

**Spring Equinox Issue**  
**Year of the Reform "LI"**  
**March 19, 2014 c.e.**  
**Volume 31, Issue 2**

## **Editor's Notes**

As we enter the Equinox, we take a moment to notice (again) that weather patterns have not been quite balanced. We are all familiar now with the term “Polar Vortex” and that the term “climate change” isn’t always synonymous with “global warming”. Unpredictability is another word for “Chaos”, as the world moves towards a new long-term “norm”, and that affects weather, agriculture, environment, economics, and there will be winners and losers in geopolitics. I encourage you to support long-term sustainability projects, fund greater educational efforts with scientific basis, and most of all, remember. Remember what the world was like when you were a child, so that you can tell future generations. So much is passing quickly.



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## News of the Groves

### **Carleton Grove: News from MN**

Mike TheFool Anna Smith indicated that there might be some life left in Druidism as Carleton. Hopefully, Spring Equinox, Beltane and Solstice will bring the Oakdale Twin Cities grove and Carleton Students together to compare notes and enjoy the wonders of the arb and good conversation.

**Jon Drum** Planning on going to the 51st...

**Anna** Can confirm; there are a handful of us who have been celebrating sabbats together (one of us isn't actually a druid at all, but rather Asatru), and we've been talking seriously about breathing some life back into the Carleton grove. We're excited to attend the reunion and will do what we can to get the word out on campus for hedge druids and curious students alike!

**Jon** Were you one of the folks at the 50th?

**Anna** Nope, I'm a first year at Carleton and so are the rest of the people I'm currently practicing with. There are probably more of us from other years, but we just don't know where to look for them. Hopefully advertising a bit and forming a more cohesive group will bring them out a bit.

**Jon** Well, I am so happy to hear that - good luck

**Jon** I have to say it was beyond amazing to walk through the campus with the Frangquists et al. last year and visit the sights and revisit the history. It was \*awesome\*

**John** Anna, if you can contact Matt , last Beltane we gave him a fully-stocked RDNA "starter kit." A pair of chalices, a leatherbound selected works of ARDA, it also housed a green glass chalice that was supposed to be deposited in the Carleton Arch...See More

**Stacey** It certainly was!

**Anna** Every time I've tried to contact Matt, he's ignored me.  
I'm not sure how we'll inherit the kit if he's out of reach like this...

**Mike TheFool** Sigh. Looks like its time to make another start-up kit of goodies! You know, it's tradition for the Carleton Druids to lose everything every summer. It's endearing.

**Stacey J** John shared the reliquary with us at the 50th reunion. He put a lot of work into it and it wasn't something he just threw together from stuff imported from China. Sounds like it's time for an S&R mission to Northfield.

**Glenn** Yes. That is a beautiful piece.

**Mike TheFool** I'm sure its still beautiful, wherever it is now.

**John Michael** Now I'm concerned about Norm's chalice. It was to be temporarily stored in the reliquary until Monday May 6, 2013 when the Carleton Archive was open, and deposited with

Eric. We were careful to make sure Matt would deposit that chalice, and I remember he understood why. Anna if you have time to visit Eric in the Archives during hours, you can ask if a green glass was deposited in the druid archives.

**Anna** The archives just closed, so I could maybe do it on Monday. They might not even be open because the term is over, but I can check

**Mike TheFool** BTW: i have a bunch of Isaac's chalices too. I might bring them this summer.

### Carleton Mini-51<sup>st</sup> Reunion



Never too early to start planning the 51st anniversary of the RDNA. I've been strongly advised to set the date for the 51st Beltane, so how does the first weekend of May sound? Saturday May 3, 2014 would be the main reunion and celebration, and I'm definitely open to having festivities the Friday before as well, since weather at that time of year may dictate what happens or does not happen. Sunday would be the final official day of events. So, Friday May 2 through Sunday May 4, 2014?

### Oakdale Grove: News from Minnesota



Oakdale Grove: Last night we met, the moon was in the sky. It was veiled by clouds but we could see it's light shining through.

We proceeded to the site near Medicine Lake. We used the grill to get the water going for tea later and prepped the site near by where the ritual would take place.

The clouds found the moon slipping from their grasp and becoming more clear but still ensconced in their misty folds. And thus we began. Two of us didn't notice but a duck circled thrice over head during the rite and gave call three times each

time it passed.



From a modified version of the 4th order, "Know that we find the Mother's pleasure to extend her power to men in the form of a spring as I rushes forth from the Earth. Even as the Water-of-Life grant Awareness, so the healing springs minister to the needs of mankind, cleansing the weary and uplifting the weak in body, mind and in spirit."

When we finished, the moon was now like a pearl with slight green cast in the sky. Its auric halo growing to a gradual pale yellow as the moon would eventually gain its familiar pearl white color reflecting the light of the sun which was just a small splash of peach, orange and pink hues against the Western horizon.

We drank our tea to warm our hands and refresh us after the healing ritual for the Earth and against hydro-fracking. We put out the coals in the grill and picked up what we had brought. Once collected we made our ways back to our vehicles and left knowing we had done some good by our intent.

### **Raven's Grove: News from Quebec**

What is Raven's Grove? It is a place where you can dance to the earth, play outside with every seasons, to celebrate, to share and eat great food together. Where we always cherish our connection to each other and to the sacred world around us. It is where we gather together to rekindle our own connectedness to nature, with each other sharing our own life journeys, inspirations and aspirations. Raven Grove brings sparks of joy, of transformation, a sense of deep community that we then bring back to our homes and into our everyday lives. It is a place open to old friends and brand new ones. It is a place that we gather around the great cauldron of gratitude.

All of our efforts in the two years as an official grove has locally taken root, we have established a real home for our own RDNA tradition. We have joined and grown together for a common future. In search of a understanding of where we are going and how. Synchronicity

The Grove, is the embodiment of all the people that cross its threshold. The bonds that bring us together, are an appreciation for, the land, its people, and for all life in general. A celebration of different cultures, and a love of the arts, but at it's heart is love for the earth, and all things that grow, the seasons, the cycles the passage of time, from the deep rooted past, to the present and forward to the future. Those that have passed before us, those that are still with us, and those that, have yet to be born

### **Poison Oak Grove: News from California**

Stacey's post on Mount Shasta led to a new liquid concoction: the Waters of Shasta. Apparently Whiskey Town and Whiskey Lake are located at the base of Mount Shasta, which is also the name of a soda pop. Ergo the ingredients are: 2 parts Whiskey 1 part Shasta soda.

### **Poison Oak Grove and Grove of the Golden Valley: News from California**



This weekend is the 20th annual PantheaCon at the Double Tree Hotel in San Jose.

[pantheacon.com/wordpress/](http://pantheacon.com/wordpress/) Poison Oak Grove and Grove of the Golden Valley N/RDNA groves are proud to offer a traditional RDNA Oimelc service Saturday night at 7 pm in the ADF Hospitality suite, Room 253. The service will be held outside on the balcony. Please feel welcome to bring natural offerings in praise or request of the gods.

Dinner of the three Thirds prior to the Second Annual RDNA service at PantheaCon in San Jose this weekend.

PHOTO: The three RDNA thirds enjoying dinner and conversation. — with Stacey, Jeff S. and Jen A.

## **Ghost Orchid Protogrove: News from Florida**

Starting a proto grove is was the easy for me. I have been active in the local Earth base religions for 12 years. FB makes things really easy. I held a couple Meet ups. The first one didn't go all that will. The "Wiccans" ended up with Coven. So I had another told people what it was about, that it was open to all who want to hold rituals to honor the Earth. Then with Linda's help I put on one of my what I call Bardic Ritual. Everybody shares some art or music, people like them. I been doing them for years, I just haven't been doing them every month. Then we did another one where we honored the Stars, Linda brought her big scope, everybody loved it and ask when the next one is. Our next one will be to honor the flowers. I use the seasons as they apply to the living in the tropics. We have also made a FB site and a website. We wrote a Constitution and put that on the site and sent it off to mike. <http://ghostorchidgrove.com/>

**Vivian** Our home base is a friend's 5 acre property in Bonita Springs, that is where the picture of from. It has 5 circles they have built over the years. It is used for festivals and a central meeting place for various groups. In grove at this time we have Wiccan (ish), African, Native American, Buddhist, New Age, Druid paths all of whom want to get together to worship and or honor the Earth. I personally fall to the Celtic, as my ancestors are Celts, I don't use Gods in rituals, though. I don't know what else you would call it other than Earth base. Non revealed Earth base religions, but then I have my Buddhist atheist who would not fit the non-revealed in that Buddhism is classified as a revealed religion, through the Buddha. We have different rituals that reflect the diversity of our grove. The next ritual Linda and I are doing and it will be Druid style, the one after that the Wiccan is doing, then the New Ager whats to do one. As a Pantheist I am comfortable with just about anything as long as nothing is being killed and it involves the Earth in some way.

### **Constitution of Ghost Orchid (proto) Grove (GOG) of SW Florida**

#### **Article I**

The name of this organization shall be Ghost Orchid (proto) Grove

#### **Article II**

The Grove is open to anyone of the age of consent who reveres and honors nature as God, Mother, Father and our brothers the kindred beings with whom we share the Earth.

#### **Article III**

The GOG are seekers of wisdom through the understanding of nature, science and spirituality with the understanding there is no one set way or path.

#### **Article IV**

The GOG is a non profit religious organization. Any moneys collected are to be used for GOG activities and expenses approved by GOG members.

#### **Article V**

Please be respectful of others and their Paths. No disruptive behavior, no proselytizing

## **Wilding Protogrove: News from Mississippi**

Victoria M. is setting up a grove in MS, that might be non-hierarchical. Best wishes to their efforts. There haven't been many Druid efforts in the deep South before.



## ARDA Study Course 2014

Would people be interested in my moderating a six month trudging procession through RDNA literature, minutiae and factoids - from May to November 2014? If so, should it be on this conference with appropriate Lesson Title headers and lengthy comments, or should we hide it away in another FB group where it won't disturb our transcendent peace? I haven't held one of these since 2005, I think.

**Mike TheFool** Well, I can't guarantee I can do any better job at presenting it Domi than I did 10 years ago, if anything, I am regressing. However, I hope that everyone else has gotten wiser and more knowledgeable and will be able to contribute more richly to discussion. So, perhaps in Mid April we'll review the process of accessing the files and then go through about 1 lesson every 2 weeks through the Summer Half of the Year (May-Nov) and see where we get to by November when I ship off to Egypt and start working too hard to teach further. We'll keep it on this conference. I will expect all the students to post at least one comment per lesson (or PM me) to show they are keeping up, those that slump off will get chided.

More details to come in mid April.

## NEWS from OBOD



Essay "Constructing New Society in 8 Steps"

<http://philipcarrgomm.wordpress.com/2014/03/12/constructing-the-new-society-eight-steps/>

## Event News from Virginia

For anyone who will be on the east coast this May, the second annual PanDruid Retreat is scheduled for May 8-11 in Gore, Va., near Winchester. We are very excited about this year's program and have a superb group of panelists attending. Please take a look at <http://pandruidretreat.org/>. Thanks and please share with anyone who might be interested. –John Adams

# DRUID POETRY

## Dust If You Must

by Rose Milligan (non RDNA)

Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better  
To paint a picture, or write a letter,  
Bake a cake, or plant a seed;  
Ponder the difference between want and need?

Dust if you must, but there's not much time,  
With rivers to swim, and mountains to climb;  
Music to hear, and books to read;  
Friends to cherish, and life to lead.

Dust if you must, but the world's out there  
With the sun in your eyes, and the wind in your hair;  
A flutter of snow, a shower of rain,  
This day will not come around again.

Dust if you must, but bear in mind,  
Old age will come and it's not kind.  
And when you go (and go you must)  
You, yourself, will make more dust.

Do not stand at my grave and weep  
I am not there. I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am the diamond glints on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.  
I am the gentle autumn rain.  
When you awaken in the morning's hush  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry;  
I am not there. I did not die.

Mary Elizabeth Frye (non RDNA)

Lonely on a dark battle moor,  
a maiden soaked in blood & gore.  
She holds in her lap her lovers head,  
He lays still silent and pale white dead.  
Her evil fathers body nearby laid,  
His cruel heart this sad day made.  
He locked her away in a Tower tall,  
To keep her away from one and all.  
What the evil man's heart did not know,  
Is that ye can only reap what ye sow.  
Now that day has long come to pass,  
No one knows the loss of that lass.  
Every full moon in the darkest night,  
When just then right is left, left is right.  
You may see two soaring doves,  
Flying together forever in love.  
- Coyoti Geo

slowly days seep through my hands  
my thoughts creeping in waves  
my thoughts exploding in creepy details  
my thoughts denying the obvious  
please, bring me my wine  
before I fade away  
hasty I take my sleeping pills  
I need dreams of tenderness  
I need dreams of everlasting  
I need dreams of the unbelievable  
please, bring me my wine  
before I fade away  
please, bring me my wine  
I want to relax and play  
-Hennie

but the fire  
there's no giving  
but the fire  
loves messages  
huge cuddles  
the unexpected letter  
'bout the fire  
there is no giving  
but the fire  
the hurt stays  
the memories ripen  
the mind boggles  
on the fire  
there is no giving  
but the fire  
the fire  
the most honest  
most frightening  
most merry-making  
fire  
there is no giving  
but the fire  
-Hennie

may love rule your days  
may rest rule your nights  
may beauty rule twilight  
may grace rule your moving  
may joy rule your singing  
may integrity rule your speaking  
may vision rule your thinking  
may ecstasy rule your feeling  
may clearness rule your intuition  
may you live like you hope to  
-Hennie

### **Spring**

From the ground, does life spring and nature sings  
From the ground rent and all life is spent  
From the ground she does giveth and the green grass  
springeth  
From the ground I spring and my heart does sing  
From the soil we toil and our root does coil  
From the ground, does life spring and nature sings  
-By Penny Young

### **Set Free** by Penny Young

On seamless clouds of white, we travel in our flight to  
the undying lands, in gentle and peaceful hands. There  
is nothing that we need, but to be carried by the  
feathered steed, to a far green expanse and timeless  
shimmerence glance.

To a land where pearls shine in the shimmering sea,  
horses ride the waves and dance free. A trill of the harp  
fills these lands, awakening the shore that climbs these  
sands. A lullaby can float on down in a breeze, it  
soothes, it lulls, the timeless seas.

Of all the lands that my time has sort, I have never  
dwelt in souh sweet retort. From the shores to the  
mountains and all that be, my sould does fly, soul set  
free.

### **The Intangible Tangent of Us**

A person's religion is a path of spiritual unfoldment  
that they have willingly chosen, in which they have  
embraced prior doctrine that experience has  
demonstrated is conducive to growth, and that allows  
for the avoidance of dogma that locks the inner  
existence to a cycle of failure and ignorance.

A person must always be spiritual to be religious but  
does not necessarily need to be religious to be spiritual.  
Realization of this truth provides the individual with the  
key to their release from the bondage of forced fed  
ignorance and expected submissiveness.

No one religion is the complete answer to quenching  
the eternal thirst experienced by the eventually  
awakened. The variety of individuals capable of  
spiritual maturity are as countless as the individual  
grains of dust found across the vastness of the known  
and unknown universes.

There is a Way for each and every one of these  
points of being. No one Way is the asbsolute Way. A  
spiritual tradition is an acceptable path of potentiality in  
so far as the relationship of the follower to that which  
they choose to follow is one of desired growth.

Anything else is just an illusion of the flawed  
divinity that we masquerade as a communal truth and a  
finite construct of the human experience.

You are that which you most seek.  
- Coyoti Geo

Dreaming the stream, Streaming the dream,  
Seeing the Unseen, Unseeing the Seen.  
Stilling the touch, Touching the still,  
Willing to know, Knowing to will.  
Hidden it is, hidden it was.  
Because it's simple, simply because.  
The path that is crooked, the path that is long.  
The Truth that is gained, eternal and strong.  
Dreaming the stream, Streaming the dream,  
Seeing the Unseen, Unseeing the Seen.  
- Coyoti Geo

near death experience  
out of body experience  
high sensitive experience  
illusions and dreams  
hallucinations and delusions  
fantasies and escapades  
but the beauty can't be made up  
can't be small-talk  
can't be a lie  
the beauty that can make you cry  
-Hennie

The Tinker Man came to the village today.  
He was eager to visit but not willing to stay.  
He sang of a lady made of leaf and of foam,  
He sang of her long lost, searching for home.  
He told of a knight seeking the heart of a song,  
His tale was a sad one of him righting his wrongs.  
The Knight and the Lady fell in love in the Wood,  
He gave her the Ring and she gave him the Hood.  
The Tinker Man pauses with a tear in his eye.  
He packs away his harp and tells us not why.  
The Tinker Man came to the village today,  
We are left wondering as he goes on his way.  
- Coyoti Geo

**March Hare** by Penny Young  
Thumping, jumping, jiggy jig, you call this romance,  
I call you pig.  
Rolly polly in the grass, swat my paw you stupid ass.  
Box your ears and slap you silly, no I don't want to see  
that willy.  
Rumpy pumpy all around, I will rumpy pumpy you, in  
the ground.  
The mating season of the march Hare, they begin to  
swerve, they begin to glare.  
Kissed by the moon they stand and stare. Oh be giddy,  
a brainless March Hare.

### {THE DRUID'S GOBLET}

Sit at yon round table,  
Join in with the few,  
A weeks worth of emotion,  
Spit out and come chew,  
Laugh to forget,  
you'll not come to regret,  
Welcome, welcome!  
To the Druid's Goblet!!!  
~j.anglehart~

### BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Birds of a feather have flown together across the Atlantic seas,  
to land in the Misty Mountains and face the cool welsh breeze.

To walk among the ancient yews, green grass and hedgerow,  
they feel the fairy folk nearby dancing to and fro.

Birds of a feather walk together upon the Swansea streets,  
they listen to the welsh birds sing because of whom they meet.

Then wander off to dine on Cawl, a tasty welsh stew treat  
a blend of taste and culture for even birds must eat.

Birds of a feather climb together towards the crumbling walls,  
to ooh and aah at heights and sights among the Carreg Cennen halls.

Deep in the caves among the dark and through an arrow slit,  
no worse for wear at being there and better because of it.

Birds of a feather perched on high, take in the scenery,  
fields below truly glow in the prettiest green you ever did see.

Woolly white snagged on a fence where can those beasties be?  
Grazing out upon the vale, there! as happy as can be.

Birds of a feather smile together at Flower's peeking face,  
the land is good and truly blessed in this both time and space.

There's gorse and yew, oh! heather too, what a lovely thing,  
they left the snow, these birds we know to see the island spring.

Birds of a feather drink together in friendly company,  
magic Merlyn, Iron (age) Celts, and, of course there is Ceri.

Then joining in the old tradition of stories being told,

birds can weave a wondrous tale when drink has made them bold.

Birds of a feather seek together the singing of the stones,  
Preseli secrets, Brecon Beacon heights and the cromlech in their  
bones,

to meditate and awe inspire by the secrets now at hand,  
these birds you see, are tuning in to this an ancient land.

Birds of a feather rise together on thermals they do soar,  
over sacred lands carved by ancient hands upon this distant shore.

They seek the sights and walk the paths to the foot of Wilmington,  
To stand in the Long Man's shadow and hear words of the Pendragon.

Birds of a feather wings together up around the Tor,  
round and round where fairies bound, and live for evermore.

The spiral flight they each will take to cross the dragon lines,  
then down together each initiate of the druid modern times.

Birds of a feather swim together in the Chalice well's imagery,  
refreshed by the quenching thirst of the waters sacred energy.

They pause to expect the cause of this springs most holy site,  
this water trickling down and around with presence in its light.

Birds of a feather saunter together through many a garden scene,  
pointing wing and sparkling eye to all that is popping green.

Mother nature's gift are an act of love that shows her many powers,  
for even in the meekest land, the earth will laugh in flowers.

Birds of a feather spiraling together, around the circled stones,  
the sarsens, blues and the heel stone too, that make them feel at home,

along the plain to the clootie tree, another seeks for their query,  
they stop to contemplate the truth in the circle of Avebury.

Birds of a feather weep together tears of llawenydd dwys,  
for they came, they saw and they heard the power of the ancient voice.

High above in the restless skies, rooks and their companions caw,  
all throughout these birds migration, they have felt the Imbolc thaw.

Birds of a feather prepare together to venture to the northern wilds,  
the old and the new will discover together the secrets along the miles.

Leaving behind, the tamed downs and commons, they are headed for  
the peak,  
a surprise awaits in these rocky scapes, the outcome truly epic.

Birds of a feather have weaved together a pattern of memories,  
the mists enfolded them and he on the sacred sites of Anglesey.

Standing wing to wing wrapped in friendship and worth,  
their adventure twisting round like intricate knot work.

Birds of a feather have grown together within this journey,  
they have smelled the sea, felt the wind and spoke of mystery.

A newly forged track between here and there,  
the solid bonding of dark and of fair.

Birds of a feather wing in hand and heart in eye,  
shedding tears as they say their goodbyes,

to golden groves and standing stones,  
to gracious gardens and friendships owned.

Birds of a feather transformed together, their spirits are freshly molt  
, newly fettle in their feathers, their souls seem to float.

The land of Wales has left on them an indelible magic mark,  
but one they'll share and sing about like the graceful meadowlark.

Birds of a feather nestled together on this their very last night,  
for tomorrow they'll fledge to make their final flight.

Now reminiscing about all they've seen,  
the souls, the stones, the sheep and the green.

Birds of a feather depart together back across the seas,  
towards their clan, towards their own and longing families,

their spirits high, their wings in flight and beaks so full of tales,  
for they've return quite happy birds from the dragonland of Wales.

J~Anglehart 2013

# DRUID VIDEOS



How to make fire with a polished aluminum can bottom.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iwrPKVuoTQ>



Celestial Elf's video **Eostre Equinox**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lZ-YKleXww>



Glenn suggests: **Modern Hellenic Polytheism**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ibz4Ti3NszE#t=67>



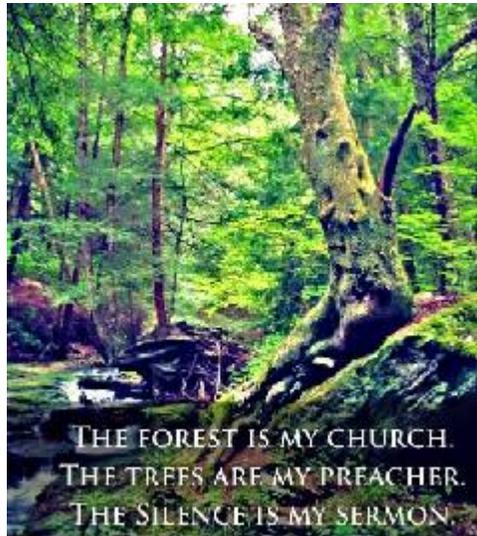
Sebastien suggests: **Cerrunos Looking Every Which Way** (hour long lecture by Ceisiwr Serith)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ap3LEcfVig>



Sebastien suggests **The Secret Life of Nature**  
[http://issuu.com/scottjenson/docs/peter\\_tompkins - the secret life of](http://issuu.com/scottjenson/docs/peter_tompkins_-_the_secret_life_of)

# DRUID PICTURES

I found  
this  
humerus



THE FOREST IS MY CHURCH.  
THE TREES ARE MY PREACHER.  
THE SILENCE IS MY SERMON.

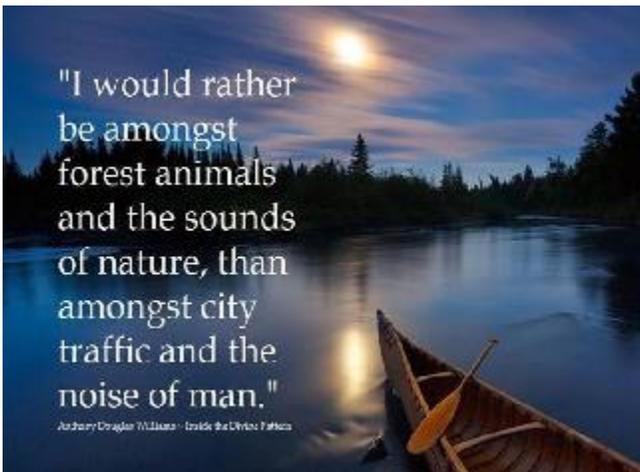
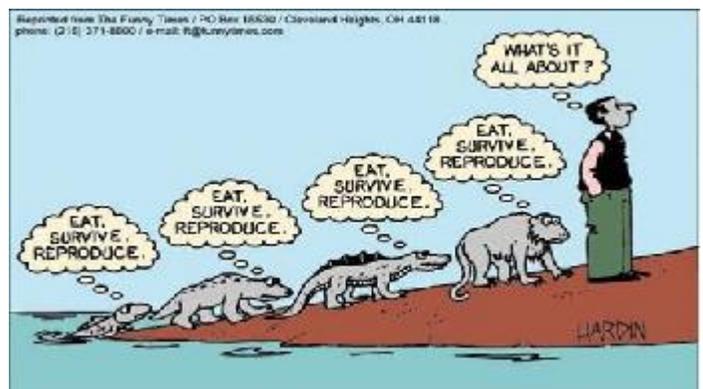
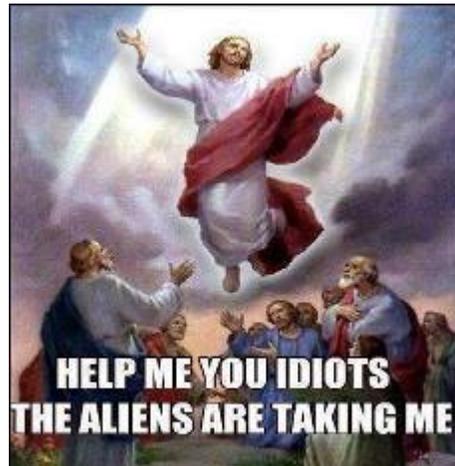
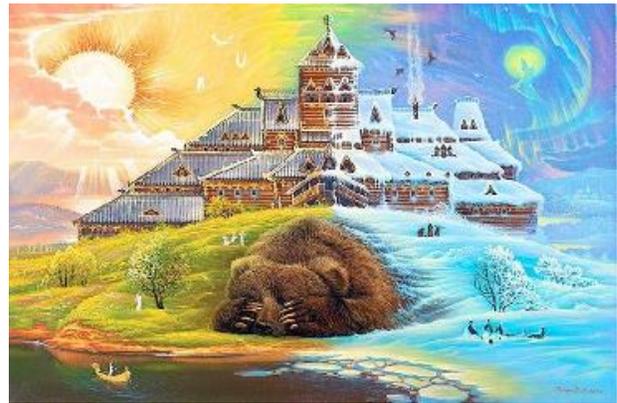
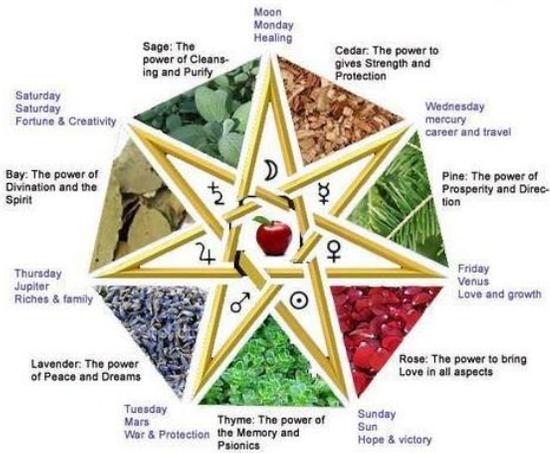


Before you speak,  
let your words pass  
through three gates.  
At the first gate,  
ask yourself,  
'Is it true?'  
At the second ask,  
'Is it necessary?'  
At the third gate ask  
'Is it kind?'



Funerary Procession?

# The Seven Pointed star Seren Derwydd

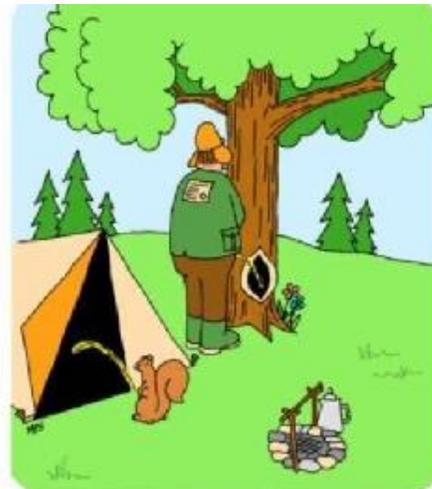
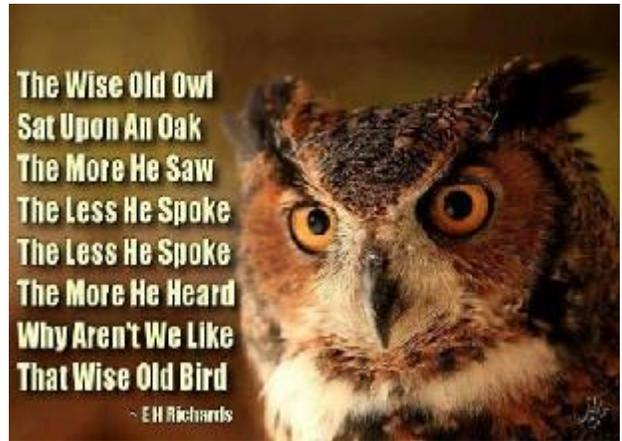




One day the Master announced that a young monk had reached an advanced state of enlightenment. The news caused some stir. Some of the monks went to see the young monk. "We heard you are enlightened. Is that true?" they asked. "It is," he replied. "And how do you feel?" "As miserable as ever," said the monk.

EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON SOMETIMES THAT REASON IS YOU'RE STUPID AND MAKE BAD CHOICES

»



The Balance of Nature



"WELL, MRS. FARNSWORTH, I'M AFRAID YOU'VE GOT DRUIDS!"

## Druid Jokes

Riddle #32: Three men in a boat with only four cigarettes, and no other tools or such. How did they smoke?

Answer: one threw a cigarette overboard to make the boat a cigarette lighter!

Answer 2: the 3 men could also have formed a corporation on the boat and then fired someone.

Answer 3: they could have had a discussion and someone bring up an old flame

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### 911 JOKE

Two hunters are out in the woods when one of them collapses. He doesn't seem to be breathing and his eyes are glazed.

The other guy whips out his phone and calls the emergency services. He gasps, "My friend is dead! What can I do?"

The dispatcher says "Calm down. We need to assess the situation. First, let's make sure he's dead."

There is a silence, then a gunshot is heard.

Back on the phone, the guy says "OK, now what?"



### **OLD FISHING JOKE:**

Two friends, John & Jerry were on vacation in the isles of Fiji. While there they decided to go out fishing since hearing of the many great fishing spots.

They rented a boat and left before sunrise. The sun was now shining directly down on their heads. They realized that they'd been out at sea for nearly 4 hrs. Jerry turns around and says, " So much for the great fishing spot! I think I'm ready to head in!"

John replies, "well, let's just try casting over there", as he pointed east of where they were. Jerry agrees and not long after they started hauling in loads and loads of fish. Jerry with a glee in his face shouts out to John, "this is the best fishing spot ever!" I know, says John we should definitely mark this place. Jerry: don't worry I'll mark it down.

As they headed back to shore, John asks Jerry what did he put out there as to mark their fishing spot.

Jerry answers: Well I marked the side of the boat! Right here, see, a red cross!

John with a surprised look turns to his friend and says, "that is the dumbest thing I've ever heard! What if we don't take out the same boat tomorrow"!



## The Instructions of King Cormac

*Note: Some useful advice for Archdruids*

"O Cormac, grandson of Conn", said Carbery, "what are the dues of a chief and of an ale-house?"

"Not hard to tell", said Cormac

Good behaviour around a good chief,

Lights to lamps

Exerting oneself for the company

A proper settlement of seats

Liberality of dispensers,

A nimble hand at distributing

Attentive service

Music in moderation

Short story-telling

A joyous countenance

Welcome to guests

Silence during recitals

Harmonious choruses

"O Cormac, grandson of Conn", said Carbery, "What were your habits when you were a lad?"

"Not hard to tell", said Cormac.

I was a listener in woods

I was a gazer at stars

I was blind where secrets were concerned

I was silent in a wilderness

I was talkative among many

I was mild in the mead-hall

I was stern in battle

I was gentle towards allies

I was a physician of the sick

I was weak towards the feeble

I was strong towards the powerful

I was not close lest I should be burdensome

I was not arrogant though I was wise

I was not given to promising though I was strong

I was not venturesome though I was swift

I did not deride the old though I was young

I was not boastful though I was a good fighter

I would not speak about any one in his absence

I would not reproach, but I would praise

I would not ask, but I would give

For it is through these habits that the young become old and kingly warriors."

"O Cormac, grandson of Conn", said Carbery, "What is the worst thing you have seen?"

"Not hard to tell", said Cormac, "Faces of foes in the rout of battle".

"O Cormac, grandson of Conn", said Carbery, "What is the sweetest thing you have heard?"

"Not hard to tell", said Cormac, "The shout of triumph after victory, Praise after wages, A lady's invitation to her pillow."

"O Cormac, grandson of Conn", said Carbery, "What is worst for the body of man?"

"Not hard to tell", said Cormac. "Sitting too long, lying too long, exerting oneself beyond one's strength, running too much, leaping too much, frequent falls, sleeping with one's leg over the bed rail, gazing at glowing embers, wax, bestings, new ale, bull-flesh, curdles, dry food, bog-water, rising too early, cold, sun, hunger, drinking too much, eating too much, sleeping too much, sinning too much, grief, running up to a height, shouting against the wind, drying oneself by a fire, summer-dew, winter-dew, beating ashes, swimming on a full stomach, sleeping on one's back, foolish romping."

"O Cormac, grandson of Conn", said Carbery, "What is the worst pleading and arguing?"

"Not hard to tell", said Cormac.  
Contending against knowledge,  
contending without proofs  
taking refuge in bad language  
a stiff delivery  
a muttering speech  
hair-splitting  
uncertain proofs,  
despising books  
turning against custom  
shifting one's pleading  
inciting the mob  
blowing one's own trumpet  
shouting at the top of one's voice.

"O Cormac, grandson of Conn", said Carbery, "Who are the worst for whom you have a comparison?"

"Not hard to tell", said Cormac.  
A man with the impudence of a satirist,  
with the pugnacity of a slave-woman  
with the carelessness of a dog  
with the conscience of a hound  
with a robber's hand  
with a bull's strength  
with the dignity of a judge  
with keen ingenious wisdom  
with the speech of a stately man  
with the memory of an historian  
with the behavior of an abbot  
with the swearing of a horse-thief  
and he wise, lying, grey-haired, violent, swearing, garrulous, when he says 'the matter is settled, I swear, you shall swear'.

"O Cormac, grandson of Conn", said Carbery, "I desire to know how I shall behave among the wise and the foolish, among friends and strangers, among the old and the young, among the innocent and the wicked."

"Not hard to tell", said Cormac.  
Be not too wise, be not too foolish  
be not too conceited, nor too diffident  
be not too haughty, nor too humble  
be not too talkative, nor too silent  
be not too hard, nor too feeble  
If you be too wise, one will expect too much of you

If you be foolish, you will be deceived  
 If you be too conceited, you will be thought vexatious  
 If you be too humble, you will be without honour  
 If you be too talkative, you will not be heeded  
 If you be too silent, you will not be regarded  
 If you be too hard, you will be broken  
 If you be too feeble, you will be crushed.  
 "It is through these habits," adds Cormac,  
 "That the young become old and kingly warriors."

## Something about Cheese



"Sorry, I'm a Goudist; you might try my neighbor, but I think he's a Maasdam"

Who am I to dis a brie??

It is a trap, stick with the bread of the Lord...

In guda they trust

have you found your whey?

Blessed are the cheese makers.

Mormonzolas.

Also could be 3 blind mice.

## Druid Chronicles – Book of Meditation: The Smell of Cheese \_\_\_\_

### Chapter the NINTH

1. Behold, they shall come unto you, scoffing, and mocking the words that ye have spoken, and saying: "There is no thing at all which is this awareness; what proof do ye give of it?"
2. And ye shall answer them in a parable, for this is the second lesson:
3. There was a small village in which was produced the finest cheese in all the world. There was none other anywhere that was like unto it.
4. And it came to pass that a traveler, who was a merchant, came to the village; for it was his desire that the finest of all foods should be served upon his table.
5. Wherefore, he did seek out the makers of the cheese.
6. But behold, when he was given a piece of the cheese, he did thrust it away from him, for he was offended by the foul smell thereof; for it was an exceeding foul smell indeed.
7. And he said unto them: "I do not believe that the taste of this cheese can be good, for it doth have an odor which is foul like unto no other!"
8. And he was answered: "Thou needst only to taste once of the cheese, and thou wilt see for thyself that it be good."
9. But it came to pass that the merchant did go away again, having not partaken of the fine cheese.
10. And he did never have served on his table the finest of all cheeses, for he would not taste it, any of it.
11. Verily I say unto you: in all the books of Man is there not one word which can give you proof even of the taste of a cheese

# Debate 1: Archetypes and Jung



**Joanna VanderHoeven**

What are your thoughts on the gods as archetypes - do you find that this resonates within your soul, or does perhaps seem ego-centric, to assume deity is something humans created in their minds? Is it a beautiful way to connect to an abstract, or taking away from a power of nature?

**Niall O'Draighnean** Greetings joanna, To Me, Saying the Gods are Archetypes Means that they are a Mental abstraction. My own Experience Tells me They are the intelligence and Spiritual Aspect of nature. I also Believe That humanity Is Nature's Means Of Experiencing and interacting

With Itself, So In a sense, we are the gods too, using Archetypes as a model Helps us Understand this Relationship..

**Mike TheFool** If humans created gods in our mind, and they created us in their minds, then they created themselves in their minds..... Don't see any disrespect there.

**Altar Ego** Is it an either/or though? Might it be some some deities or aspect of Deity (depending on where you're coming from) are internally driven archetypes and some are external realities to be discovered. From a monotheist perspective my experience has been of discovering some of the 'realities' were projected archetypes waiting to be dismantled.

**Niall O'Draighnean** I Make an Exception of [ ]Ernounous..A Modern invention For Those Who somehow Need A Horned god..

**Niall O'Draighnean** [He Does Not Figure in Celtic Mythology, Has No Qualities attributed to Him, and Apparently did not interact with any other deities, You could hardly Be more Mysterious..lol..

**Jamie** "Archetype" is a pretty good fit. "Real" or not, if it helps to anthropomorphize them, great. If worshipping a deity makes you a better human, even better. It's when people think those deities tell them to do harm or kill that I begin to have problems.

**Mike TheFool** Many modern religions around us are in the thralls of the literalist vs figurative but inspiring vs "silly stories that embarrass our other efforts". Not surprised if we have our own divisions on this matter that just as irreconcilable.

**Mike TheFool** Here's one article this morning from the Economist: <http://www.economist.com/.../21590475-furiousand...>

All about Adam

[www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)

THAT old-time religion is strong in America. To take just one measure, for decad...

**Nimue Brown** I think we manufacture our responses to ideas and experiences that are, by their very nature, beyond us to really comprehend. We may deal with archetypes if that makes sense to us - why not? But it is important to remember that human responses to ideas of the divine, are always going to be human responses and not any kind of ultimate truth or insight.

November 29 at 8:59am · Unlike · 5

**Stuart** I believe the Gods that we know them are Archetypes. I believe anything that truly meets the description of "God" is necessarily more than we can comprehend, and as such we have archetypes as an irreducible feature of our psychology to help us understand them and apply their lessons in our life.

Though I truly believe it's all 1

**Jamie** @nimue brown... I comment as "anzan" on your blog... Love your writings!

Saw recently that Texas is going through the whole textbook debate again. It would be interesting to poll Druids, but I bet a majority support the separation of church and state, I know I do.

**Dennis** I Personally am not fond of the archetype concept . My faith is CR based . In that worldview our gods are distinct individuals .

**Mike TheFool** The archetype approach got very popular with Carl Jung and more recently with Joseph Campbell's work on comparative mythology "The Hero with 1000 faces" book, heavily in use by Hollywood script writers (such as Star Wars) and the PBS "Power of Myth" interview.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSWcIcOcDvU> I know some Jung's purists think Pagans have grossly twisted the original concept, I believe.

**Mike TheFool** I'm not an expert on Jung, but this might help with Jung's idea of collective consciousness, something Isaac Bonewits like to talk to me about. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5drUNviakdk> ...

Carl Gustav Jung Documentary Pt. 1 of 2

Carl Gustav Jung Documentary Pt. 1 of 2.

**George King** Both real and created and mixed and matched. Think A.I. and Energy Pools.

**Lorna** I see the gods as real, independent beings. Whilst the way they appear to us depends on the structures of human consciousness, social conditioning and the psychological make-up of individuals I believe they have their own lives, ways of being and purposes. As mentioned above archetypes are a very modern creation whilst some of the gods are as old as time. For me seeing the gods as archetypes would be very narrow and limiting- the imposition of a human concept on beings who exist way beyond the limits of human understanding.

**Naomi Jacobs** Like Lorna and Robin, I see them as real beings. I respect others' differing views on the matter, though. We can only approach the gods in terms of the way they've revealed themselves to us.

November 29 at 2:11pm · Like · 3

**Jamie** I wouldn't say he is a living god, but I see the Dalai Lama as a living embodiment of compassion. So I don't worship him, but I do highly regard him and chant my "om mani pad me hums", especially when I need to balance my Fudo Myoo (warrior energy) with some compassion. His photo also sits in my charm box with a few other deities and special "sacred" items.

**Mike TheFool** Yes, Joanna, there is a divine god/dess. You might appreciate this 1897 letter....

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aevy8jIBZmM>

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

**Cheryl** i see them as personifications

**Philip** As a Jung fan myself, I know that Jungian thought is poorly understood and often misrepresented in pagan circles. The idea that the gods represent archetypes is NOT the same as saying they are imaginary. The collective unconscious exists outside of the 'ego' self...we are talking 'psychic forces' rather as the physical world has 'physical forces' (or better, psycho-physical forces, as there is no true dualism). Jung's publications were couched in semi-scientific terms (though he has often been criticised for not following a true scientific method), however he was much more mystical than is often realised.

**Philip** Even a 'personification' is a personification of a real something - a natural force, an aspect of mental or physical reality. However understanding deities even as archetypes does not mean they can be understood like the imaginary characters of general fiction. They are much much more. Archetypes energise us, they answer back, they are distinct from the self, they impart wisdom and balance or sometimes, necessarily discomfort us. Also they are real, public, stable, empirical (i.e. experienced) they manifest in many forms that in part depends on the mind, receptivity of the individual, part on a particular culture and history. One archetype may have many names and forms - because an archetype in itself is in fact 'imageless', a force, a potential, a pattern awaiting manifestation. Ultimately they are a kind of particular frequency within the life force, distinct divine energies, and like everything else a particular manifestation of the infinite, of the All, except in the psychic realm.

**Philip** Some reading.....<http://web.eecs.utk.edu/.../EvolutionaryNeurotheology...>

**Philip** and, for the more naturalistically inclined.... <http://humanisticpaganism.com/2011/09/18/the-archetypes-are-gods-re-godding-the-archetypes-by-john-h-halstead/> .../

**Philip** and..... <http://www.voidspace.org.uk/psychology/archetypes.shtml>

**Dennis** As some one exposed to archetypes and Wicca and the foreignness to a Celt frame of mind . In my early pagan days this stuff was and still is wide spread in the greater pagan community . As my journey has progressed my faith has become more CR based . Archetypal concepts fly directly in the face of a Celtic pagan faith and how we see our gods .

**Naomi** I understand archetypes - I have read Jung and a lot of commentary on him. I simply don't see the gods that way. I do find that a lot of Pagans decide I need 'educating' when they hear this, as though I'll grow out of this immature view of the gods. In fact I have studied religion, psychology and sociology, and am quite educated enough and know my own beliefs very well. I respond to the way that the gods have revealed themselves to me, as individual spirits that pre-existed humanity and that are not archetypes. When I say they are 'real', I do not mean that others see the gods as imaginary. I simply don't have a better word for their self-contained, existent reality. They exist in the way that I do, except they are spirits. I don't understand why some Pagans feel the need to educate me out of this deeply-held, well-considered belief. My ancestors believed the gods were, for want of a better word, real. So do I.

**Philip** Jung presents one reasoned way to understand the nature of the gods but there may be others...so those who reject this theory...what is your alternative reasoning...what are spirits...? Where do they exist? What is their origin and why do they only appear to some people? In my experience those who reject the Jungian theory have no alternative explanation. Jung does not deny anyone's experience he simply provided an explanation for that experience

**Philip** What folk are really rejecting when it comes to Jung is any attempt to rationalize our spiritual experiences.

**Philip** What does 'real' mean? Does it mean physical existing in some place and time? Or something else?

**Philip** Jung came to believe archetypes are psychoid...as old as the world...patterns and forces in the unus mundus the interconnected unity that underlies all physical and psychic reality...that sounds pagan enough for me. I have no idea what theology or cosmology the ancient celts had..do you?

**Philip** There are other theologies out there....one says the gods were an Elder race of ancestors from thousands of years ago...they were physical beings once endowed with wisdom and magic...in some stories they became associated with the Atlanteans and other great rulers of the heroic age of men...but they now exist in a different state of being but still in the realm of nature.

**Philip** As well as ascended ancestors another theology comes from the hermetic and gnostic schools and hellenic tradition...this considers there are many gods, archons or rulers that emanate and mediate between the absolute divinity or One and the mortal realm.

**Philip** These archons help form animate harmonise and preserve the natural order in platonist thought

**Naomi** Philip, why does my theology offend you personally? I'm not asking you to change yours. I believe the gods exist in a different spiritual realm and that they emerge from the earth.

**Philip** What theology?

**Philip** It doesn't offend me if you have your own theory. Jung's ideas are just a theory...but most of those who reject Jung refuse to have any theory..any theoi-ology at all.

**Naomi** I study theology and sociology at PhD level.

**Philip** I admit I have difficulty with understanding why people are not interested in asking questions about gods

**Naomi** And I suspect many people who believe in Jung's theories don't question or theorise around their own beliefs either...

**Philip** Call me odd but I want my spirituality to make sense otherwise it might as well be make believe. There are a number of polytheistic and animistic theologies out there..

**Naomi** Why do you think I haven't thought about it? It's all I do...

**Naomi** I want mine to make sense too. That's why I study theology.

**Philip** Well some people refer to Jungs theories without understanding

**Philip** What then is a God?

**Philip** Why do they take anthropomorphic form?

**Philip** These are theological questions. My undergrad degree was in Religious Studies

**Philip** The best anti-Jungian argument vis a vis paganism is that our gods are often difficult to classify in terms of particular archetypes. The Jungian fit can seem very contrived

**Philip** My take is that Jung was correct to identify multiple psychoid forces that we relate to via the unconscious. ..but if anything this is evidence for a polytheism but not necessarily proof for all his theories. ..

**Naomi** One's answer to that will depend on whether one is a metaphorical polytheist, a hard polytheist, a monist, a pantheist, a panentheist, a process theologian, an eco-theologist or one of many other schools of thought. I'm not inclined to share my own theories, given how answers are currently being demanded of me. People are capable of reading theology/thealogy/polytheology like Carol Christ's, Christine Kramer's, John Michael Greer's, Raven Kaldera's and so on, and of course the classics like Spinoza. But as I don't like how my answers are demanded of me (in question after question with an aggressive tone) without much hospitality, I'm bowing out here.

**Angharad Lois** In response to various ideas about whether the gods are internal or external to us, I experience them as that which bridges the gap between the internal and external. I wish I could write something more coherent on the matter but I have a cold... Interesting discussion though. Might be worth mentioning that my encounters with the gods are often challenging and unexpected.

**Dennis** In the CR path we see our gods as distinct individuals. A family of gods we are descended from, distant relatives. The Tuatha de Dannan. We consider ourselves of or from the TDD. These are the Gods of our ethnic ancestors, the gods of our people, ancestors. Our goal is to re-establish in a modern context the faith of our ancestors, a Celtic pagan faith.

**Dennis** My beliefs are hard polytheistic and animist.

**Cheryl** Why do they take anthropomorphic form? My thoughts are that as humans often we have/had a habit of when trying to understand something - be it spirit, nature force or similar of giving it a human presence, a human face in order to relate. And stories are a great way of learning and understanding something beyond the grasp of most. I see this in art and literature, but I have no academic education to support this at all it is merely a thought.

**Mike TheFool** I suspect anthropomorphic forms are necessary when tool technology reaches a certain level, since professions and specialization require holding certain implements as symbols of complex roles. Might be why Egyptian deities had animal heads and useful human grasping hands? Stories like Aesop's parables and many animal-stories capture the foibles of human character very well, and are sort of a side-category of divinity. It is hard for a cat to portray a potter or baker role, I think, although in the post-Beatrix-Potter 19th century, western cultures began to draw animals in more human form (clothes and standing up) which led to current cartoon/anime of walking/talking animals (which some monotheists object to). Someday, we'll figure out how to give sentience to animals, and what a can of worms that will be. (read St. Ailbe's Hall by my friend <http://www.strangehorizons.com/2004/20040119/hall.shtml>)

Fiction: St. Ailbe's Hall (part 1 of 2), by Naomi Kritzer

[www.strangehorizons.com](http://www.strangehorizons.com)

here was a Siberian husky in the last pew of St. Mary's. It was standing on its ...

**Ian** I figure gods that like humans enjoy the human form. There are lots of spirits that don't care a fig for mortal humans - I assume they don't take human form much.

I hold with the macrocosm/microcosm formula. Since I think the gods exist in the macrocosm, I think they also appear in my microcosm. When I invoke a god and it draws near, I figure it awakens/energizes the part of me that responds to it. That inner image, or 'archetype' if you like, can become a speaking idol of the greater divine force.

Sometimes, I think, we only interact with those archetypes. Sometimes we comprehend outside of them to a more objective divine presence.

**Tira** Aw, come on, Mike! Animals are already sentient -- we are just too dim-witted to recognize it.

**Mike TheFool** Or they just don't want to talk to us, wouldn't blame them, they might be upset with us.

**Scott** Personally, I believe that humans cannot fully comprehend the Divine, so when presented with the Divine, we put them into terms and personas such as we can understand. to me, this explains why most pantheons have similar, and in some cases almost identical Gods and Goddesses, we made them this way.

This is also why I worship the God and the Goddess, with no specific names associated when they (I come from a Wiccan background).

**Philip** For the record Naomi, I wasn't demanding answers of you personally, just putting the questions out there to illustrate the kind of questions that are 'theological' or better, polytheological. Sure, this may not be the place to discuss them in any detail. But I don't find most pagans want to discuss theology in the sense of answering questions, challenging ideas, or critically examining any theories about the gods and 'religion'. It is probably unrealistic to expect that, and still weirder to want such discussions. But I rather think it's because pagans don't do theology or don't think you can make statements about the mysteries and personal experiences. Then again, no one is a pagan because it provides a philosophically coherent and intellectually satisfying explanation for everything....(I'm being provocative perhaps). Anyway, I will bow out now, before I upset (any more) people. P.M. me if you have comments, criticisms or questions, particularly if anyone wants to seriously engage with theology in the pagan context....perhaps we can start our own discussion group, all ideas welcome, for those geeks like me who like that kind of thing.

**Joanna VanderHoeven** Some excellent viewpoints here - thank you for sharing in the discussion!

**Mike TheFool** Keep feeding us material for thought Joanna.

**Jamie** @philip Anderson-- a discussion group sounds great.

**Ian** I'm always interested in Pagan theology chat.

**Angharad** Philip, the druid network's own social site (i.e. not the facebook page) pretty much IS the discussion group you're describing - you should join in over there!



## Debate 2: on Public Park Services

I have been thinking about the notion of a proto-grove, and am wondering about the public / private area for something like this. It seems people do it someplace on their own land, though wondering if anybody has had experience planning or engaging in ritual in a public location, such as in an urban landscape?

-Fulbert

**Nancy** I've held ritual at a county park before with curious onlookers. Even received a religious tract from one of the watchers. Main thing to remember is that since it is not your property, you have to expect negative reactions to your form of worship while being confident of your actions.

**Kirk** we have in a public woods, but we all know each other well, new comers might be a little uneasy about going out to the woods for a ritual lol

**Thomas** In RDNAspeak, a protogrove is the people, not the place, without a Third Order present to consecrate the Waters of Life. Ritual can literally be held anywhere.

**Fulbert** Thanks for the suggestions! I have an area outside the city where I can meet, though I am just tossing around ideas for how realistic this would be in our urban area.

**Thomas** Iolo recorded three places for gorsedd: a church, a court ( by this i will assume he intended a pub, for that where his met), or an open field. He was in London, so take it for what it's worth ad an urban setting.

**Fulbert** Thanks, Thomas!

**Mike TheFool** True, most groves are based around a group of people, but few if any have been that mobile, so it usually is also a general region where they live. There aren't boundary limits, and sometimes you can have 4 or 5 groves in the same area (such as the Bay Area of San Francisco). It is possible for a "Grove" to travel with a priest or group of Druids, but usually my practice is when I visiting someone to have a new grove established when I arrived, hold services with them, and then leave the newly created grove with them, although it may revert to protogrove when I leave. I think location is kind of important, but a group of Druids in a grove may have multiple locations within (say) a 10 mile radius and may rotate nearby locations.

**John Michael** Utilizing nature in a public urban space can often seem very crowded. For Imbolc, it was so cold out, that the Oakdale Grove held half of our service inside the Como Park Conservatory in Saint Paul, where tropical plants grow year round. We finished up outside under a pine tree with temperature in the single digits (teens below zero Celsius).

Locally, the Oakdale Grove has ceremonies in the open spaces of Clifton E. French Regional Park above Medicine Lake, other times in a circular grove of oak trees in Oakdale Nature Preserve, and we've had a couple services at the Carleton College Arboretum, where it's on privately owned land, but they welcome visitors who follow the "rules."

For the most part, it seems other passers by keep to themselves for whatever reason, though once after our service concluded, a lady who had watched from a park pavilion asked if we were Jewish. She interpreted my plastic vuvuzela to be a shofar. "Are you Jewish?" she asked, "No, we are druids." she looked a bit confused, "Jewish?" and that is when I paraphrased the Two Basic Tenets, and she seemed to begin to make sense of it. Ever since then, I carry a few of my informational tri-fold RDNA brochures wherever we hold a service.

**Fulbert** Thanks for the example and explanation, John.



## Debate 3: OBOD Resources

**Are there folks here who are OBOD members? I'm thinking of joining and taking their Bardic course. Any members here? What are/were your impressions?**

**Kirk** Hope you have lots of extra cash on hand, because to go through their whole course is bloody expensive!! not a member myself nor have I gone through it, so I cant comment on the quality of the material.....just know it costs a lot lol

**Scott** Plus the cost is in British Pounds, which is more in US Dollars. But.. the monthly plan doesn't break the bank at \$35/month. I'm a saver, plus it can be an education deduction for me as a self employed person. I've always been intrigued with the OBOD approach.

**Kirk** and charging loads of money for spiritual training pisses off the hippie in me.....so I don't recommend it due to that alone.....but I will be the first to admit that i'm highly biased in that regard.....so hopefully someone who has gone through it will comment

**Scott** \$35/month to me is less than Cable TV and is what I agree to pay for my cell phone. I think growing up, my folks donated far more to our church every month. It's a matter of planning for a year commitment for the course, then determining when to start. I tend to like to put these things out to the Universe, and see how it manifests. If I receive \$400 out of the blue (either extra from work or unexpected money) next month, that might be my answer to dive in.

**Melissa** I highly recommend it. I'm half way through and couldn't be happier with the course. Worth every penny

**Sam** Ditto Melissa's comments

**Penny** I have a mentor with RDNA but i'm also doing the OBOD ovate course. Every penny that has been spent, has been worth it, but only because i worked hard, and did my best to live the experiences through the practicums. It structured a lot more than RDNA but you have a choice to be assigned a tutor in the bardic stage, and later in the ovate stage, you will have a tutor, much like mentorship with the RDNA, you only get out of it what you put in

**Linda** Where do you live?

**Penny** In Canada from U.K. originally

**Penny** and you Linda ?

**Linda** Oops, sorry, Penny, I meant Scott! I'm in SW Wisconsin! GMOD in Vermont might be an option for him. Google for website. Led by Ivan.

**Penny** Young no probs Linda and hi

**Vivian** If I had the extra cash I would do the OBOD course. But I can't even afford Cable. lol I looked at the GMOD course and every thing they are teaching I get from cuups at the local UU Church for a small donation.

**Penny** Yes money can be an issue, you could seek a mentor with RDNA or alternatively if OBOD is your choice then you can write to them to explain your reasons, that is stated right on the website, or you can share with another person for a small registration fee, hope that helps you

**Vivian** Yes it does. I didn't notice that. Thank you

**Penny** YW

**Vivian** They guys voice reading in the samples is dreamy. lolol

**Penny** Yes Vivian Tanis, sound is one of the many tools that is used sometimes

**Vivian** Pure tones from say Tibetan bowls are healing. I use them for my MS issues. I have a friend with a full set who helps me.

**Penny** It's amazing how we respond to different stuff, i'm trying to figure also work on my other senses too so that my sensitive heightens

**Vivian** Tone in a ritual are excellent for getting people on the same page.

**Vivian** I was going to take a class on sent, but my allergies.... sneeze... I had to sadly leave the class.

**Scott** I'm in Minnesota - Twin Cities metro area.

**Scott** Some other good courses for you Vivian could be found at The Druid Network. Many of them are free. I especially like Emma Restall Orr's Perennial Druidry course.

<http://druidnetwork.org/what-is-druidry/learning-resources/>  
Learning Resources - The Druid Network  
druidnetwork.org

**Vivian** Thank you, Scott.

**Daniel K** OBOD is wonderful,

**Linda** For just a good read, **The Path of Druidry** by Penny Billington.

**Dane** I loved the Bardic course myself, well worth it.



## DEBATE 4: Defining a Reformed Druid

**Sébastien:** What is it with using the title of Reformed Druids, when you have nothing in common with the core tradition with RDNA. It is like me creating a new ADF or OBOD group with having no link to them. Then calling myself as a druid of the New ADF or a druid of the Reformed druids of OBOD.... I guess RDNA is so tolerant and broad-minded that people can permit themselves of doing this. hehehehehe

**Helgaleena** what do you mean, Sébastien ? Who is doing this? And the 'core tradition' of RDNA is not very tightly defined to begin with.

**Laurie** Does it even need to be tightly defined? Just asking.

**Domi** Many of the people on this group are RDNA members, including some quite senior ones.

**Sébastien** I have been finding so many self proclaimed Reformed Druids groups, websites... people that have nothing in common with RDNA traditions, people that even have not been initiated in RDNA. Helgaleena, RDNA does have a core tradition and it is somewhat tightly defined. That is why there is a 3rd order in RDNA. You can also find it in Dalon Ap landu, waters of life... even OBOD and ADF have a distinction.

**Helgaleena** As long as you accept the Two Tenets, you may be a Reformed Druid. You don't need to be of 2nd Order or even 3rd Order to make a web page. If they start a Grove without being 3rd Order, that's maybe bothersome, if they don't specify 'proto-Grove' because they simply haven't had opportunity to vigil. But otherwise, Nature is Good. What label you put on that is immaterial in the long run imo.

**Sébastien** Offshoots do really exist but they do have a real link to RDNA. It is usually some former RDNA druid, usually an initiated or ordained that decided to go on and create his/her own tradition and kept with many RDNA influence. That is fine... but self-proclaimed is just using the tradition to give them some type of credibility. oh well... I guess it is a thing that we cannot control... hehehehehe

**Vivian** I started a proto Grove, I know I jumped in with both feet, but when I looked to your site and understood the core concepts and I couldn't see why not. It is actually what I been really doing for a long time without knowing about the RDNA If there is a problem you need to tell me now. I don't want to cause offense.

**Helgaleena** I think you did right! Until a 3rd Order can use your guest room, Florida needs you.

**Sébastien** "As long as you accept the Two Tenets, you may be a Reformed Druid" is not really truthful. If someone that studies and gets more involve in RDNA will discover that there is lot more then the two Tenets. There is lot more things involves in the RDNA tradition then most people think... it is a myth that has been propagated with time even by some 3rd order druids. It is kind of our promotion... just as other druid groups. You have to accept Two Tenets to become first order.

**Sébastien** When you become a RDNA member you can create a proto-grove

**Vivian** So am I considered a member?

**Helgaleena** You are already a member because you publicly accepted the Tenets and were welcomed. You become 2nd Order by assisting at a service held by a 3rd Order. It will happen eventually. In the meantime your proto-Grove holds meetings that are not strictly RDNA but in harmony with our intent.

**Vivian** One the website I say GOG is affiliated with the RDNA and give a link to the site. Is that ok?  
<http://ghostorchidgrove.com/>

**Sébastien** You are, but when you officially become first order, you are truly dedicated to pursue your journey further within RDNA.

**Sébastien** This is much how most 3rd order druids see the levels. It reflects the natural stages of learning. First comes the stage of the Inquire (newbie), Seeker (1st order), Practitioner (2nd order) and then Teacher (3rd order). Even then, as teachers we continue to learn. That is why we have other levels higher then 3rd order

**Sébastien** 3rd order is about officiating services, it is what many would call "falling in love and getting married stage"... hehehehehe... It is truly devoting of yourself to your work as a priest". For me the title priest is seriously taken, it not just about ritual and having an opinion. It is to serve other people without ego. Gurus type of people are not tolerated in RDNA nor in Druidry in fact. Oh we also have Arch Druid titles.... but we kind of shy away from this. I usually give this title to a dog, cat, bird or any non human creature that is in the proximity of our rituals. lol

**Sébastien** Usually when you start your journey in RDNA you have a "mentor or tutor" he/ she must be 3rd Order. If he/she "approves" your proto-grove, usually will, that person usually helps you out in the process and helps you put one together.

**Sébastien** I think RDNA has the best Grove and proto-grove "rules" ever...

**Vivian** Being am here in Florida, y'all on this page is all I got.

**Vivian** I read the whole Pamphlet a when I first started. To be honest some of it is about as clear as mud, but I am trying.

**Helgaleena** It's not likely to get any clearer.

**Vivian** lol I kind of figured out. I'll tell y'all what I am doing here is growning. Every time we do a gathering more people show up, and want to know when the next one is. It rings a bell with people.

**Catherine** Well, you got have a few jokers or clowns in the group

**Deborah** Just to point out that, while RDNA has certainly grown and matured since the early days, it was started by a bunch of teenagers who found ourselves rather surprised by the gravitas of what we had entered into. And the unspoken tenet of having a sense of humor has always been core to the tradition.

**Scott** It sounds like Sébastien wants RDNA to be more "formalized" than it is in reality. Such is the way of many an organized "religion or group" - where a person or factions start putting a stamp of approval or "measurement" of worthiness. Groves are autonomous and there are no hard and fast rules of "worthiness". I'm surprised we're tolerating the thought as such.

**Domi** ARDA provides everything pretty much you need to know, and a lot of the history of why RDNA is NOT more formalized than it is. I still find the correspondence between Isaac and others interesting in showing clearly why RDNA remained essentially what it was, and Isaac went on to found ADF.

**Sébastien** Scott you know me soooo little.... hehehehehe

**Sébastien** Like Mike has said before there is some that take their druidry and RDNA lightly and some more seriously. It depends what you want from it. I speak for those that take it more then just fun, games and jokes. But I have a sense of openness and lightness that you cannot imagine. It is sometimes hard for some to accept that others might think differently. It is the schism in RDNA that many of has come to accept, some not. I find that is what balances RDNA for what it is... a very inclusive and open group of druids. I'm proud of what I have done and achieve in RDNA. You can judge and/or challenge me as much as you want. hehehehehe

**Aonarach** I have to agree with Scott, First teens cant join the site, now people who accept the tenants can't call themselves RDNA or start there own site ... what's next. While I guess I'm not really a member of the RDNA because all I've done is accept the tenants (no nearby groves in FL) and therefore have no credibility... but I am discouraged by recent events.

**Sébastien** it's hard I know!

**Helgaleena** Tenets, Aonarach... if you have accepted them publicly here, you are now a member of our grand gaggle. Go forth and love Nature while calling yourself one of us. To become 2nd and 3rd Order takes a wee bit more face-to-face contact, but it can be held in abeyance until somebody comes along or you travel to meet a congregation run by a 3rd Order.

**Scott** So many of us have fled the fundamentalism of "organized religion" to find a home in Druidry. I want to caution you Sébastien in your judgement in these matters. No one of us can or even should speak for the whole of RDNA, and as far as rules, barriers, achievement levels and recognition beyond the two tenets - this should only be formalized by either the individual or an autonomous grove. Otherwise it's just one person forcing their own dogma onto the masses.

**Sébastien** Scott

**Scott** I'm not one to press, but where is this coming from? The smiley face is all well intentioned I'm sure, but I think that you should explain a little more where your notions are coming from, and if indeed you want to use your position as a moderator here to apply these beliefs or call into question someone else's Druidry or chosen spiritual path in RDNA.

**Aonarach** Helgaleena, fortunately tenants is one of my least embarrassing spellchecker guffaws . I'm sure one day I'll get up to North Florida or some other destination where there is an RDNA grove, until then I'm perfectly content doing my thing where I am. I have no grand desire for levels or status. All things will come at their proper time.

**Helgaleena** They do.

**Sean** There are some traditions out west that we hold dear when it comes to ordinations. It boils down to those who want to be elevated to third order being willing to learn and then teach what they've learned. A person can be a Reformed druid without learning all the traditions, but those same people can't be expected to have a third order elevate them simply because they want it. There is a path the individual teacher lays before them, and it is incumbent for the student to do the work.

**Stacey J.** I was going to say basically the same thing as Sean. There are some traditions that are not written down and are not contained in the ARDA. We don't have many of them but we do have some mysteries.

**Jon** Sometimes, the greatest mysteries and the greatest learning comes from the meeting of like minds and the communion of traditions. The best teacher loves to be taught and seeks learning like a cold drink on a very hot day. When we celebrate together, we teach and we learn

**Jon** The Earth is our Mother; it begins here

**Vivian** Interesting discussion for sure. Domi Thanks I hadn't got round to reading the Bonewit affair. I did the ADF for about a year a while back and ran away screaming DOGMA NOoooo.. The whole idea of bring back the "old ways" makes me say "you can't go home again." I went home and the town had been bulldozed and a freeway was build in its place, to which I said good move. The Druids of old did us a favor not writing anything down. We got a do over. I understand Sebastien's point of wanting to have some formal way of say what is and is not RDNA. You leave the door open and there are a lot of folks who will take advantage and cause harm to your good name. But you can't let it turn into an inflexible dogma riddled system either. I join the RDNA because it is open to all who love honor the Earth. I did the Grove under the RDNA because I wanted something open to all who honor the Earth, regardless of path. I did it for my local community of dirt worshipers without whom I would be lost. There is a need for this idea in the world.

**Vivian** My first teacher is the Earth, my last teacher will be the Earth.

**Stacey J.** At some point though when does a person's practice no longer become RDNA but general Earth spirituality?

**Vivian** When they say RDNA doesn't fit their path, I would say.

**Jon** I think they blend into each other and becomes compliments of one another, like sleeve on a coat.

**Scott** Stacey, why do you care, and who's job is it to differentiate? Is RDNA a church? When a person accepts the two tennets, are there more unwritten conditions that say "here's where RDNA begins and ends and where mere Earth Spirituality begins and ends"? What motivates anyone to care about how another person derives meaning (or not) through RDNA?

**Stacey J.** It's not a matter of caring Scott. It's a matter of curiosity.

**Stacey J.** Who are you to say I can't ask questions?

**Sébastien** I'm not setting any inflexible dogma or any riddled system. You haven't been to Raven Grove...hehehehehe... RDNA has clear guidelines and structure based on the Two Basic Tenets. It just depends whose interpretation it is. Mine in which I'm not alone and others. lol

**Scott** Apologies. Curiosity is good, but RDNA as a whole has no position on where one begins and the other ends. You're simply a member if you accept the two tennants, and then the lid is off. Everyone's path is simply "their path"

**Scott** Sébastien, I'm not bashing your grove and your beliefs. But your grove is autonomous, and I fear you might be trying to apply YOUR GROVE's rules and practices to the whole of RDNA. We're as diverse as the forest, and we should be. Why do pagans in general get into the "I'm more pagan than you, more druid than you, more RDNA than you, etc ad nauseum" diatribes? It happens all too much in my opinion.

**Vivian** What is "general Earth spirituality"? Sebastien, I didn't say you were doing an inflexible...system. I am sorry if you miss understood me. Like I said I agree you have to have some system of what is and isn't.

**Sébastien** Scott what is your intention here, are you trying to discredited me or humiliate me in the group? You have your opinion... Respect mine.

**Vivian** The GOG is a proto grove and that is in its Constitution. I know I don't have 2nd or 3rd degree to make GOG a Grove, but it will happen it just takes time. I agree with the degree system to build Groves, but the need was there in my community, so I ran it. Time for bed, for me, group (((hug))). Peace, y'all.

**Scott** My question for you Sébastien, is Are you trying to apply your beliefs and your grove's rules to the entirety of RDNA? We're all free to practice in our own way here. Accept the two tennants - you're in. Period. One grove doesn't control the whole, nor do its beliefs. My beliefs don't control the entirety of RDNA. We can all have our opinions, just like in society - but expecting others to take on our opinions and practices borders on infringement of others' freedom and autonomy.

**Sean** Scott, if you are a third order, then you have freedom to expect whatever you want from your students. You can build your Grove as you see fit. I think Sebastien is merely trying to state that there are exPectations when one decides to progress, and those exPectations are set by the third order. I don't see anyone taking away any autonomy, and any reformed druid can worship as they see fit. Just my 2.5 cents.

**Kirk** wow I need a shot of whiskey after reading through this thread.....actually better make that 2 shots!

**Kirk** ok now that I've had my 2 shots here is my whiskey backed 2 cents lol.....Vivian you are doing great! I know how you feel, back in 2006 I started a protogrove because I deeply felt in resonance with the spirit of what RDNA stood for. But at the time we didn't have access to any RDNA members, particularly any 3rds so we weren't an actual RDNA grove. It took MANY years in our case, but eventually we entered RDNA through the traditional channels of drinking the waters of life consecrated by a 3rd. So hang in there if you really like what RDNA stands for. Scott, you stated Groves are autonomous, which they are, but what makes a grove an RDNA grove is clearly laid out in ARDA and by the founders.....the archdruid must be a 3rd order through the traditional channels for it to be a grove. You also stated 'accept the two tennants- your in.' Yes but you also have to drink the waters consecrated by a 3rd after you accept those tennants you cant just read them online and say 'sounds good to me!' and go off and start an RDNA Grove.....you can start a PROTO-grove though. RDNA does have traditions and it DOES have some minimum requirements ( and I do believe they are as minimum as you can get). If you get rid of those bare minimum things then you are scattering the leaves into the wind and RDNA will be no more. In that case why be RDNA at all?. why not be ADF or Keltria Or OBOD druids? Oh wait those groups also have requirements to maintain their identity Peace, Peace, Peace!

**Julie** ^^ I think that after reading this thread Kirk, you have clearly explained what is exactly at issue here and what Sebastien was trying to say.... Druidry is affordable to everyone, but you must prove to YOURself that you can afford to be a druid, not to anyone else.....Correct me if I am wrong, but when you hold position of teacher, tutor, mentor (3rd order) at this point you should have a good idea who you are and your ego should be in check...no? Not to mention, is there not this search for the truth? MY truth? As "unstructured as RDNA is, it is its inclusive structure that drew me, not its easy to get into association and druid label.....

**Penny** There r core virtues in all druid groups, dressed differently, granted, whether you identify with all or just some is a matter of passion, and expression. I would like to think no matter how muddy the waters can be, that, that we have seen virtues that we identify with, when when decide to join an order and we are comfortable with that identity or title, if not then, it would seem that we where never ready or at that stage of learning. It is a great privilege, to be able to be mentored by such learned folk, and discover the self, credit goes to both the seeker and teacher, for that interaction is paramount, and lots of us are examples of how well that interaction works. Acceptance is sometimes hard come to by

**Julie** Not to mention NOWHERE is it stated that you must accept 100% your mentor or guides truth...we have brains and hearts that permit us to accept or not what is presented and we have full freedom to incorporate it into our own practice or catalogue for information purposes.....we all walk a similar path, we're just not at the same spot on said path /\

**Sean** Nobody can dictate personal practice, however when working with a mentor with the expectation of being ordained then one must expect to work within the parameters of the course of study lined up by the third order.

**Julie** yes but the parameters are not sooo rigid are they? Aren't the parameter a leading off point into discussion and discovery?

**Julie** then when furthering this discovery can one acknowledge the continuing relevancy of this path? I by no means question the orders or the inner workings of RDNA, I am simply trying to put forth some of my own "interpretation

**Julie** I agree that the orders are relevant and necessary to the progression of the learned, weather one thinks they are of import or not is a matter of discussion, yes, but not a reason to critique a way of practice or relevance...am I making sense???

**Vivian** Thank you guys this have been a most helpful discussion. I am big believer balance. I wouldn't be here is there wasn't structure of some kind. I been doing the pagan thing for 12 years. I have seen it both ways. I been in groups so rigid free thought is impossible and groups where everybody just does whatever and no one learns anything. Either way, there is no true growth. I want to through learning, I'm a life long seeker, it is my nature. One good thing is we live in the age of communication. I have to fill bird feeder, they are beating on the window.

**Scott** I think that Julie has a good statement of balance here. With the autonomy of groves you have a right in protecting your own sovereignty and traditions as a grove (as well as your teachings within). However within the RDNA you do NOT have the ability or right to critique another grove or solitary's way of practice or their relevance or "worthiness" of belonging to RDNA. That's the crux of my argument. Groves, mentors, etc have every right to work within their paradigms, but the moment someone starts to critique another's practice as unworthy or "less than" - we should call it out. Or at least I will continue to do so.

**Stacey J.** Someone has to be the RDNA police! I guess you're it Scott.

**Julie** I think the initial status of this thread was the careless use of the title "reformed druid"...I know RDNA does not "OWN" that title, but the fact that there are orders within the RDNA tradition speaks to the fact that there is a learning curve...and as much as there is freedom in this tradition there is also loose structure and anytime you have structure, even as loose as this one, one will find differing interpretations of this. some self professed druids ,NOT all, are blinded by the label.....

**Julie** Blessing on GOG you do good by making your practice viable for the people around you....you can only grow and growth = wisdom /\

**Sean** It seems like there are possibly two threads here. I've stated several times in this thread that nobody is here to dictate personal practice, nor is anyone trying to take away Grove autonomy. **Thread 1:** To be a Reformed Druid you must accept the tenants and drink of the Waters from one who is already ordained. That's in the ARDA. **Thread 2:** Mentor/student ordination - that is between the third order and the mentee. If a student has an issue with the work assigned, that student should either work with the third order to obtain their goal or try to find another third who will guide them a different direction. This thread keeps getting sidetracked with allegations of others trying to tell people who to worship as a reformed druid, and that simply isn't the case. There are traditions that should be followed to progress through the ordination levels, and for the many years I've been in the reformed that hasn't really been called into question...until now.

**Helgaleena** 'accept the tenants'--? Good advice. Never alienate the local flora & fauna if you can possibly avoid it! That aside, if you haven't been able to get to a 3rd Order yet, feel free to found a proto-Grove if you wish. Or not.

**Helgaleena** Some of us 3rd Orders don't bother to found a Grove you know. But according to Mike TheFool we spontaneously generate one wherever we are. That's why he went ahead and named my Grove for me when I wasn't originally aware of it.

**Helgaleena** And behold, I looked out the window to the back yard and there it was.'

**Vivian** How can I drink of the Waters from an ordained Druid when I am here in Florida and there is no one here?

**Linda** I am Viv's friend and we were just discussing this...

**Linda** can we both be mentored?

**Helgaleena** You can't, very easily anyway. Tegwedd used to mail out samples of consecrated Waters, I think. Just carry on for years as is with Nature's blessing, as Kirk Hofer described. Or once your proto-Grove has members who can travel, maybe one of them might go to where there's a 3rd Order.

**Linda** where is the nearest third order to florida?

**Helgaleena** Linda, I am assuming that someone shot you a private mail asking if you accept the Tenets before they let you join this group. So you are a first Order according to me. First Orders can form proto-Groves just fine. It's 'future RDNA'.

**Linda** Viv and I have Ghost Orchid Grove

**Helgaleena** For locations of known 3rd Order Groves see the listing at <http://rdna.info>

**Vivian** we are a proto grove.

**Fulbert** Vivian, can you tell us, perhaps in another thread so as to start it again with fresh energy, what the process was like for your starting the GOG? I am interested in hearing about it (and in learning about how you chose to meet where you do). Thanks!

**Linda** <http://ghostorchidgrove.com>

**Helgaleena** Florida seems to have a number of ADF Groves. Since ADF originated from us at RDNA, I think if you attend one of their services, it would count toward being 2nd Order. They also serve 'Waters of Life'-- just with a Celtic wrapper.

**Helgaleena** It's that bit about doing the Vigil and becoming a 3rd Order-- you wouldn't want to accidentally become ADF instead by doing theirs!

**Stacey J.** How would it count towards Second Order? That doesn't make much sense. It's a different group. Our Orders don't count as theirs and visa versa.

**Vivian** Well we live in the age of miracle and wonder. There is a way this can be done. One thing about being disable is have learned how to things creatively.

**Stacey J.** You need Waters of Life consecrated by a Third Order druid of the RDNA.

**Stacey J.** Sean can chime in here because he is a Third Order in the RDNA and a priest in ADF.

**Stacey J.** Also Jon !

**Helgaleena** oh snap. That means Waters from NRDNA, ADF, OMS, Keltria, etc don't count for us because they mutated too much?

**Stacey J.** NRDNA yes, but the rest no.

**Stacey J.** The NRDNA mutation isn't really in affect any more because it was supposed to be the "pagan" branch but the RDNA is pretty much mostly pagan now.

**Helgaleena** Okay, what I think about the ADFs in Florida isn't a solution ...sorry

**Jon** I think the boundaries have definitely blurred and with some of the Reunion Rituals of recent years, we find many, many more similarities than differences and we honour both traditions

**Sean** An ADF ritual would not count toward 2nd Order. The liturgy is different. "Celtic wrapper" is also incorrect as ADF is not linked to Celtic, but rather all Indo European hearts.

**Sean** Also, ADF's return flow might not actually be Waters. It's not required.

**Sean** I also disagree that simply accepting the tenants make you first order. You need to ingest the Waters. That's my opinIon.

**Vivian** I am starting to feel rather unwanted.

**Helgaleena** Don't worry, Vivian , not all 3rd Orders think so.

**Helgaleena** I think you need the Waters for 2nd Order.

**Stacey J.** I do. It's in the ARDA.

**Vivian** What will be will be. Time for bed night.

]

**Kirk** No don't feel that way Vivian! You are very much wanted.....your protogrove is still valid. You are just being encouraged to go through the traditional channels when u are able

**Helgaleena** My reading differs then. Probably a good thing my congregation nearly never knows where my physical Grove is, and there are NO 2nd Order members.

**Stacey J.** Exactly Kirk!

**Jon Kirk,** how long did it take you to become official?

**Kirk** 7 freaking years! lol

**Jon** I am proud of you

**Helgaleena** There have been Florida proto-Groves before this also. People move, or this & that. No hurries.

**Kirk** but it could have been much sooner had I been willing to drive a bit.....so mine is not the normal wait time lol

**Mike TheFool** Gasp. Done moving apartments this weekend, sounds like you had a good hairpull without too many scars about groving. Just some thoughts from me. RDNA teeters on the edge of anarchy, and our minimalist formal structure should be easy enough to swallow, and inobtrusive in comparison to other Druid groups. There is much that 1st, 2nd and 3rds can teach eachother, it's not all top-down instruction. 3rds don't just teach in order to ordain people "up the ladder", if anything we try to slow folks down enough to build a foundation and understand the diversity of paths within Reformed Druidism.

As a rule of thumb a new member should enter 1st order within a year or two of coming into the grove, and if they have a true vocational calling to serve others in Reformed Druidism, then proceed to 2nd Order by their 2nd or 3rd year, and 3rd order by their 3rd year, but not too early if possible, although extenuating circumstances may require a hastened course or a more leisurely and organic growth according to personal circumstances and a few up-downs. 3rds also teach/share/experience the seasons with members with all trajectories of spiritual paths.

As for who's a first order, there are two formal steps. For those who agree with the tenets they are of the "spiritual" body of the first order. For those who partake of the consecrated waters of life, they are of the "material" body of the first order (somewhere in Druid Chronicles), if you do either step you have one foot in the first order. Need to get both feet in to complete the full entrance to first order, but I can see people proclaiming them 1st order by purely solitary theological agreement (we did this at Carleton 1984-1992 actually due to Reasons).

**Mike TheFool** As to who is or is not a Reformed Druid, that should first and foremost be the individually's personal decision. A few have very pointedly left without any equivocation, others have reluctantly kinda-left due to conflict of interest and other issues (e.g. David Fisher).

We have no formal excommunication process or kick-out maneuver (unlike most serious Druid groups) but we have shown that we can shun people who are rude, crude, or frankly bonkers. Most folks whose "druidry" requires everyone else in the RDNA to fit their new system, are going to find that despite their charisma, we ain't going to change, and so most of them will split off as a schism or a similar thing, and find an association with us more trouble than its worth. We're just too ornery and well known by reputation among Druids, with a long paper trail.

However, we're going to eventually find someone who talks authoritatively about things he/she doesn't hand, and we'll tell them how rare or unprecedented those ideas are in our wide swath of Reformed Druidry and clarify the difference between the main channel of Reformed Druidry and this new path-in-development-using-the-term-Reformed-in-its-name. We saw this with RDG, SDNA, and to a little with MOCC, but I think we usually disagree without being disagreeable or mean. As a reminder, while there are probably 10+ main schisms of groups calling themselves "Reformed Druids", so there is room for much further variation including non-hierarchical (un-ordered) Reformed Druids. Too many assume that a schism has to have apostolic succession with David Fisher to be "Reformed Druids" (As SDNA, HDNA

did). RDG for example has several hundred members without any ordination linkage to David Fisher, although they have their own apostolic succession to Cerridwen & Ellis as an independent origin, approaching a decade now.

**Mike TheFool** As a reminder, there are all kinds of people in the world who suddenly one morning up-and-shout they are Christian or Muslim or what-have-you who can't coherently explain the broadest connection with the wide-field-of-Christianity or Islam, except their certainty that they are in it. We shouldn't be surprised when folks do that with little-old-us too. Naturally, we'd hope they'd spent an hour or two to absorb even fleetingly our very simple system, but you know how little patience people have in this world. We are hindered in our control of the term "reformed druid", but we can emphasize our own traditions at the branch level, grove level, family level and individual level - each of which may be quite odd and distinct from others in this conference.

**Mike TheFool** The geophysical distance "curse" is a great hindrance to ordination and to INSTRUCTION. A gap of 100-500 miles makes it difficult to attend a mentor's grove on a regular basis, and forces telephone/email or other technological paths to communicate. A two hour visit every 3 months isn't going to convey very much without the personal discussion/questions and discovery that two people who know each other can bring. One should strive towards this ideal as much as possible before the ordination steps, and then keep up the connection afterwards. I feel very responsible for the quality of my ordainees as a seed my wild acorns across the forest of this world. If they go rogue or rude, it looks bad upon me for doing a poor or hasty job screening and teaching them. If they do basically nothing after 10 years, I also feel a bit embarrassed that I may have railroaded them into a position for which they didn't have any real vocational "fire-in-the-belly".

As my mentor, Richard Shelton, told me the 2nd and 3rd orders are about increasing SERVICE to others, gaining confidence and skill in this public role, and making networks with wise and experienced people to get guidance when we are completely baffled at what to do. It should be something a little more deep for ordainer and ordainee than "checking the box". The more each puts into the exchange, the more each will grow from the process, and a great deal of what the Reform teaches is not what one must do, but how much one does not necessarily have to do. We "unteach" as much as we "teach", we liberate as much as we tie them down with new traditions. And above all, don't neglect the 1sts who have no interest in 2nd/3rd, the 1st are the bulk of the grove and deserve the bulk of your attention.

**Domi** When I was running the ADF Grove Garran Siorghlas (Evergreen Grove) in Seattle 1990-1993, I was also attending Cyndie Sallee's NRDNA Grove (Greenwood Grove). (We figured the holidays differently, so they never did fall on the same days). So I consecrated the waters ADF style, and ingested them also consecrated by Cyndie NRDNA/RDNA style. In 1995 I was ordained to the 3rd circle of ADF in the same ritual in which Fox was ordained to the 3rd circle. (My original initiation was in DTG, Framingham, MA, Mean Foghamhar 1964).) Now I am Dean for Druidic Association of North American (NH registered non-profit) and Senior Druid for Grove of the Golden Leaves, DANA. I am more Recon than most of the groups to which I have affiliation, and teach Irish for the Gaelic League of New England. The Litany of the Waters is still part of my practice, though this Grove does not do Waters of Sleep; instead when I ask "and has She given forth of Her bounty" Samhain on in the dark season the response is "She has not, but through the wisdom of the Ancestors we have stored up against need", and the consecrated single-malt is passed around...

**Jon** Thank you for sharing that, Domi. Very interesting!

**Stacey J.** I remember hearing of Greenwood Grove. Emmon used to include their news in the Missal-Any. And I think they came out with a cassette of music.

**Sean** Domi reminds me of myself. A Celtic Recon who identifies with a multitude of traditions. You have to have variety on your spiritual plate, otherwise eating the same meal can become monotonous and lose its uniqueness and personal resonance.

**Fulbert** Mike, your post-moving thoughts all present a helpful balance to this most interesting of threads here. What an interesting little community we have here.

**Domi** Stacey: I still have Greenwood Grove's Yule tape and May tape, and a friend put them on CD for me.

**Mike TheFool** I'd like to get a copy of those if I could, or if you could send me the files.

**Mike TheFool** Druids are interesting people. We've been lucky not to have many jerks over the years (present company excluded of course).

**Domi** Mike: Let me see if I have a spare copy. If not perhaps I can get another made.

**Stacey** J. I would too.



## DEBATE 5: When to go to 3<sup>rd</sup>?

**ORIANA**----

I've been RDNA for 12 years.

2nd order for a decade. A few months ago I started to consider if it was still relevant to me in my life. I thought perhaps instead of stagnating at 2nd moving up was the answer. Re-dedicate myself and take the 3rd.

But is that the answer?

Acquire levels? Like a video game?

Does that go against my disdain for organized religion? Rules in general? Dogma?

Is it enough to agree that nature is good?

About 9 years ago when I left a grove - I became painfully aware that to some - the answer is no.

I think a lot of people believe that nature is good. It doesn't make them RDNA.

So what does?

considering.

**Kirk** I think you should vigil.....not to acquire levels or even necessarily to become 3rd order, but to deepen your awareness and to contemplate deeply about RDNA and if you wish to be 3rd. At the end of the vigil you can decide and either accept the ordination to 3rd or say no thanks

**John** I have often considered that there is a third Basic Tenet of the RDNA, which anchors in a sense of direction and belonging, not that it's necessary by any means, but to me that unwritten third tenet is the desire to identify as a Reformed Druid, whether you are in any of the orders or not.

Furthermore, long before I was even of the First Order, I was adapting the RDNA liturgy into my own practice, and I remember the first time I invoked Dalon Ap Landu during the consecration of the Waters, and I FELT Dalon, and it worked. Where authenticity was lacking since there was no Third Order present, there was still validity as to how I ministered to myself. Of course, "authenticity" is a big word for the RDNA.

First I would recommend to do what feels natural, to pardon the pun. If you have transcended the need for Orders and titles, than that also means that Ego is in check. In some eastern traditions, Egotism is considered a hindrance of spiritual growth. When our ego is out of the picture, we are limitless.

Second I absolutely agree with Kirk Hofer. The Vigil is something that definitely ought to be experienced. It can be very transformative in the way it connects you with nature and with the mystical.

**Kirk** indeed John.....although I am 2nd order, I have undergone 2 forest vigils in the past 2 years on my own, not for RDNA but as part of my own spiritual journey, and I must say vigiling can bring clarity and focus to things like nothing else can in my opinion.....I highly recommend it. In fact I think it would be a good practice for 3rd Orders to continue vigils either annually or every couple of years when they can, doesn't have to be a once in a lifetime event. And on a side note, I do look forward to my third vigil being for the RDNA and 3rd Orders

**Kirk** Also, all this talk about egos.....I must be caught up in mine, cause I want to be in 3rd Orders damn it! lol.....RDNA is such a paradox

**Kirk** Kirk is now signing off to practice some zen meditation to get his ego in check.....

**Laurie** I agree that the vigil is a good idea and I would also consider what I am doing to give back to nature or the Druid community. I'm a huge proponent of volunteerism. And yes, volunteering doesn't make anyone RDNA either. But it does add a quality and purpose to one's life. I truly believe that it's the volunteers that make this world a better place to live.

**Oriana** Great responses. Considering.

**Mike TheFool** Kirk, I am no longer egotistical enough to think I can overcome my ego.

**Mike TheFool** One can have a rich and vibrant awareness at 1st, 2nd or 3rd - and one can have a flat, flavorless boring period at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd. It's not the order that indicates how much progress you are making personally, that will rise and fall with the years and seasons regardless. The order indicates how much you wish to serve \*others\* and help \*them\* to progress. You can be pretty incompetent in one's own affairs, but if you are good at helping others to find their pathway, then you can do good at the third order. It's all about showing people the resources, getting them to ask the questions they fear, and prodding them to answer them honestly, and take steps to advance. It's also a lot of hand holding. It's helpful to be an exemplary avatar of greatness in spiritual ways, but most people can do well with mediocre mentors too.

**Mike TheFool** What distinguishes RDNA folk from other Druids? We are diverse enough to have members that resemble folks in alot of traditions. I think are buzzwords are humility, humor, openness, respect, Nature-ish, inclusive, moderated, and simple. We have a "style", history, literature, and trappings without being too fixated and dogmatic about it. Some are more organized, serious and practical than us, and some are too amorphous to describe. Some are like Ice, some are like water, we are like wiggily jello in between.

**Sébastien** Mike... you said to much but yet kept it confusing... be careful...you know they are watching everything...aaaaaaaargh lol

**Sébastien** I got to stop from dying every time I post.... aaaaaaaargh

**Sean** If you are interested in achieving through various study programs, then maybe ADF is the answer for you. If you are interested in working through a mentor and achieving what your mentor puts in front of you, then RDNA is for you. Maybe the choice is simply deciding what you want to be dedicated to. Working one on one with a mentor gives you specific tools for you too mentor others and carry our traditions forward. There's a reason for everything, and I would count out as a blessing to be working toward being able to reach rather than working toward simply achieving another level in the video game.

**John** Also, ADF spun out the Solitary Druid variation for those looking for a more custom tailored/solo path. Also, I think there's an active RDNA grove that created the ERDNA or Egalitarian Reformed Druids of North

America, an orderless grove that transcends the use of ranks. And also there are the Living Druids, an alternative with exponentially less dogma than the RDNA, comparatively speaking ...I forgot to mention that in my post last night.

**Scott** We're all priests of our own Druidry. Many of us don't believe that these degrees are necessary.

**Sébastien** It is hard to understand our tradition... I know... but it comes down to personal choices. You Choose RDNA or you don't.

**Sébastien** Walking the solitary druid path is not uncommon, but the key thing about solitary druidry is that it is just that – solitary.

**Sébastien** But solitary form of druidry is freestyle and very experiential (working with no one, no mentor our specific tools and guidelines can be hard if you are not the self taught kind of person). Done it for a long time before joining RDNA.

**Sébastien** In fact it is hard being alone. I respect those that do practice it. Very honorable in my opinion. Someone being a "hermit" druid has my respect. I have done it in the beginning. It is very meditative at times. It is a lifestyle in itself. But you always feel the need to justify yourself the moment you start socializing on social networks like Facebook. You end up arguing and telling everyone is wrong.... hehehehehe

**Sébastien** I have done this... I believe we all go through this stage in the beginning. Sadly some Druids never get out of that stage of arguing. But I had discovered this type of druidry is hard. By being alone one might sometimes have trouble in finding ways of measuring or checking his/her ego. Our weekly Grove meet ups (we call "The Druids Goblet) helps everyone of us on this level, specifically for myself. As a group we learn that is to OK to be vulnerable and we can trust each other. This is what creates a strong sense of fraternity and loyalty that we talk about in druidry.

**Sébastien** Sometimes being alone is a sign that means that one cannot work with other druids or within in a group structure.

**Sébastien** This website seems as a great way of breaking the solitude of being solitary. It is ADF, I believe?

**Sébastien** <http://www.solitarydruid.org/>

**Helgaleena** Nature is the ultimate source, so getting in touch with Nature, whether through vigil or any other type of communion, will help you immeasurably. You don't have to be a 3rd Order unless you feel a distinct need to teach, organize, etc.

**Mike TheFool** While the 3rd order assists at formal services and regulates the membership process, we cannot and should not prevent Nature and the Earthmother from reaching out directly to any Reformed Druid or other person in public. We shouldn't be jealous if she bestows more blessings on others, while we priests do all the drudgery and get scant/insufficient divine thanks. That would be selfish on our part, and just shows that we haven't found the true rewards of service in its own right. I hope and wish each member of my grove have deep and overwhelming personal spiritual lives, home services, and impromptu worship in the outdoors wherever the mood strikes their fancy!!!



# A Montreal Acrostic, Part 1

by Charlotte Hussey (non RDNA)

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<http://encoremagazine.ca/>

A lane in NDG. Photo by Zoe Arniotis

I live in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce in the western part of Montreal, a borough full of gardens, alleyways resembling country lanes, and gracious old trees—sugar maples, white birches, red ash, white oak, elm, and pine. Walking up my

street, Rue Royal, I pass Lower Canada College with its spacious sports fields surrounded by numerous hardwoods, home to kills of crows. Rounding the corner onto Monkland Avenue, I arrive at our local Jean Coutu. Above the pharmacy on the second floor is the healer Liddy Flewwelling. She often treats me with herbal tinctures, but more importantly, with plant spirits.

Modern medicine tends to see the universe as an inanimate machine. In our post-industrial world, researchers assume plants are to be disassembled and their extracted properties used for the pills, creams, or powders sold at a Jean Coutu. Like many shaman from the Americas, Liddy also believes every plant has a spirit. More than the sum of its chemical properties, this spirit is its most potent aspect. Liddy's approach to plant spirits is similar to that of the Mohawk who live on the outskirts of Montreal in Kahnawake and Kanesatake. Aside from the Great Spirit, their most important deities are called De-oh-ha-ko, Our Sustainers. These Three Sisters are the spirits of Corn, Beans, and Squash. The Mohawk traditionalists still honor them in planting and harvest rituals, pray to them, and propitiate them for their blessings.

For a treatment, I lie down on Liddy's massage table, guarded by a huge jade plant, and she will evoke, say, the spirit of nettle, sunflower, dandelion, or burdock, placing their energies into my body with her hands. Her balcony door open, I hear the soft, repetitive bounce of tennis balls on a clay court. Their hypnotic rhythm often melds with that of a Jean Coutu delivery man singing French hip-hop to the back beats of his truck radio. Little Grey, the shaman's apprentice, curls over my belly, purring. Gradually more and more plants and trees begin appearing in my poetry. I begin reading local plant guides and wandering about Parc Angrignon, tricked by nettle to stumble into its stinging patches. Strangely too my new pups—a Rottweiler and a Pit Bull—get named Iris and Lily, instead of Alligator and Diggums.

A plant spirit shaman first contacts the plants she works with in the wild, sits with them, sketches them, gets to know them, before journeying to meet their spirits who teach her their medicine. When attending Liddy's Eastern Township retreats, I go out for a nature walk with the intention of contacting a plant spirit that can speak to my immediate concerns. I wander about alone until I feel a plant call to me. This is similar to how a photographer, out for a city stroll, might be drawn to take a particular photo. Something reaches out to be met.

One time on the shore of Lac Memphremagog, I began considering if I should sit in a ditch to sketch a delicately white flowered, branching plant. Vigorous bugs started buzzing around my neck and head. I threw out my arms, gesturing that suffering is part of getting where I want to go. I would suffer them in this muddy ditch. Bingo, they vanished. I was steadied by a deep drone; fat bumblebees were visiting the plant's cascading blossoms.

I took out my "Vermont Flower Guide" and identified it as a Goldthread. Its blossoms have five white petals, and at its centre are many tiny golden threads. Very delicate. Lying in the ditch to draw Goldthread, I was struck by the value of Quebec ditches: sitting in them renders you invisible. A man and a child walked right by, a jeep

passed, even a cop car. The only person who noticed me was a man in white shorts, who got puddle-splashed by a passing van. Shocked, he looked my way and cried, “Tabarnac!”

Back inside our cottage, I journeyed into the Underworld, where plant and animal spirits reside. I did so to acquaint myself with the spirit that had called me into that wet, black fly-guarded ditch. Goldthread appeared to me as a woman in a white frock sewn with gold ribbons. She said she was a weaver, and I saw her loom in the back of her root-filled cave. She explained that she weaves tapestries and at the time, I was writing a poem about a Mille-fleurs tapestry. These 15th and 16th century Flemish tapestries were woven with threads covered with silver and gold. Her message was not to let go of my poetry-writing thread. I was also to craft each line of a poem, wrapping it with self-expressive gold. Uncannily, Goldthread was referring to how I often free-write about each line of a poem skeleton, in order to have “stuff” to enrich and develop it further.

Pursuing my interest in what shamanism and creativity have in common, I have sometimes attended a weekly drumming circle that Macdonald Tobacco heiress-turned-shamanic-practitioner Cathy Heiss holds in the Scottish Rites Room of the Montreal Masonic Memorial Temple. Passing the illuminated globes perched atop ionic columns fronting its majestic Greek temple facade, more specifically a temple modeled on that of King Solomon, I enter the Saint-Marc Street side door. Here a stern gatekeeper asks the purpose of my visit before escorting me to the 1930s caged elevator commandeered by a crisply-uniformed attendant. The silent attendant’s white-gloved hands work the controls of our slow, smooth, quiet ascent.

Arriving at the top floor, I often encounter aged Masons completely covered in medals that jingle as they walk, reminiscent of the tinkling bells, nails, and clacking bones sewn onto a Mongolian shaman’s costume. I am soon in the cavernous Scottish Rites Room, suitable for a Jacobean banquet with its oak beams, thrones, lions, and mystical signs. Insulated from sound and light, this ritual room is perfect for some 20 of us to drum, dance, and sing in order to open our hearts. We then lie down, glancing up at huge oil paintings of bearded, 33rd degree Masons, festooned with their fraternal badges, ribbons, and charms. Masons are known for their love of antiquity—that of the ancient Greeks, Egyptians, and Jews, but what would these refined gentlemen, so regally depicted in these imposing paintings, think about animism? Would they have been willing to shake a gourd rattle along with their booty? As the huge, deerskin drum begins its trance-inducing beat, we cover our eyes and let it carry us into Otherworlds.

The plant spirits had led me to Robert Graves’s *The White Goddess*, leaving me to stagger through its complex charts and murky explanations of Celtic tree alphabets. As heavy-going as it is, *The White Goddess* inspired me to journey to the tree spirits involved in one of its alphabets. To do so, I asked the tree’s permission, held its image in my mind, and imagined a hole near its roots to spiral down, rather like Alice, in order to meet its spirit. Like Blake’s “mental traveler,” I did so in my small studio on Rue Royal, writing down an account of each journey.



**The result was an acrostic, based on 8 trees from Graves’s alphabet, Celtic trees whose names spelt out the word, Montreal:**

## **MONTREAL ACROSTIC, Part Two**

While I dream up some trees,  
Celtic trees for the most part,  
right here in Montreal, on my futon,  
laid over the hardwood floor,  
three pines stare in at the window.

MUINN (Vine)

For practice, I dream up a vine.

No big trees, just one grape vine  
that in "The Song of Amergin,"  
grows between the hazel of wisdom  
and the ivy of madness. But  
rushing out to Cabane Grecque  
I forget to write my dream down.

I am seated in a booth under a vine.  
This dream is following me around.  
I drink another glass of red wine,  
looking up at where they nailed  
it down, papery twists of leaves,  
hanging bunches of green plastic grapes,  
somewhere between wisdom and madness.

OHN (Gorse)

I remember Peredure who missed  
his opportunity and had to wander for years,  
so I ask, "Who are you?" thinking  
I might have dreamed up a lone  
gorse plant, with its green spines,  
its ever blooming, yellow blossoms  
so foreign to these wintry lands.

Bells, tinkling sounds? Did I  
leave my TV on? A Morris dancer  
leaps out of its grey screen,  
prancing to a pipe and drum.  
Shaped like golden gorse blossoms,  
his shin bells rattle and ring.  
"Stop dancing, you'll wake my family."

NUINN (Ash)

"Or am I dreaming you?" a voice asks,  
"leaves falling into my brown hair,  
seed-pods winging down like keys?  
My arms stretch open as if nailed  
to this high, slender trunk. Stag horns  
branch up from my temples: bronze,  
twisted, upside-down roots."

Suddenly I'm underground. It's dim,  
crowded with clumps of fine rootlets  
tangled together like a lumpy shroud.  
A broad nose, a chin pokes through  
this mat of root hairs. One huge  
left eye stares, inquiring yet guarded.  
"My sour roots protect the dead."

TINNE (Holly)

A garbage truck disturbs my dreaming up  
the one who is best in a fight,  
with spines to defeat her enemies.  
Soft summer leaves harden in winter,  
showing their spiky teeth. Nothing  
can eat them, and so Amergin chanted:  
“I am a battle-waging holly spear.”

Her battle apron bloodied, iron  
breastplate clanking, a dour woman  
hits my shoulders—thwack, thwack—  
with the broad, flat side of her sword.  
I keep battling to dream her up,  
as the revved truck shreds boxes,  
crushes cans and ketchup bottles.

RUIS (Elder)

Falling back exhausted, I stare  
at a photo of myself, age 7, posed  
in a velvet dress on a manicured lawn.  
A bit of untamed shrubbery bursts up,  
as if out of the left side of my head.  
Five unpruned twigs, their wavy tips  
spell out the word “marsh,”

a boggy place with its Elder Woman  
no one dares cut. I know her  
by her creamy 5-petalled flowers,  
and that hole by her roots to slide down.  
Sneakered feet pound,  
children running under my window.  
Who will get there first?

EODHA (Aspen)

I lean against three pillows  
thinking about trees, trees growing  
out of my dreams that are filling up  
this small room with their rustlings.  
One in particular has round leaves.  
Their long, flattened stalks quake  
as if stirred by the wind, or a spirit.

A tall, pole-like being approaches  
with gouged-out eyes, a chiseled nose.  
His rising arms materialize a crude  
harp out of the air. “Harp, Carp.  
No. I am a tuning fork,” he corrects me,  
dissolving into a shivery atonal hum.  
Unnerved I shake, breaking into a sweat.

AILM (Fir)

Have I gone mad like old Merlin,  
down on my bony knees  
hugging imaginary trees  
in a small dimly lit room,  
mad as the one who rips off  
her proper pinafore, her velvet dress  
and runs pell-mell into a wood?

In a snow flurry, she shinnies up  
a sap-stained trunk. Through silvery  
needles, a birdlike creature appears,  
dressed in a cloud with long-  
crane-like legs and near-human face.  
He offers to fly her over her life,  
to see where she needs to journey.

LUIS (Rowan)

Rowan, dispeller of enchantments,  
I fix its sprigs over my door jamb  
to protect all the sheep and goats,  
just in case I dream them up too—  
black-faced, wooly ones that bleat before sleep,  
might need extra rowan to ward off  
the evil-eye of my racist neighbors  
who don't like them, or foreign trees.  
In my little room, behind my closed eyes  
I sit under this young rowan  
admiring her blood-red berries,  
each embedded with a five-pointed star,  
ancient, vigilant pentagram  
that keeps cranks and bigots at bay.

Admittedly, we are all immigrants in Montreal, that is unless you are a native tree or Native American. This was brought home to me while travelling through Northern Quebec, where I taught academic and creative writing for McGill University on Cree, Algonquin, and Mohawk reserves. In one James Bay community fronted by its broad flat river, which can no longer be fished due to the hydro dams providing Montreal with electricity, the Cree locals are left to depend on one small, faltering generator. At night the lights flickered off, on and out, as my bathtub filled with dirty brown water. During the day, I was teaching an autobiography workshop for elementary school teachers, who were writing their stories in Cree as part of an effort to help develop their own Cree-language school texts. One of my students grew distressed about the recent death of her teenaged son from glue sniffing. After class, we walked together out in the bush. She wanted to show me some lichen-covered rocks. Looking closely, I could see long, seemingly manmade incisions, partly obscured by the lichen. "These ancient rocks are proof we have always been here," she said. "You Whites tell stories about us migrating out of Asia and across the Bering Strait. You do so to make our land claims more tenuous. We have always been here."

As my small bush plane flew me south for hours over the lake-dotted muskeg, covered with its uncountable, winter stunted-trees, I withdrew into thought. Landing in Dorval Airport, I vowed to investigate my own roots, something I knew little about. Soon I was studying Celtic mythology and Druidry in the UK.

Writing an acrostic that spells Montreal, a French city, with Celtic words that signify, for the most part, European trees, reflects how I live in the fusion world of North America's big cities. I found from my European

trips I am not from the UK; my family has been in North America for nearly 400 years. Like most Montrealers, I am from neither here nor there. Does it matter? I have come to believe it is better to look for commonalities than differences, although the post-modernism I encountered at university stressed irreconcilable, cultural differences. Isn't it better to look at what unites us as a species, rather than dwell on our sectarian tendencies? For example, I once thought there were no core shamanic principles, but now can point to a few: valuing and listening to Nature; singing and dancing to open the heart; journeying to receive non-hierarchical direct revelation; and using art to empower individuals and heal communities worldwide.

A friend recently commented that I am more drawn to an "inner, rather than outer Montreal." I guess she meant I spend much of my free time dancing and writing poetry in my small yellow studio, in my small brick home on Rue Royal. Here, encircled by a grove comprised of a 100-year-old sugar maple, 6 pines, 2 lilac bushes, 1 ash, and a young pear tree, I attempt to connect to its earth energies, its spirit of place:

Soft scrape of a skin-wrapped stick brushing the edge of a drum,  
as something comes out of the earth from where it slept with the stones,

something my toes suck up like roots, like small, hungry animals their food.  
My nails blacken. Ankles thicken like plant stalks stirred by what climbs them,

up through sheets of quartz, through granite, stretching my hip bones  
until they can claim more space for themselves. Nobody sees me,

absorbed by this earth light, flooding my tattooed chest, my raised arms,  
washed with the scents of burning marsh reeds and sweet grasses.

Nobody sees how this pale fire cast off from buried veins of ore  
and clefts of smoky crystal flares up to torch my moist heart.

The grove softens into bluish twilight that turns tree-bark to pewter;  
aroused the ash tree eyes me, horned brows, knotholes of black onyx.



## Terms of Engagement

from Galina Krasskova (non RDNA)

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<http://witchesandpagans.com/EasyBlog/terms-of-engagement.html#.UyY-rhxyHW4.facebook>

Submitted by Stacey

"You know when wolves run free and alone? when they're mentally or physically diseased."

--Sannion

I have long noticed that we, especially in America, tend to idolize the image of the "lone wolf," forging his own way, eschewing the pack to seek freedom in solitude. This to us seems the epitome of proud maturity and this archetype has wound its way into contemporary Paganism and Polytheism too. There is that in our culture that looks at those working to make change, to forge ahead within their communities askance, but those who focus solely on themselves separating from any sense of community or tribe as something worthy of emulation. There's something very wrong with that paradigm. Now there's nothing wrong with being solitary. One can be working within a tradition but work alone. That is something different from abandoning the tradition to serve one's own purposes. One need not work within a lineage to support a tradition. Fighting the good fight within a tradition, battling to restore and move the tradition forward, to root it again in the bosom of one's ancestral ways serves an equal but different purpose from the oh so necessary solitary devotional practice. To get down to the nitty gritty of devotion, everyone should have a solitary practice. That's where the real work happens that sustains the communal matrix.

In our communities I understand it though. We talk about restoration of our traditions but I don't think the majority of people have any idea what that means. How can you comprehend what a living tradition and lineage entail if you've never experienced the weight of one? Let's face it, we haven't. Our traditions were shattered two thousand years ago and we're now tasked with sorting through and picking up the remaining shards, filling in the missing pieces, and feeling our way forward as we breath new life into our traditions.

Tradition is more than a word. It's more than a set of practices to which one may adhere. It's more than a common core of belief or ritual structure. A tradition in its largest sense is something deeply rooted in Wyrð. It is a reservoir of sacral mysteries. It is a container of every step along the road of devotion that a people have taken under the eyes of their ancestors and their Gods. It is a living record of every interaction between the Gods and a people. A Tradition defines a people. It is a living, breathing, vibrant connection with our earliest kin and with the unfolding of the path of piety so integral to communal wholeness and health.

I'll take this a step farther. Many of us have direct experience with what it means to ensconce oneself in a living tradition, to be intimately bound up with the restoration of this container, the arteries carrying the lifeblood of reciprocity and devotion that sustain a spiritual community. Some of us have been dumped right into the experience of their sundering by our dead. For those of us upon whose shoulders the weight of a tradition rests, we carry a powerful obligation from our Gods, from our ancestors, and from those in our spiritual lineage however far back they may have lived, to heal, restore, and above all protect the integrity of that tradition. It's not a word that we are defending; it is a living sanctuary into which our Gods are repeatedly made welcome.

For those of us who have had this connection forged for us, by the grace of our Gods and our dead, by the grace of the lineage whose hands and heart we collectively are called to manifest in our work, no compromise is possible. We will guard and protect that sacred space, the flow and push of that tradition as it continues to unfold

and rework itself against anything that may threaten the integrity of its re-weaving. This takes precedence over anything, everything, and anyone save venerating the Gods and ancestors Themselves.

One of the things that seems to have caused endless upset in the ongoing debates between pagans and polytheists is that many in both camps do not comprehend the push that many of us feel to defend the tradition over and above the comfort of those people immediately involved now. This is, I believe an invisible fault line that has been causing round after round of trouble. Until you have been rooted in the immediacy of a tradition and lineage, it is impossible - for anyone--to truly comprehend what this means. But it is at the core of polytheistic resistance: the weight of lineage and the tradition which it sustains rests on our shoulders.

There is nothing wrong with individual wolves having their voice. We're not trying to silence their howl. But we're talking about the symphonic beauty of the collective howl of every pack that has ever howled since the moon first rose and the children of Odin's ravens first screamed themselves into being at the side of neolithic dyre wolves seeking food and common survival for their pack. We are fighting against a cold and desolate landscape: a modern world that may no longer systematically destroy our traditions with violence and bloodshed, but that seeks their erasure no less surely and drains the passion and life out of every attempt at restoration. Even on the cusp of spring's awakening, the song of this brutal winter lingers.

This isn't about the individual. We're not working for the individual. This is a different agenda, one that will restore and sustain our traditions regardless of the opposition faced.



### **The Secret Behind How This Guy Balances Rocks Is Very Unusual. Can You Guess It?**

<http://www.lifebuzz.com/rocks/>

Suggested by Ellis

Michael Grab has mastered the art of stone balancing. He explains how he does it. “The most fundamental element of balancing in a physical sense is finding some kind of “tripod” for the rock to stand on. Every rock is covered in a variety of tiny to large indentations that can act as a tripod for the rock to stand upright, or in most orientations you can think of with other rocks.

By paying close attention to the feeling of the rocks, you will start to feel even the smallest clicks as the notches of the rocks in contact are moving over one another. In the finer point balances, these clicks can be felt on a scale smaller than millimeters. Some point balances will give the illusion of weightlessness as the rocks look to be barely touching. Parallel to the physical element of finding tripods, the most fundamental non-physical element is harder to explain through words. In a nutshell, I am referring to meditation, or finding a zero point or silence within yourself. Some balances can apply significant pressure on your mind and your patience. The challenge is overcoming any doubt that may arise.”



## Scientists Trace Heat Wave To Massive Star At Center Of Solar System

**NEWS • Science • ISSUE 47•32 • Aug 8, 2011**  
**Onion News Network**

ASADENA, CA—Groundbreaking new findings announced Monday suggest the record-setting heat wave plaguing much of the United States may be due to radiation emitted from an enormous star located in the center of the solar system.

Scientists believe the star, which they have named G2V65,

may in fact be the same bright yellow orb seen arcing over the sky day after day, and given its extreme heat and proximity to Earth, it is likely not only to have caused the heat wave, but to be responsible for every warm day in human history.

"Our measurements indicate the massive amount of energy this thing gives off is able to travel 93 million miles and reach our planet in as little as eight and a half minutes," said Professor Mitch Kivens, an astronomer at the California Institute of Technology. "While we can't see them, we're fairly certain these infrared rays strike Earth's surface, become trapped by the atmosphere, and just heat everything up like a great big oven."



"We originally thought that if this star was producing temperatures of 100-plus in the South and Midwest, it must be at least 100 degrees itself," Kivens added. "But it turns out it's far, far hotter than that, with a surface temperature of nearly 10,900 degrees Fahrenheit."

Kivens and his CalTech colleagues said this intense radiation, which results from constant nuclear reactions converting hydrogen to helium in the star's core, could also account for why the orb in the sky is extremely bright and difficult to stare at directly.

While scientists initially assumed the heat and luminescence of the star must make it the largest in the universe—a theory lent credence by the star appearing much bigger than other objects in the sky—they said the data actually appear to refute such a notion.

"Apparently it's gigantic simply because it's closer to us than any other star," Kivens said. "Which would also account for why we feel this particular star's heat during the day but are not warmed by the tiny blinking stars we see at night."

"It's interesting stuff," he added.

According to Kivens, the discovery has prompted researchers to explore the possibility that a variety of phenomena accompanying the heat wave could also be linked to the star, including taller grass, hot car seats, red skin burns, and sweating "even when one has just been standing there and hasn't been running around or anything."

An additional study is reportedly being conducted to determine if the unexplained shrinking of puddles until they disappear may be caused by star-hotness soaking up all the loose water. Moreover, scientists reportedly believe the heat emitted from the glowing orb could potentially be the reason why it is uncomfortable to walk on asphalt barefoot.

When asked if anything could be done to prevent or counteract the star's heat production, Kivens expressed skepticism.

"No, for the foreseeable future, I think we're locked into orbit with this thing," he said. "Although the star seems to disappear every night, 24-hour reports from around the world seem to indicate the star never leaves Earth entirely."

Residents of heat- and drought-stricken regions welcomed the findings, thankful to finally have an explanation for the high temperatures, if no relief from them.

"That makes sense, because it's usually hotter when that [star] is up in the air," said Stillwater, OK resident Asher Arps, 31, speaking to reporters as temperature rose to 110 degrees over the weekend. "I knew it lit things up, of course, but I didn't realize it could make things hot."

"The big star heats the earth, and the moon cools it—I get it," he added.

As to potential applications of the new discovery, experts acknowledge the possibilities could be limitless. "This is a watershed moment," renewable energy specialist Dr. Martin Flint said. "Who knows where this could lead? Perhaps we could develop a method of harnessing these big star rays and transforming them into some sort of ecologically friendly power source."

"Wait, what am I saying?" he said, laughing. "I'm getting ahead of myself. We still don't understand how it's possible for that thing to be up in the sky in January when it's freezing outside."



## **North Korea Lands First Ever Man On The Sun, Confirms Central News Agency January 21, 2014**

THE STATE News Agency of North Korea has confirmed today that the country has become the first in the world to ever land a man on the sun.

It reported that astronaut Hung Il Gong left for the sun on a specially designed rocket ship at approximately 3am this morning.

Hung, who traveled alone, reached his destination some four hours later, landing his craft on the dark side of the lonely star.

"We are very delighted to announce a successful mission to put a man on the sun." a North Korean central news anchor man said on a live broadcast earlier. "North Korea has beaten every other country in the world to the sun. Hung Il Gong is a hero and deserves a hero's welcome when he returns home later this evening."

The specially trained astronaut is expected to return back to earth at 9pm tonight, where he will meet his uncle and supreme leader Kim Jong-un.

It is understood that the 17-year-old 'space explorer' traveled at night to avoid being engulfed by the sun's rays, and that this genius approach has brought the soviet state to the top of the global space rankings.

While on the sun, Mr. Hung collected sun spot samples to bring back to his supreme leader as a present.

The 18 hour mission is already being called the 'greatest human achievement of our time' by the North Korean central news agency.

## **DRUID INQUIRER INFO**

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