon the planet and in this space/time that cycles through its seasonal changes. I have, for the past few years, tried to enumerate the relevance of the eight festivals as they manifest to me and in the life I observe globally as well. It is there to be scrolled through at my druid blog, Healing Lines.

<http://helgaleena.mylivepage.com>

I do post about other things too, but the passage of time inevitably brings on another season for me to experience and record in my tremendously personally biased fashion.

helgaleena

White Rabbit Grove

old school RDNA

2nd Thread of Responses

Sayer de Wahull OK, this is just me speaking, but some aspects of this important series of questions have been on my mind for a while:

Nature = cycles.

I am at my best when I am in tune with those cycles..

Sayer de Wahull Each day we watch the Solar migration and I have found delight and insight into my own existence as I align myself with the motions of the Earth and Sol. I'm also finding a more subtle and pleasing feeling in being increasingly aware of Lunar cycles.

My longer look takes me to those cycles of seasonal change. The life's lessons and the personal insight as to my mortality and my connection with all else. I don't like "Communal Ritual" as much as quiet reflection. Those eight seasonal marks are perfect times for that sort of focused reflection.

Mike TheFool We have other cycles of work, tv, school, laundry, eating, bathing Why reintroduce cycles of nature? Because they are simply aesthetically pleasing? We don't fear the harvest failure or the deer's disappearance and rain rarely matters so much except in disaster

Sayer de Wahull Sad.

Catherine McGregor I agree with Sayer, seasons passing are more in tune with our life's passages. Besides I always found hard to believe that Celts didn't mark the beginning of the seasons. Granted they might not be as big as the other high days but still they must be aware of it

Mike TheFool I wonder if the wheel of 8 precise festivals is just too regular and divorced from the real weather of our localities as a result of our lack of concern with real nature and idealization of nature as predictable?

Patricia Norwood They must have been fairly accurate at one time. And really they come fairly close when compared to other holy day calendars. I find holding rites on those days gives me a deeper connection with my Celtic ancestors

Benjamin Thomas "We don't fear the harvest failure or the deer's disappearance and rain rarely matters so much except in disaster" Maybe that is why we sometimes feel disconnected from nature. And life in general for that matter. Maybe these festivals are to help us reconnect with the world around us.

David Stephen Ball-Romney If the polar ice caps melt, will we still be able to balance eggs on the Equinox?

Mike TheFool But can you connect with these cycles, when you don't have a practical necessity for survival (a big motivator to pay attention), I understand that it has symbolism though, but perhaps we only have a shell of the experience, not being worried by famine, crop failure, and poverty if the seasons and ourselves are just a little out of synch.

Sayer de Wahull There is a difference between what IS and the fantasy that we walk through each day. Even if we try to remove ourselves from them, these cycles persist.

The simple Chinese habit of naming the lunar periods and the solar movements to relate to their natural cycles is a wonderful example of tuning life's focus towards what actually occurs in your region. Named through hundreds of years of observation, they are simple elegant guides to the natural cycles where these people thrived. I have started making similar observations where I live.

Insects Awake
Spring Equinox
Clear and Bright
Grain Rain
Start of Summer
Grain Full
Grain in Ear
Summer Solstice

Perhaps you could do something like:

Ties with Stripes
Jacket of Wool
Rotate Tires
Annual Raise

It is about what you want to spend your focus on. You only have the "shell of an experience" if you choose to enjoy just the shell. Perhaps the more you isolate yourself from the realities, the greater the need to at least

acknowledge them by placing a digital mark on your appointment book. You are not so far away from the natural cycles as you may think. At least a cursory acknowledgement of that is very healthy.

Mike TheFool There is something in those cycles, but they lack the grandeur and are too tied to the control of men, for which nature worship releases me. I can't control the weather, there are things beyond my control, or of any man (though we can mess up the climate if we work together!) I'm afraid that the vast majority of people are followers of the pulse of society, which is moving further and further away from the cycles, even with the budding ecology movement. Fantasy world it may be, but people think they are content with the world of men that we have built around ourselves and fill in every waking moment with stimulation and story. Little room for nature to intervene and interrupt the conversation, like a theater troupe speaking to an empty audience with a grand spectacle that's fallen out of fashion. I can't change the world, not so arrogant to think it, and I need to keep a focus on what I can do about myself, and share with others of like mind. We've been hunting/gathering for 5 million years, husbanding for 10,000, farming 7,000, and typing for 200 years, guess which is the most developed and instinctual to our primordial senses?

Catherine McGregor It is also connection to something greater than you. Whether it's the Gods or divine presence. They will always be greater than you in the end.

Mike TheFool I agree there. I think that a lot is lost in the transition of a religious system to different climates, different times, different economy. One sees this with Christianity too and how they struggled to make the story of a carpenter pushing for some social and religious activism under Roman occupation into a message that people in other parts of the world would relate to. Wasn't easy. Probably a reason that much of the judaic customs, agrarian/husbandry tie-ins and such were lost as they sought to find a thread that would allow world-wide audiences (but at great loss of continuity with old-testament teachings).

Sayer de Wahull If the question is as stated: "Why do the festivals matter?".

My answer is: "They don't"

The cycles would go on without any interruption. I do not do "Festivals" because I generally don't like crowds and hocus pocus.

It is only when we try to capture the wonder around us that we find we must use the cyclic terms to describe them:

Tree, what is it? Acorn? Sprout? Sapling? Undergrowth?Firewood or furniture? Decay and mulch for the next generation? We can only describe natural phenomenon in cyclic terms.

When we say we worship nature, can we remove ourselves very far from those cycles before we become lost?

I celebrate the cycles. Don't give a damn about group hugs. I do enjoy showing others a glimpse of what natural cycles encompass their world. Even in busy sterile cities, there are birds and insects, trees and shrubs who's drive to conform to the natural cycles will be visible. Don't care if we use Gaelic names, or scientific, the cycles prevail.

So, NO. The Festivals don't matter at all. The connection to the observations that spawned them does. We can only describe "Nature" by using cyclic terms. Nature is good.

Mike TheFool That's the thing, I don't think people really feel that without our sacrifices, the seasons will keep on turning. They will. We know that scientifically. Even if all the humans die, seasons will keep on turning, they don't absolutely need us. Crops need us, they can't really survive on their own anymore, most farm animals might have a hard time of it without us. But the partnership with nature, that our fires will save the sun on the solstice, not there on more than symbolic level, or was it ever really believed? Perhaps. What we're left with, is it better than nothing, or better to start over, can we start over, would it take too long to find another dynamic, or will the old dynamic come back in spades if the modern life falls apart? Many questions for those who keep the seasonal passings alive, unrooted in the farmer's plot, never having hunted, but trying to imagine that era.

Rusty Mon "not being worried by famine, crop failure, and poverty if the seasons and ourselves are just a little out of synch." Must be nice, to live in such a World! Where IS that World? It is NOT the World I live in...Children are dying every minute. The "Dust Bowl" was caused by Humans who did not respect Nature, ahhhh....forget it.

David Stephen Ball-Romney I sense some impending poetry from some of you ~ Please Write!

Rusty Mon The "Fires" were to burn old, dead stuff from the Fields, and you all understand that that is to kill the Bugs and Molds that over-winter in the Stalks...yes? The Bones of Animals were burnt, in the "Bone-Fires" to release the Calcium...all this was spread on the Fields for a good crop.

Mike TheFool I'm sure some practical aspects have been overlooked, by what to us looks purely symbolic or poetic. Just like 100 from now, CDs might be looked at as some form of jewelry (ooh shiny disks!). A lot of customs remain long after a purpose has been forgotten.

Mike TheFool I appreciate your input, and have much to ruminate upon.

Helgaleena Healingline 'We have other cycles of work, tv,school, laundry, eating, bathing Why reintroduce cycles of nature? Because they are simply aesthetically pleasing? We don't fear the harvest failure or the deer's disappearance and rain rarely matters so much except in disaster'

Helgaleena Healingline Mike, what do you mean, WE ??? I surely do fear these things. And if I had no running water and no electricity, like large numbers of humans, I would fear them still more. It's not a fashion statement whether or not to ignore the external world when it's the obvious source of sustenance to most.

Patricia Norwood I agree,no matter how we have advanced as a culture, the forces of nature still are very much a part of our lives. Drought and plagues and pestilences are natural occurrences and cycles and while some may consider it a fashion statement to acknowledge them or ignore them I cannot. I would rather give honor to nature as a manifestation of the Divine at work in our world, than ignore it and perhaps see all its resources rebel against us. Or live without water and plants and animals that make my life sustainable and joyous

Mike TheFool How can you expect to get small things from the gods, when one doesn't thank them for delivering us from famines, plagues and politically motivated wars (or at least partially delivering us from some)?

Rusty Mon One does...

3rd Thread of Responses

Donald Ervin The Iron Age Celts from what we know only really celebrated the fire festivals of Samhain, Imbolg, Beltane, and Lughnassah. The four Alban days are a more modern invention. A good question would be whether the Solstices and Equinoxes even have a place in a Celtic path? But as a modern creation I feel that the 8 fold calendar has merit. It divides the year into equal chunks of about 45 days each. It makes things easy for ritual planning and celebrations.

Mike TheFool Are regular intervals better than actual days of changes in nature? Like the first snow fall. First day of lambing itself? And since we don't live or die by local harvest, gasp, I'll say it, do local nature gods matter when we can buy our food from Brazil?

Mike TheFool If the ancient Celts didn't have the four festivals would we simply not do them now or would we rediscover them? Are they innately apparent and meaningful in themselves?

Lemeunier Nicolas what do you do without no real science of history, example Lascaux

Rusty Mon People who do not celebrate, are not Druids...unless they are dour Druids...with no fun-time...

Lemeunier Nicolas my think is do the think you are with nature celebration is begin with communion

Mike TheFool Do we celebrate or do we worship. Do people only pray if there is something in it for them? For selfish reasons?

Lemeunier Nicolas me my job is the education after my last life it's end

Aisling Beith Ferch Arianrhod Well I feel the cycle of festivals DO serve the purpose of getting one more in tune with the seasons and the changes nature goes through. Of course any set of dates around these times would do the same as would the afore mentioned actual dates of change such as first snow etc. Agrarian cultures are in tune with their environment, they don't actually even need set dates to know, to feel the cycle around them, our modern lifestyles have changed that. Somehow I doubt even the Fire Festivals were held on exactly the same date each year or even from one community to the next in ancient times. However I think for Modern continuity it makes more sense to have set dates. First Snow for me is NOT the same time of year as first Snow for someone in Norway, and yet the progression of the season is basically the same if with less drastic changes. Also it is hard enough for even people in a local group to find a day that is good to get together. With the invention of modern "Jobs" most people have to have advance notice of a day to celebrate or hold rituals. Not like the majority of us could just call in and say "So yea.. umm it's snowing for the first time this year.. or hey a lamb was born last night... so I can't come in to work cause I have to go do a ritual with my Grove/Coven... see you tomorrow though OK?"

Penny Leyson Young For me it's a time to celebrate, i am alive and have great joy in life, i see the beauty, the positive as opposed to the negative, i choose that, the changing seasons are a life cycle much the same as we have a life cycle, there is a connection, we live it every day, and see it every day, and if we are lucky enough feel it. :-)

Tully Reill The family and I celebrate the markers of the wheel of the year. As for "worship", I don't do that at any time. I have a working relationship with the Gods, I respect them and honor them, but the only thing I worship is the love of my family.

Ellis Arseneau Sometimes I think 8 festivals is way too much work. Personally, I lean towards the Samhain, Oimelc, Beltaine, Lughnasadh cycle, and even there I think a minimalist attitude has much merit.

Penny Leyson Young I guess we have to do the best we can, most important for me is that it comes from the heart, and is of love, no matter how big or small :-)

Donald Ervin Mike TheFool wrote:" Do we celebrate or do we worship. Do people only pray if there is something in it for them? For selfish reasons?" According to many theorists the reasoning for the celebration (the original four anyway) was that it was a ritual re-enacting of the creation of the world by the Celts and the Druids. Each time was a time when certain sacrifices were given in a particular order to ensure that the universe kept going. So in the light, the origins of the festivals are ones where the people were doing it because there was something in it for them.

Donald Ervin However I would say that nowadays the main reasoning for the festivals is continuation of tradition. The continuation puts us in touch with our ancestral ways and makes us feel like we are a part of a tradition with deep roots.

Ellis Arseneau The main purpose, at least from my point of view, is that these are community building exercises. Ritual binds communities together.

Mike TheFool Aisling Beith Ferch Arianrhod is right we can't "flash mob" with the actual markers of spring, summer, fall and winter like the old ones could living next to each other and having fewer clock-driven jobs. If we do want to have those moments celebrated, they have to be family and individual moments - done and then shared with others later or online. Ellis Arseneau is right in that they bring people together, not too far apart so that we don't lose track of each other, not too close to overwhelm us. Weekly services are a near impossibility outside of college, and don't work well then either. Not all festivals are created equal. Belt & Samh are the big drawers, Oimelc & Lugh seem next, Winter Solstice would be bigger (as would Spring and Summer) but secular/religious juggernauts and traveling knocks schedules silly. Fall has the most promise of moving up, and we long for Easter. Donald Ervin has a good point in that tradition brings us to our ancestors, who were very concerned with each harvest and not falling out of synch for survival reasons, in ways we just can't relate to nowadays, but if you want to talk to them, you need to have common ground for discussion. I wonder if urban pagans in the dark ages had this feeling of estrangement also, like us? I however fear that we can only get the hollowed out egg shell feeling for a festival that celebrates the harvest and

husbandry of others works, and for which we do not probably eat or help with, and for which we are not depend. Symbolism, although pretty, lacks the oomph of necessity.

Mike TheFool I think more indigenous festivals will begin to appear in North American circles as certain concepts demand wider audience than the 8 standards ones that we have. Like the MFWDFD festival (Messing with forces we don't fully understand Day) or something like Megalith Monday....

Aisling Beith Ferch Arianrhod I am not one of those to "pray" for things for myself. When and if I petition the forces around me to move in a desired path is always something for the general good... helping heal the land, helping people be good to each other.. peace... that sort of thing. On occasion I will do so for another individual who needs healing of some kind. But for some reason I actually have a huge aversion to "asking" for things for myself. I do express thanks for the good things that happen for me, but I never "ask" for them.

Mhichíl Hill How are they relevant in our modern society? That is the question. As long as we can celebrate them with a context that honors our ancestors and is practical for our modern form of Druidry then I think they are fine.
Mike TheFool The hard question. Which ancestors, the last 200 years of typists, the last 7000 years of farmers, the last 5 million years of hunters and gatherers, the 20 million years of leaf munchers in the trees etc? Yet, we know not what the next 1000 years will bring. Shall our next generations be as foreign to us as the cave dwellers are to us? Or is the human spark, the love the continuity throughout greater than the economy or religion or languages that have obscured are connection and built walls of incomprehensibility between us? Are we seeking to imagine a return to the trees to the swamps to the deep ocean from which we came? Or is our path to return there again? I don't know.

Laurence A Venezia Sr I Feel A Connection To My Past Generations It Is Something Of A Nostalgia, Very Special Times Of The Year To Know Possibly My Ancestors May Or May not Have Celebrated These Seasonal Celebrations Is Not Important, There Is A Certain Energy Felt At These special Times Of Year, To Honor The Gods, Wights & Ancestors With Something More Elaborate Then The usual Ritual, Not Because I Want Anything Other then To be In My Special Area & Enjoy The Wheel of The Year & The Awe & Splendor O The Changing Seasons..

Lynn Charlton-Blore Lets not get too bound in sentimental hogwash....ha ha (she croaks in hagtails fit for queen at Halloween!) -NOW is the most important time to connect to our universal mind....as Janis Joplin says "It's one f.....n day man....." so lets make it special!

Mike TheFool NOW is always the right time to pray and celebrate the season you are in.

Laurence A Venezia Sr True Very True, All Times Are Great Times To Celebrate I Was Just Commenting On The Qestion At Hand, This Is A Great Topic...

Sean TheDruid The four fire festivals were indeed observations of the agricultural year. The two equinoxes and solstices were more celestial in nature. They actual marked occasions where the sun was either at it's most extreme or the days were equal. To druids/pagans in a modern context, it is important to know why our ancestors celebrated these events. These High days keep us connected to our various hearths and to our gods. To understand why they celebrated these days, gives us an deeper understanding of where we came from, who our gods were, and how we can continue to connect to them. Why you might feel a little divorced from the (example) Beltane and the running of cattle between the fires, you can appreciate the connection to our ancestors and hearths. Also, if you are a meat eater, you can appreciate the meat that you do eat. While you have difficulty grasping the festival of Lughnasadh with the first harvest, you can appreciate the fruits and vegetables that you consume. While urbanites might be divorced from the agricultural cycle as far as physically planting and slaughtering livestock, we still consume these items daily. I believe the urbanites of old felt the same displacement, but were able to celebrate these festivals because of the food available for them when they went to the market. To this day, modern farmers follow the seasons and deliver their products to us. Just because you don't do the labor, doesn't mean you can't offer sacrifice to the gods in appreciation for the food that you consume.



Debate #3

I read in the ARDA that anyone who wants or says they are a reformed druid is a reformed druid of the RDNA, true or false?

Stacey J. Weinberger This is what Mike Scharding wrote in the ARDA but not all agree with it.

Dyddgu Rhys If Sharding said it that means it must be true regardless of what others think. Since it's documented therefore it is.

Stacey J. Weinberger I doubt that. Mike wouldn't say anything like that.

Dyddgu Rhys Stacey J. Weinberger This is what Mike Scharding wrote in the ARDA but not all agree with it.

Dyddgu Rhys this is a contradiction..

Dyddgu Rhys im confused

Stacey J. Weinberger I doubt he said it much be true regardless of what others think.

Dyddgu Rhys How do I get ahold of CoDal? I need some serious and reliable answers

Stacey J. Weinberger I'm a member of CoDal.

Dyddgu Rhys somebody else plz

Stacey J. Weinberger My answer is serious.

Dyddgu Rhys how do i get a hold of AD at Carleton College?

Dyddgu Rhys who are the other board members or CoDal?

Helgaleena Healingline We don't do it like that, DR. I'm a member too, because I am a 3rd Order. And I say that if you believe the 2 Tenets, and want to be RDNA, you are, ceremony be darned. Being 2nd Order now, -- for that you need face-time and recognition of other RDNAs.

Dyddgu Rhys So that means I am a 3rd order because I say i am and took the waters?

Dyddgu Rhys just clarifying...

Stacey J. Weinberger No, you have not been ordained Second Order or Third Order. To attain those orders you must be ordained by a Third Order priest. You are only a First Order at this point.

Helgaleena Healingline You are a first order if you want, even if you just spit into your palm and lap it up. Where did you get the waters though? If it was from a Grove, you have a 3rd Order to ask. If it was from a Proto-Grove, you are as Druid as the founder of that group is.

Dyddgu Rhys Have a list of all 3rd order priests in the RDNA?

Finneagas Dravyn MacColl Oriana may I ask about the 'formal mentoring'? I was told there wasn't any, as we make it up as we go along, so what could apply as a substitute then and by whose approval of said outside information?

Finneagas Dravyn MacColl I thank you sincerely.

Helgaleena Healingline There are Druids who are 1st and 2nd Order, who have proto-Groves and free rein to worship as they please. There are 3rd Order Archdruids who found Groves and follow the Liturgy but also make innovations. You can't add to the ARDA without being an Archdruid, that's for sure. But as long as Nature is Good, go for it.

Dyddgu Rhys Stacy may i have the list plz?

Helgaleena Healingline The list of 3rd Orders is at Mike's site.

Finneagas Dravyn MacColl So lets say someone would like a 3rd order to come and perform a vigil,whom may it be that's contacted then?Mike,Stacy or any known 3rd order?

Dyddgu Rhys And where would one find a mentor when the mentor isn't accepting new members in thier grove?

Finneagas Dravyn MacColl or near where you may be?

Helgaleena Healingline see previous post

Dyddgu Rhys I inquired with a 3rd over a year ago, got a promise then he renigged, inquired again with the same 3rd and got the brush off again. Inquired with another 3rd recently and told they were to busy. What does it take to find a 3rd who do an ordination?

Stacey J. Weinberger Now I'm confused. It sounded like you didn't know about ordinations, that because you had partaken of the waters of life that you thought you were a Third Order.

Dyddgu Rhys didn't say i was a 3rd of rdna was merely inquiring about it

Dyddgu Rhys if i was a 3rd of this order i wouldn't be asking

Dyddgu Rhys now where can i get a 3rd today lets say to do my 3rd?

Dyddgu Rhys been waiting for over year now

Helgaleena Healingline . But if you got waters of life from another RDNA they would be a big help to you. Meanwhile talk to a nearby tree and calm yourself.

Dyddgu Rhys i would appreciate you talking to me with respect without the antaganizing, I am questioning this list because I want answers.

Dyddgu Rhys Unless this how people are to be treated in the RDNA

Helgaleena Healingline Go to the list of 3rd Orders on Mike's site, and try to locate somebody else if the first two didn't get back to you. We are fallible human creatures of varying temperaments.

Dyddgu Rhys I think i need to talk the AD, what is his email address plz?

Dyddgu Rhys 2010-2011: Beksahn Jang is current AD

Helgaleena Healingline No he isn't, I am! And so are Stacey and Mike! We haven't got a high poohbah Pope of the Archdruids!

Helgaleena Healingline Oh and let's not forget Teresa Reitan and Stephen and a bunch of other older and wiser heads than us...

Daniel Henry Lessin Beksahn Jang has since graduated.

Stacey J. Weinberger And Daniel above is also a Third Order.

Daniel Henry Lessin ...And when he was in power, he tended to leave a lot of the politics to me, actually, but that was, as everyone else was saying, just the Carleton Grove, we of Carleton College speak for very few people

Helgaleena Healingline there's plenty to choose from :P

Dyddgu Rhys So if there is no head AD then the RDNA is defunt

Daniel Henry Lessin not really, we're a confederacy of sorts...a switch in organizational technique, so to speak

Dyddgu Rhys Doesn't that go against policy of the RDNA?

Helgaleena Healingline I resent that a bit on principle and can see why you might have exasperated other 3rd Orders.

Dyddgu Rhys What is there to resent? its a question requiring an honest answer

Stacey J. Weinberger No, there never has been a head of the RDNA. It wasn't set up that way. Each grove is self governing.

Daniel Henry Lessin Well, you seem to be implying that we're doing something wrong which is to be interpreted very much in our own style..we've very few important principles to live by in common, but those we have we hold pretty dear, i feel

Helgaleena Healingline No it doesn't 'go against policy of the RDNA' because we only have the Tenets, the Liturgy, and the 3 Orders. Doesn't say we need a Pope.

Dyddgu Rhys Then if its all made up, anyone can claim 3rd order RDNA because they made it up.

Helgaleena Healingline You can claim it, but we won't claim you.

Helgaleena Healingline Unless you are nice to us.

Dyddgu Rhys Lets talk about nice for moment, nice is a relative term, thus me questioning is not being nice?

Dyddgu Rhys Is being nice in policy of RDNA and CoDAI?

Helgaleena Healingline You can be a first Order a*hole, certainly. But in 2nd Order and 3rd Order just as in other parts of humanity, niceness helps.

Dyddgu Rhys conversation ended due to lack of knowledge of RDNA policy by RDNA Members, Have Mike get a hold me plz thanks. To many contradictions and twists. And please don't smoke the trees, they don't like that.

Daniel Henry Lessin good day. sorry you didn't get the answers you sought

Dyddgu Rhys Conversation also ended due to RDNA members swearing at the lower orders.

Dyddgu Rhys How RUDE!!! good day

Helgaleena Healingline showing rudimentary understanding of trees is very nice.

Stacey J. Weinberger Please go read the Druid Chronicles in the first part of the ARDA. They will answer a lot of your questions.

Dyddgu Rhys Thank you Stacey.

Dyddgu Rhys for all your help.

Daniel Henry Lessin That's actually a good idea...It will describe a lot of what we were trying to imply, but was kinda lost in translation...sorry that it came off a bit harshly.

Mike TheFool The rdna is baffling to ordinary religion, perhaps designed as such. Inadvertently we perplex people in a hurry to categorize or fit us in boxes. It took me years to devise a system that could explain what the Druids did ,but it really is a system of what they don'ttoo Your questions are pertinent and many are answered inthe welcome pamphlet. There's no need to hurry, you'll find it unravels and becomes clearer with a year or two of study and reflection and then after that it will plunge into chaotic confusion to where I am now :)

But in all things be patient , good natured and honest in discussion. If you tetras the posts there was a lot of good wisdom in there!

Try www.rdna.info/uwp.doc. And keep asking such good questions, that's a good sign, the better sign is when the answer provokes a laugh rather than anger by the student. Good luck.

Oh isn't Laura mcreary the ad at Carleton now, loved that the youngest most inexperienced archdruid was in job of keeping the group together, that's humor right there!!!

Teresa Reitan Yes that's true. If you don't believe me ask Michael Sharding. He's the one who said it.

Penny Leyson Young oh my LOL quite the convo :-)



Debate #4

Does this also make them a 3rd order because they believe they are? And how does this apply to other branches of the RDNA?

Stacey J. Weinberger This is where it gets squiggly because of what Mike wrote. For me a person has to be ordained an Order (First, Second, or Third, and at one point there was an "Acorn" level) to be a Reformed Druid. To become a First Order it is quite easy. Traditionally you agree to the two tenets. Some groves and Third Orders have a First Order Ordination ceremony.

Stacey J. Weinberger A Third Order must be a Second Order and be ordained by another Third Order (AD if there is a grove or a "travelling missionary Third).

Dyddgu Rhys So I agreed to the tenants which means I am a 1st order. And I already took my waters of life so that makes me a 2nd order?

Stacey J. Weinberger No, that is for the First Order. Were the waters of life consecrated by a Third Order? They would need to be. No, the Second Order has a whole ordination all unto itself.

Helgaleena Healingline 3rd Order is when you are a 2nd Order who feels the calling to start a Grove. It involves an ordination and a Vigil. For that you need another Archdruid to ordain you.

Dyddgu Rhys I have a grove.

Stacey J. Weinberger But you haven't been ordained by a Third Order. Anyone can have a grove.

Helgaleena Healingline You mean, anyone can have a Proto-Grove. It's not a true RDNA Grove without an Archdruid of the 3rd Order.

Stacey J. Weinberger Right. I was thinking more grove site rather than grove. Thank you for correcting that. :)

Finneagas Dravyn MacColl Our constitution wa sent to Carleton who said to contact Mike Sharding,which we did.

Helgaleena Healingline Mike told me I had a Grove and I looked, and behold, there it was! I'd been 3rd Order for years without bothering.

Finneagas Dravyn MacColl I would like to hear Mikes imput if possible.

Rusty Mon I was Born, under a Wandering 3rd Order...or was it a Dream? If it can be done by Phone, why not by Dream?

Stacey J. Weinberger You can become a doctor by a dream too!

Rusty Mon I give myself Brain-Surgery all the time!

Sayer de Wahull That monkey has your shrimp.

Sayer de Wahull Funny thing about "ordination", the word. Means so many things to so many people, yet at its root; "order". To place things into a proper order. First usages in the 1300s had to do with which "orders" you went into of "the church". Later evolved into the concept of authority.

I have a sticky situation in that the volunteer work I do requires an "ordination from an organization, recognized by the US Army Chaplains". And a letter of good standing, on official letterhead. No ordination from any aspect of the RDNA would satisfy the Army Chaplain's Corp. However, an ordination can be had quite readily from many organizations that the Army DOES recognize. So I have those credentials that mean nothing to me, but empower me to serve people I care about. Hmmmm, something doesn't feel totally right about that. I drive on anyway. The 'order' and 'authority' were confirmed by the Army Chaplain Colonel Newton who sought me out and over several months convinced me that this was a good thing and I was the guy to do it. Our Protogrove (Desert Willow) got swallowed by a bigger fish (Earth Spirit NTC). I have authority from the members of the protogrove based upon annual elections, I have authority from the Earth spirit Group by nature of a strong desire from the people who participate.

The order and authority is established, but there is no meaning, other than a means to gather folks and let them help each other.

In my heart, I dream of the day when I'll pass though the ritual stages of the RDNA orders. If that dream never eventuates, I wont have let opportunity to enjoy the company and companionship of our group pass me by. The ordiantions, while important, take a way back seat to the people.

Mike TheFool I think you told me that you had a grove in wisc so I assumed you had one. Not a lot of people register with Carleton anymore. We should probably request the file them on a website or conference so we can jeep track of them, but that would likely only be a concern if their "credentials" were challenged by some outside authority as in the Smiley Affairs when the Carleton grove confirmed that Smiley was a priest in good standing and operating a fully chartered grove and thus eligible for a draft exemption in 1971. As you can tell even inhve trouble keeping track of our 20 groves in my spare time, but I don't approve them in that sense, just keep track and share the info while the Calderon ad does what she does best - be fabulously Druidic in a wonderland. I'd hope they'd tAke an interest in organization, but they seem o have other things to do, leaving Atlas to hold up the sky. :)

Mike TheFool On a philosophical level there are internally and externally applied labels of authority. Strange things happen when you have one And not the other. Your job is a bit different in each scenario isn't it.

Mike TheFool Some have authority but using it well or "not using" it well can happen. Some don't use it well and some don't use it at all. Similarly some don't have internal or external authrorty but are in leadership. So many situations.

I'd note that non thirds can theoretically lead services that are either proto rove style or that are not based on the order of worship, such as experimental, family services, personal or side order rites or external services to

which they are trained like Wicca etc. In practice it is usually the third order folk who are interested in leading most services at groves, of whatever ilk , but I've seen plenty of exceptions.

Teresa Reitan No, for a 3rd Order, you have to sit an all night vigil. But a 3rd Order Druid can get hold of you by phone and ordain you.

Mike TheFool It happens rarely, so much less aesthetically pleasing, but aye it could happen, requires a bit of mailing of this and that, unless you dip the phone in the chalice, I suppose....

Patricia Norwood all night vigils are a part of the OOS initiatory processes so here is another similarity we have in our practices.



Debate #5

Complete the Sentence - Witty Contest

"When you come to a fork in the road...."

Domi O'Brien Pick it up and look for the plate.

Catherine McGregor Stick a knife in it and and dance with the moon.

Helgaleena Healingline --take it!

Tully Reill watch where you step, there could be more...and knives too!

Benjamin Thomas You are forked unless you know which way to go...

Penny Leyson Young which ever way the road takes you :-)

Patricia Norwood look for the knife and spoon to go with it.

John Martens I'd feel bad that it was abandoned, because the dish ran away with the spoon.

Finneagas Dravyn MacColl Throw it a nice steak!

Patricia Norwood add some mashed potatoes lol.

Alan Wisniewski probe for landmines, unless the last owner left a dark red stain nearby

Sayer de Wahull Hopeful you have already chosen your path, if not, let your heart decide before your brain mucks it up.

Jess Stone "be sure that you haven't stumbled onto a giant's dining table before proceeding any further."

Brid Dana DragonWillow Remember to put the bib's on the tree's before dinner.

Tony Dunsworth look for the dinner plate

Mike TheFool Get out your map and figure where you want to go, and how much time you've got, perhaps a detour might be fun.

Jefrey Classic Go neither way but tread your own path down the middle.

NEWS



Leaf-Hunting Season Begins

OCTOBER 17, 2011 | ISSUE 47•42

THE ONION NEWS

PENACOOK, NH—Sportsmen throughout the region donned camouflage and readied their rifles and bows Monday, heralding the official opening of New Hampshire's 2011 leaf-hunting season.

In what has become a time-honored autumn ritual, foliage hunters reportedly entered the state's wooded areas to match their skills against maple, oak, and poplar leaves that have fallen from trees.

"Nothing makes you feel more alive than the sweat on your brow as you take down a freshly sprawled pile of red maple leaves," said 58-year-old hunter Lyle Inman, showing

reporters the mounted taxidermy busts of leaves hanging on a wall in his home. "The adrenaline rush of being face-to-face with a leaf in its native environment is simply unparalleled."

"This is an American tradition," Inman added. "It's man against nature."

State game officials confirmed that for the next three weeks it will be open season on the fallen leaves of silver maples, cottonwoods, all oak varieties, flowering dogwoods, shagbark hickories, sycamores over 10 feet, larches, and hackberries. As usual, New Hampshire's state tree will be fair game for one weekend only, during the annual Great White Birch Hunt, in which each participant is limited to one leaf per \$20 permit.

The Granite State's forest canopies have turned exceptionally vivid shades of gold, sienna, amber, and russet this year, reportedly drawing in hunters from all over the Northeast who hope to return home with a prize leaf strapped to the hood of their car.

"I brought my son out this year so he could have a chance to bag his first leaf," said Dan Hardin of Leominster, MA, who was teaching his 12-year-old son how to cut open a sweet-birch leaf and clean it. "Hopefully we can kill enough to freeze and last us through the winter. You can pickle and jar them, too. Folks around here have been doing that for generations."

Over the years, hunters said, their strategies for stalking leaves have grown more sophisticated and they've found new ways to get closer to piles undetected, often by cloaking themselves with spray-on bark scents or blowing into a "leaf call" device that mimics rustling noises.

Nonetheless, experienced marksmen said the only way to guarantee a clean leaf kill is with a straight shot to the midrib or petiole.

"You've got to stay focused, tread lightly, and, most importantly, think like a leaf," said skilled huntsman Ernie Richards, 43, a native of Amherst, NH. "Sometimes I'll track a leaf for a full day before making my move. It's all about keeping one step ahead of your quarry and anticipating where it will go next. Then you go in for the kill."

"This one's just a young bud—no older than two months, I'd say," continued Richards, holding up a shotgun-grazed young oak leaf he soon released back into the wild. "If you look over there you'll see an older one. That boy's a five-pointer at least."

While vegetation rights groups have long protested the sport, leaf-hunting enthusiasts have been quick to defend the practice as both an inalienable right and a method necessary to curb the rapid growth of organic debris on forest floors.

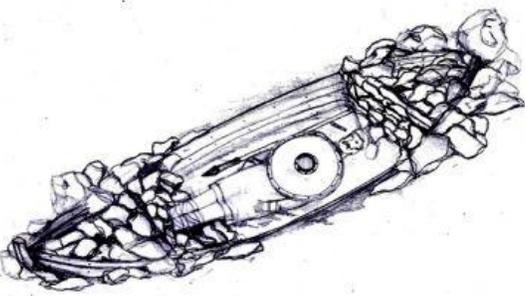
Walter Hastings, a retiree who lives on Lake Winnepesaukee, said his front yard is overrun by leaves almost every fall. When the problem arose again this year, he invested in a crossbow.

"I'm not much of a hunter myself, but if I didn't shoot some of these elm leaves each day, they'd be all over my grass," he said. "There's a reason God gave us dominion over such things. We've got to take them down a notch or else they get out of control." Several hunters told reporters they see leaf season as a call to return to the wilderness, a yearly rite that hearkens back to a time when people everywhere lived off the land and its leaves.



"It's not just about outmaneuvering a pile of leaves," said Paul Garrison, 33, who is planning a hunting trip with friends this weekend. "This is about sitting out in a field with a couple of guys, smelling the charred red pine needles over a fire, and drinking some beers while taking in the natural beauty around you."

"It's a simpler way of life," Garrison continued. "I'm sure the guys who go pollen-trapping would tell you the same thing."



Viking Chief Buried in His Boat Found in Scotland

The first intact Viking boat burial site to be found on the British mainland was discovered recently in Scotland, archaeologists announced. The grave contains the body of a Norse warrior thought to have been a chieftain or other high-ranking figure, lying with his weapons by his side in the remains of a rotted ship. He was likely interred during a ritualized pagan ceremony roughly 1,000 years ago, according to the researchers.

An X-ray of an elaborately decorated sword, encrusted with centuries of rust, found in a Viking boat burial site in Scotland. (Credit: Pieta Greaves/AOC Archaeology)

"This is a very exciting find," said project co-director Hannah Cole, who for six years has been leading digs on the remote Ardnamurchan peninsula in the Scottish highlands. "Though we have excavated many important artifacts over the years, I think it's fair to say that this year the archaeology has really exceeded our expectations."

Viking boat burials are extremely rare, in part because only prominent individuals received the reverent and elaborate sendoff. In the Norse religion, valiant warriors entered festive and glorious realms after death, and it was thought that the vessels that served them well in life would help them reach their final destination. Distinguished raiders were also equipped with weapons and valuable goods for the afterlife, even if they were to be cremated.

A drawing of what the burial site unearthed at Ardnamurchan might have looked like. (Credit: Sarah Paris) Although its wooden timbers decomposed long ago, the outline of a ship surrounds what's left of the body—fragments of an arm bone and several teeth—found in the Ardnamurchan grave. Hundreds of metal rivets that once held the vessel together, some with wood shards still attached, also remain. The dig also revealed a knife, an axe, a sword with an ornate hilt, a shield, part of a bronze drinking horn, pottery and other possessions that the dead chief might have needed for the hereafter—all encrusted with centuries of rust but shown by X-rays to be in remarkable condition.

"A Viking boat burial is an incredible discovery, but in addition to that, the artifacts and preservation make this one of the most important Norse graves ever excavated in Britain," said Cole. A handful of other boat burials have been unearthed on the UK mainland, but lack of expertise and outdated techniques made these early excavations unsuccessful. The best-preserved examples come from Norway, Denmark and Sweden.

The seafaring Scandinavians known as the Vikings raided and settled coastal sites in the British Isles and beyond between the ninth and 11th centuries. In the 10th century, when the Ardnamurchan Viking was laid to rest, Norsemen occupied Ireland, Scotland and northwest England, and some had already begun converting to Christianity. This was apparently not the case for the mourners who interred the newly discovered warrior, whose grave bears traces of pagan traditions including stones covering the body.



Magical Mystery Treasure Buried in the English countryside. Anglo-Saxon in origin. Who hid it and why?

By Caroline Alexander

Art by Daniel Docu

One day, or perhaps one night, in the late seventh century an unknown party traveled along an old Roman road that cut across an uninhabited heath fringed by forest in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia. Possibly they were soldiers, or then again maybe thieves—the remote area would remain notorious for highwaymen for centuries—but at any rate they were not casual travelers. Stepping off the road near the rise of a small ridge, they dug a pit and buried a stash of treasure in the ground.

For 1,300 years the treasure lay undisturbed, and eventually the landscape evolved from forest clearing to grazing pasture to working field. Then treasure hunters equipped with metal detectors—ubiquitous in Britain—began to call on farmer Fred Johnson, asking permission to walk the field. "I told one I'd lost a wrench and asked him to find that," Johnson says. Instead, on July 5, 2009, Terry Herbert came to the farmhouse door and announced to Johnson that he had found Anglo-Saxon treasure.

The Staffordshire Hoard, as it was quickly dubbed, electrified the general public and Anglo-Saxon scholars alike. Spectacular discoveries, such as the royal finds at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk, had been made in Anglo-Saxon burial sites. But the treasure pulled from Fred Johnson's field was novel—a cache of gold, silver, and garnet objects from early Anglo-Saxon times and from one of the most important kingdoms of the era. Moreover, the quality and style of the intricate filigree and cloisonné decorating the objects were extraordinary, inviting heady comparisons to such legendary treasures as the Lindisfarne Gospels or the Book of Kells.

Once cataloged, the hoard was found to contain some 3,500 pieces representing hundreds of complete objects. And the items that could be securely identified presented a striking pattern. There were more than 300 sword-hilt fittings, 92 sword-pommel caps, and 10 scabbard pendants. Also noteworthy: There were no coins or women's jewelry, and out of the entire collection, the three religious objects appeared to be the only nonmartial pieces. Intriguingly, many of the items seemed to have been bent or broken. This treasure, then, was a pile of broken, elite, military hardware hidden 13 centuries ago in a politically and militarily turbulent region. The Staffordshire Hoard was thrilling and historic—but above all it was enigmatic.

Celts, Roman colonizers, Viking marauders, Norman conquerors—all came and went, leaving their mark on Britain's landscape, language, and character. But it is the six centuries of Anglo-Saxon rule, from shortly after the departure of the Roman colonizers, around A.D. 410, to the Norman Conquest in 1066, that most define what we now call England.

Barbarian tribes had been moving westward across Europe since the mid-third century and may have made raids on Britain around this time. In the early fifth century the restless tribes menaced Rome, prompting it to withdraw garrisons from Britannia, the province it had governed for 350 years, to fight threats closer to home. As the Romans left, the Scotti and Picts, tribes to the west and north, began to raid across the borders. Lacking Roman defenders, Britons solicited Germanic troops from the continent as mercenaries. The Venerable Bede—whose *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, written in the eighth century, is the most valuable source for this era—gives the year of the fateful invitation as around 450 and characterizes the soldiers as coming from "three very powerful Germanic tribes, the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes." Modern scholars locate the homelands of these tribes in Germany, the northern Netherlands, and Denmark.

Enticed by reports of the richness of the land and the "slackness of the Britons," the soldiers in the first three ships were followed by more, and soon, Bede noted, "hordes of these peoples eagerly crowded into the island and the number of foreigners began to increase to such an extent that they became a source of terror to the natives." The British monk Gildas, whose sixth-century treatise *On the Ruin of Britain* is the earliest surviving account of this murky period, describes the ensuing islandwide bloodshed and scorched-earth tactics at the hands of the invaders: "For the fire of vengeance . . . spread from sea to sea . . . and did not cease, until, destroying the neighbouring towns and lands, it reached the other side of the island."

According to Gildas, many in the "miserable remnant" of surviving native Britons fled or were enslaved. But archaeological evidence suggests that at least some post-Roman settlements adopted Germanic fashions in pottery and clothing and burial practices; in other words, British culture vanished at least in part through cultural assimilation. The extent of the Anglo-Saxons' appropriation of Britain is starkly revealed in their most enduring legacy, the English language. While much of Europe emerged from the post-Roman world speaking Romance languages—Spanish, Italian, and French derived from the Latin of the bygone Romans—the language that would define England was Germanic.

The discovery of a treasure hoard in an English field was not in itself remarkable. Such finds surface everywhere in Britain. Coins, silver objects cut up for scrap metal, dumps of weapons, even a magnificent silver dinner service—all from British, Roman, or Viking times—have been found in the soil. In the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf* the warrior Sigemund has killed a dragon guarding "dazzling spoils," and the aged hero Beowulf battles a dragon guarding gold and "garnered jewels" laid in the ground.



Treasure was buried for many reasons: to keep it out of enemy hands, to "bank" a fortune, to serve as a votive offering. Given the era's scant documentation, the motive behind the burial of the Staffordshire Hoard is best surmised from the hoard itself. The first clue is its military character, which suggests that the assemblage was not a grab bag of loot. The nature of the hoard accords with the militarism of the Germanic tribes, which was impressive even to the military-minded Romans. The historian Tacitus, writing in the late first century, noted that "they conduct no business, public or private, except under arms," and that when a boy came of age, he was presented with a shield and spear—"the equivalent of our toga."

Warfare formed England. The consolidation of land gained by warfare and alliances was the likely origin of the tribal kingships of early Anglo-Saxon England. The first Mercians are thought to have been Angles who moved inland along the River Trent, establishing themselves in the valley in the vicinity of the hoard. Mercia was not only one of the most important of the seven principal Anglo-Saxon kingships into which England was roughly divided but also one of the most belligerent. Between A.D. 600 and 850 Mercia waged 14 wars with its neighbor Wessex, 11 with the Welsh, and 18 campaigns with other foes—and these are only the named conflicts.

The apex of Teutonic military craft was the long cutting sword. Averaging about three feet, blades were pattern welded, a sophisticated technique by which twisted rods and strips of iron or steel were hammered together. Forged from this intricate folding, the polished blades rippled with chevron or herringbone patterns. As one appreciative recipient recorded in the early sixth century, they appear "to be grained with tiny snakes, and here such varied shadows play that you would believe the shining metal to be interwoven with many colours."

Modern studies of wounds on skeletons found in an Anglo-Saxon cemetery in Kent show that these beautiful swords also worked: "Male, aged 25-35 years...has a single linear cranial injury 16 cm long," states the clinical report. "The plane of the injury is almost vertically downwards."

The number of sword pommels in the Staffordshire Hoard, 92, roughly corresponds with the number of men noted as making up one nobleman's troop of retainers. The hoard, then, could represent the elite military gear that distinguished the retinue of a certain lord. Often a sword was issued by a lord to his retainers along with other equipment and even horses, together known as a *heriot*, repaid if the retainer died before his lord. In a will written in the tenth century a district official bequeaths "to my royal lord as a *heriot* four armlets of... gold, and four swords and eight horses, four with trappings and four without, and four helmets and four coats-of-mail and eight spears and eight shields." Swords were also buried with their warrior owners or passed down as family heirlooms.

But sometimes swords were buried without warriors. In a practice in northern Europe dating from the Bronze Age through Anglo-Saxon times, swords and other objects, many conspicuously valuable, were deposited in bogs, rivers, and streams as well as in the ground. "We can no longer see hoards only as piggy banks," says Kevin Leahy, an authority on Anglo-Saxon history who was entrusted with the task of cataloging the Staffordshire treasure. Ritual deposits, as opposed to caches buried for safekeeping, are found not only in Britain but also in Scandinavia, homeland of some of England's Germanic tribes. Significantly, many weapons—and sometimes other objects, such as a craftsman's tools—were, like the objects in the hoard, bent or broken before burial. Perhaps "killing" a weapon dispatched it to the land of spirits or rendered it a votive offering to the gods, its destruction representing the donor's irrevocable surrender of the valuable weapon's use.

"This is a hoard for male display," says Nicholas Brooks, an emeritus historian at the University of Birmingham, who calls the glittering objects found in Staffordshire "bling for warrior companions of the king." Gold, weighing in at more than 11 pounds, accounts for nearly 75 percent of the metal in the hoard. According to Brooks, "the source is a mystery." The origin of most gold in England was ultimately Rome, whose later imperial currency had been based on the solidus, a solid gold coin. Imperial gold had fallen to the Germanic tribes as plunder following the sack of Rome, and caches found in England may have been recirculated and recycled. By the date of the Staffordshire Hoard, gold supplies were dwindling, and silver and silver alloy were being used instead. Similarly, the source of garnets—like gold, a striking feature of the hoard—had shifted, from India to Bohemia and Portugal.

Historian Guy Halsall has estimated the value of the hoard's gold in its day as equivalent to 800 solidi, about 80 horses' worth. Modern valuation of the find has been set at £3,285,000, or just under \$5.3 million. In its own time, however, the hoard's worth was surely calibrated by other considerations. The gold dazzles, but from a practical point of view the most valuable part of the weaponry—"the long, sharp, pointy bit you killed people with," as Halsall notes dryly—is not present in the hoard, and it is possible that the sword blades were cannily retained for reuse.

Above all, the pieces in the hoard were forged and buried in a world in which mundane events and acts could be suffused with magic; misfortune, for instance, was commonly attributed to tiny darts fired by malicious elves, and many charms against attacks survive. The magic properties an object possessed trumped its material worth. Gold was valued not only for being precious but also because, alluring and indestructible, it was infused with magic, and therefore used in amulets. Germanic myths tell of the gods' great hall of gold, and as Christian churches and monasteries gained wealth, they acquired golden sacramental objects. In many cultures the very art of metallurgy is magical, and Nordic sagas have vivid details of the smith's magic arts, from Odin's spear and gold ring to Thor's hammer.



Magic may also account for the only three obviously nonmilitary objects in the Staffordshire Hoard: two gold crosses and a slender strip of gold inscribed with a biblical quotation. Christianity first came to Britain with the Roman occupation, faded as the Romans faded, and was vigorously reintroduced to Anglo-Saxon England by missionaries, most from Ireland and the Continent. There was a "perception of the conversion event as a spiritual battle," writes Karen Jolly, an authority on Anglo-Saxon popular religion. Conversion was a battle for the soul—effectively warfare, something the Germanic pagans understood. And the cross was a militarily useful symbol that had figured dramatically in actual battles. Bede tells the story of the Northumbrian king Oswald, who before the Battle of Heavenfield against the Welsh in 634 "set up the sign of the holy cross and, on bended knees, prayed God to send heavenly aid to His worshippers in their dire need." He and his men then "gained the victory that their faith

merited." Remarkably, one of the hoard's two crosses was determinedly bent and folded, like so many of the other pieces in the hoard. Was this to "kill" its military potency, as with the swords?

This possibility is made more compelling by the only other apparently nonmartial object: The slender strip of gold, inscribed on two sides with the same biblical quotation is, strikingly, also folded. "[S]urge d[omi]ne disepentur inimici tui et [f]ugent qui oderunt te a facie tua—Rise up, Lord, may your enemies be dispersed and those who hate you flee from your face." The quotation is from the Latin Vulgate text of Numbers 10:35 and the Psalm now numbered 68:1—verses that may have been put to unexpected use. In the *Life of Saint Guthlac*, written around 740, Guthlac is beset by demons, whereupon he "sang the first verse of the sixty-seventh psalm as if prophetically, 'Let God arise,' etc.: When they had heard this, at the same moment, quicker than words, all the hosts of demons vanished like smoke from his presence." Even the hoard's nonmartial objects, it seems, might have had militarily useful, magical functions.

The Mercians were aggressive border raiders—Mercia takes its name from the Old English *mierce*, meaning "frontier people"—which may account for the apparent range of regional styles in the hoard. "The hoard was found on a frontier zone, which is always interesting," Kevin Leahy says. "It was on the border between Mercia and Wales." In other words, in contested territory. Around 650, in Staffordshire's Trent Valley near Lichfield, an obscure battle was fought involving the Mercians and their Welsh neighbors. Much plunder was carried away—possibly down the old Roman road Watling Street, which leads past the site where the Staffordshire Hoard was found. Event and place are commemorated in the Welsh poem "Marwnad Cynddylan—The Death Song of Cynddylan":

Grandeur in battle! Extensive spoils
Morial bore off from in front of Lichfield.
Fifteen hundred cattle from the front of battle;
four twenties of stallions and equal harness.
The chief bishop wretched in his four-cornered
house, the book-keeping monks did not protect.

A retinue of 80 horses and spoils from a "wretched" bishop (a detail that conjures the gold inscription and crosses): The poem offers a tempting explanation for the hoard, an explanation, alas, built from slender, circumstantial evidence that has happened to survive from an era from which most evidence was lost. We can conjure other teasing theories. Our unknown travelers may have chosen the burial spot because it was obscure—or because it was conspicuous. The burial might have had a marker for rediscovery, or it might have been intended as an offering hidden forever to all but their gods. The hoard may have been ransom, or booty, or a votive thanks. It may have been a collection of Anglo-Saxon heirlooms buried at a later time.

Today the vanished Mercian landscape is evoked by surviving Anglo-Saxon place-names, such as those ending with "leah" or "ley," meaning "open woodland," like Wyrley, or Lichfield itself, whose name roughly means the "common pasture in or beside the gray wood." The hoard burial site is now a grassy field where Fred Johnson grazes horses. Odds are we will never know the story behind the Staffordshire Hoard, but in a world without magic spells or dragons, would we understand it if we did?

Contributing writer Caroline Alexander wrote the June 2008 cover story about Stonehenge. Robert Clark drove more than 3,000 miles to complete his 30th National Geographic story. This is Daniel Dociu's first assignment for the magazine.

BOOK REVIEWS

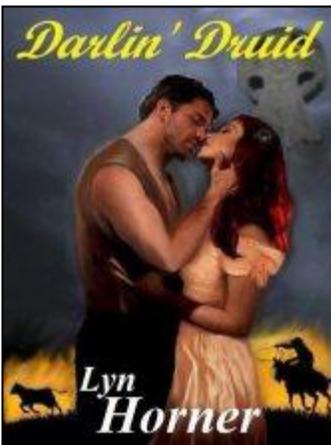


Druidical Treasure: Serialized Adventure Novel about Reformed Druids at Carleton College

(<http://webspaces.webring.com/people/dm/mikerdna/treasure.html>)

An 8 part, illustrated semi-fictional novel, loosely based on the movie "National Treasure", and set at Carleton College. The author enlisted current Druidic students to act out the scenes and take pictures of the campus to give the story extreme realism. The story conveys the author's opinions,

If you like the Desperate Druids webseries adventure, you might like to view this illustrated 170 page novel "Druidical Treasure" from 2004 about 2 Reformed Druids searching for buried treasure at Carleton College with a series of Clues. 227 color photos and charts. It'll give you an idea of how crazy "DD" might become and its a fun way to learn about Reformed Druidism.



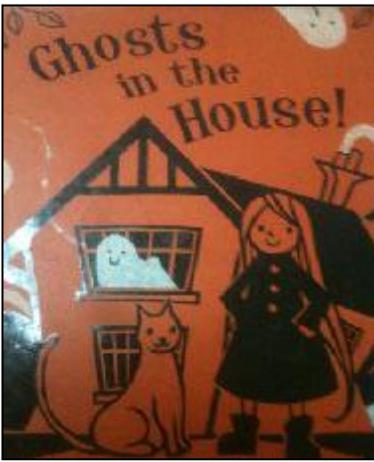
Darlin' Druid (Texas Druids)

(From Amazon – Kindle)

Set in the American West of 1872, *Darlin' Druid* is a tale of epic adventure, stormy romance and family strife, sparked by flashes of Druid magic. Jessie Devlin, a daughter of Irish immigrants and a survivor of the Great Chicago Fire, is descended from the "Old Ones," her mother's name for their ancient Druid ancestors. Gifted with second sight, Jessie suffers nightmares in which an unknown man saves her from burning to death. A prophetic vision convinces her that the man truly exists and to find him she must look west. But will her quest lead her to love or into a deadly trap?

Captain David Taylor is a Texan who sided with the North in the Civil War, earning his father's abiding wrath. Now serving on the frontier, David longs for home and a family of his own. After a trip east, he encounters Jessie in the Omaha train depot. He's entranced by her beauty but has no taste for her firecracker temper. She brings to mind a ghost from his past who he'd rather forget. As the two journey westward, their clashing personalities war with fiery passion that threatens to overwhelm common sense. Violence dogs them along the rails and explodes amid the unexpected beauty of Mormon Utah and in an isolated mountain mining camp. Whether love will win the day or be lost forever is a question that hangs in the balance until the terrifying conclusion on the broad Texas plains.

More on the author at : <http://texasdruids.com/2011/03/11/darlin-druid-on-nook/>



GHOSTS IN THE HOUSE

By Kazuno Kohara

Of all the children's Halloween books my children consumed this season, this was the one that provide the most intriguing take on the encounter with ghosts that I have ever seen.

Written by a Japanese woodblock illustrator in three colors, he details the humorous reaction of a young girl and her cat when she moves into a haunted house. She happily turns lemons into lemonade and deftly captures, dry-cleans and recycles the rampant specters into curtains, table cloths and blankets.

DRUID INQUIRER produced 8 times per year, not an official publication.

To contribute send articles, poems, news clip, grove news, cartoons etc to mikerdna@hotmail.com