



**Yule Issue**  
**Year of the Reform “LII”**  
**December 14, 2014 c.e.**  
**Volume 31, Issue 8**

An unofficial scrapbook of Reformed Druid activity

**Editor’s Note:**

I’m writing this from Japan, near Narita. So I have selected a few articles based on the intersection of Asia and Druidry. As you know the first RDNA Druids went to Japan in 1965, and Asia was a strong influence on Druidry until the end of the Vietnam War era. Zen and Taoism and Shinto seem the most congenial Asian faiths to the Reformed Druidic path and I recommend their gentle, quirky and nature-friendly paths to you. I’m on the move again, on my way to a job in the Middle East, a difficult place to be a public Druid. I’m hoping that the holiday season finds you safe, healthy and happy with loved ones.

This will be a short issue, as I’ve been hopping hotels for the last few weeks and hopefully by Oimelc, I will be all settled down and able to resume regular correspondence and internet interaction.

A lot of news from the Groves this season, especially the big Samhain service at Carleton.

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## News of the Groves

### Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota



#### Samhain Observance at the Carleton Arboretum

Saturday, November 1 at 1:10pm in CDT

Mike finally made it back to Carleton and met up with the Oakdale Grove and Carleton Grove. His flight was awful and the weather for Halloween in Northfield was quite chilly for his camping. The sweatlodge was called off, but Sam performed a sunrise Tibetan offering (with fire, thankfully) and travelled with Mike to the “Center of the Universe” at nearby St. Olaf College. The Oakdale crew came over by the afternoon and we held a Saturday noon service that was broadcast live online – a historic first!



John, Paul, David, Richard, Glenn, Earl, Sam and Mike at the Hill of 3 Oaks



Long discussion around the campfire in the Druid Den with Carleton students and alumni on a very cold night with warm wishes.

As Paul the Verbose relates of the day's events:

It began with some planning. Then there was the turbulence, as though Taranis conspired against us. But that was eventually dealt with.

Finally the day had come. And the rest of the group headed down to that famous place of Northfield. Soon enough we came into the college and gathered ourselves to the Hill of Three Oaks. The sun shown bright and the winds blew cold. We felt them most keenly upon the hill.

It was there we met with Mike the Fool, Ben John and Sam. Soon John the Verbose was blowing his Carnyx. Where upon, we noticed the arrival of Richard Shelton as he approached the hill at the horn's calling. Again the Carnyx sounded. And this time David the Chronicler came bounding across the field and up the incline to join us. And then once more the horn beckoned to any others to join us. Then John the Verbose gave one more blast of the fearsome carnyx and great joy echoed from the Arb to our South. And once this was done, John the Verbose began to intone the opening lines, "Oh Lord, forgive us these three short comings..." and upon completing the invocation we saw Glen McDavies coming up the hill as though he too had heard the baleful summons of the horn's mighty blast.

Then once gathered we began in earnest to call upon the Earth Mother. We offered up a sacrifice and it was good. We shared the Waters of Life but I went contrary to Belenos' daily trip across the heavens. But then we still had some more things to do. For unto the Second Order did Anna Smith ascend and into the First Order her comrade in Druidry, Maddy, did enter. But then a chill wind blew across the land and we felt a chill settle upon our bones. We Third Orders along with our honored guests and those of Carleton College came to agree that we must offer yet another sacrifice to the Earth Mother, the All Changing and Ever Present Mother. This time the sacrifice was rejected for the cold winds did blow. We called out to Belenos to return to us and not dwindle in strength. Yet we called upon the Waters once more but this time the spirit had gone out of them and we only had the Waters of Sleep. This time I walked the path of Belenos around to those gathered and offered them the Waters of Sleep which John the Verbose had consecrated as he had the Waters of Life just moments before. And red changed to white for Winter is upon the land. The Earth Mother sleeps until the coming of Spring when She begins to stir forth and attempts to shake off the white quilt that She will soon don in Her slumbers. We heard from Earl the Seeker and still more from David the Chronicler and even Richard Shelton of words steeped in wisdom for us to contemplate and hold unto. Then we closed the service with John the Verbose giving the blessing. Those who could went for coffee and further discussion. There we found out some things about the past and present. There we heard from David, Richard, Glen and Mike of various things they had done, witnessed and how we were heading into our unknown future as RDNA Druids.

Those of us of the Oakdale Grove who made the journey sought out our lodging for the night. We dropped a few things and ate a modest meal of human dog food, called "McDonald's". Funny how the things you shouldn't eat taste so good. Eventually we made our way back the Druid's Den and there we met up with Mike

the Fool and had much discussion late into the night. Anna Smith and Maddy came to join us along with David the Chronicler. And there we learned more of the humble beginnings of the RDNA.

While s'mores were shared and conversation flowed, a few ghost tales were offered. And then we met a few other students of Carleton who stumbled across our fire. And even more questions were asked and more answers were given. In all, there was much to consider about what was said that I know I shall be pondering much in the days ahead.

But like all things the fire went out and each of us went forth unto our next destination or to our homes. And that was a simple summation of Samhain/Halloween of 2014. Others may add or subtract what they like to this simple history. –Paul the Bard.



John ordains AD Anna of Carleton into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Order

#### NOTES FROM CARLETON LEADERSHIP:

This past autumn, the RDNA has resurfaced at the Mothergrove after a period of stagnation. Still very much in its infancy, this newest iteration is slowly building a foundation within the Carleton student community. It is under the sophomoric leadership of Archdruidess Anna S, Bookkeeper Briannon C, and Master of Coin Maddy C (positions and titles still in flux).

Our first obstacle as an organization has been recruitment. Most of the student body, when prompted with “Reformed Druids of North America,” responded with either “Whaaa?” or “Wait... you guys are actually a thing?!” Clearly there is quite a lot of ground to cover. The next problem is the religious content (or lack thereof). Outsiders are sometimes unwilling to give us a chance due to fear of insulting our beliefs. However, the RDNA as we understand it makes a point to be accepting of all views, so we decided to avoid any religious doctrine as an organization and instead encourage personal spirituality.

This past term we learned about the history of the RDNA and various Druidic traditions, and focused on forming stronger personal connections with our beautiful environment. When the weather permitted, we ventured into the Arb to appreciate our surroundings, but as the days grew colder, we devoted more time to reading the ARDA and other texts. For Winter Term we are planning to bring many exciting craft projects to fruition and to experiment with cooking concepts to keep us warm!

Peace and love,  
Maddy “Master of Coin”

My Druidry is dynamic. It ebbs and flows with the coming and going of the sun, the waxing and waning of the moon, the browning of the grass, and the layers of clothing bundled and shedded. My Druidry is situated. Northfield is my temple. Was my temple. But now I’m home again, and the familiar vistas welcome back the

spirit. My Druidry is like a string of pilgrimages, although I hesitate to use that word as it implies that one place is more spiritual than another.

I'm approaching two years of formally identifying with this tradition and analogous others, which is to say, I'm still barely past my infancy. Maddy Cosgriff and I got ordained as first order and second order Druids, respectively, this last term, but I still don't even feel like I've made it that far down my own path. In any case, I've definitely learned a lot in these last two years from co-leading the wonderful and unique group of people that makes up the current incarnation of the Carleton RDNA. Spiritualities are living traditions, and I would have to proudly say that our tradition epitomizes this. As I'm sure it's been said before by many-an-Archdruid, trying to channel the situated powers of time and place to mould a "new" RDNA has been a considerable challenge and a valuable learning experience.

In personal reflection, I've come to accept my own Druidry as having two major facets: the duty to provide a helping hand for curious peers that comes with my very basic leadership role, and my personal practice and views concerning the Earth Mother. While they're by no means isolated from one another, I'm learning to treat them as at least somewhat discrete. My spirituality is a river that navigates, at times, rocky terrain. It might run dry during hot periods of the summer, or become glazed over and stagnant with ice during the coldest periods of winter. Before, I might've looked at this and felt like something was lacking on my part. Maybe I would start to feel uninspired, or as if the "holy spirit" had forsaken me. Excuse the excessive nature imagery, but here I go again: when I look outside, I see only brown and gray. But like the skeleton of a tree, even during low points, my practice persists. It's not as glorious, but equally holy. And where there is holiness, there is holiness to be spread and shared. And I would say that one of the beauties of the RDNA is that it creates a forum to express our own, personal, seasonal cycles.

With that, I hope everyone enjoys a cozy and reflective solstice, and remembers that our little flames are always lit, even on the darkest night of the year.

Happy Yule from the Carleton Grove!  
(by Anna S.)

### **Oakdale Grove: News from Minnesota**

[ John] embarked on a road trip in November to visit a friend near Hickory, North Carolina. The sojourn will also be a pilgrimage to the land of my ancestors, a thousand years back and more. My return journey looks like it might be through some possible freezing road conditions. Any weather magic or mediating negotiations between Belenos and Taranis to appeal for drier weather come Monday/Tuesday would be much appreciated!



John also performed a semi-aquatic RDNA service at the shores of Lake Superior.

**Video** at <http://youtu.be/Nah6iuedyNk>

John relates: And it's not seen in the video, but I'm wearing a lapel microphone. In my audio tests at home, the sound quality is great, but on the shore of Lake Superior a lot of the sound is lost over the lake. I'd swear the

carynx sounded really quiet. But I was trying to project my voice, and I was blowing out the levels on the lapel microphone, so I ended up using the audio from my phone camera.

### **Dogwood Protogrove: News from Virginia**

I (Mike the Fool) had the great pleasure of meeting up with Tony again. Tony and Ellen had run a Dogwood protogrove in MD and then moved to Kansas and are back to Northern Virginia after 5+ years. They send word that they are looking for a new home, with ample grove space near by. It is my hope that they will pick up Reformed Druidic services near Washington DC now that I have moved overseas. If you are in Virginia and wish to contact them, write to me

At [Mikerdna@hotmail.com](mailto:Mikerdna@hotmail.com)

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

Karen Third Order and Ordination, Samhain 2014



Karen entered the Third order, putting Raven's grove at having three priest/ess/es now. A lot of firepower and artistic glory!

Karen reports: Thanks everyone for all the warm wishes, it was such an amazing, unforgettable day, special thx to all my clan for adding all the extra touches and taking loads of photos, a wonderful keepsake. I feel quite humbled and blessed from all the attention! Xoxox



I believe that education is key when it comes to hatred and ignorance. We have white supremacists here also in Canada. We have all not long ago experienced in the media such groups using our druidic symbols, images and issues to promote their own hateful agendas. But we all know with time that pictures of good and loving druids with torches and robes honoring nature will brake such negative connotations that these folks have created. Love and openness will always prevail at the end. –Seb

*See the drum and soap projects down in the Druid Picture section*

**Raven Grove Expansion=** Well, I believe it is time for Raven's Grove to branch out. A lot of people want to join us but distance is a major issue. I'm thinking that we should create "satellite" groups across the Ottawa Valley under Raven's Grove tutelage.

This way we could reach out more efficiently and hold more Goblet's (Raven's Meetup Groups) around the Valley. There is a growing interest in Druidry and in spiritual fellowship in our community. People need a place to share and connect with others. The Goblet night is a safe place to do this. It is a place of great acceptance and where everyone's beliefs are respected. There is no set dogma or belief system which all adherents must follow.

The Goblet is an open group of discussions and sharing. A place that supports kinship, where having a good time and tones of laughter is essential. But most importantly, where no one takes themselves too seriously.

This will give people the opportunity to meet other like minded folks in their town or neighboring municipalities. Great way to meet amazing people. If you are interested in creating a "Satellite" group in your town or area please let me know! There is a screening process to follow when starting up a Goblet group. But this process will be explained when you are setting up your group. These goblet's will be part of Reform Druid of North America network. But other druids, pagans and faiths can join!

Our Friends and folks of Bristol, Quyon and Luskville will be very happy! There is enough people in that area to create our first satellite a group.

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

Last Sunday I {Stacey} attended the ADF Samhuinn ceremony with Sierra Madrone Grove in Sacramento. Tonight I made an ancestor dinner: brisket with potatoes for my parents, Emmon's favorite apple pie, and Sheep herder's bread for Tom's mom. Just got back inside from taking the ancestor plate to the Elderberry in the Samhuinn direction in the Grove site. Oidhche Shamhna Shona Dhuibh!

### **Koad Grove: News from Ohio**

I saw an interesting movie yesterday - a cartoon - entitled "The Book of Life". It was a delightful film about the power of The Ancestors! Trailer at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBw5YScs8iQ>

### **Whispering through the Willow Protogrove: News from Mississippi**

Michael J has shared proof that Santa is Odin (LOL) <http://9gag.com/gag/aVQL3NO?ref=fb.s>

### **Golden Valley Grove: News from California**

I've (Sean) been nominated for ADF's Northwest Regional Druid, and I accepted. It's a job I've held several times before, and I think the position gives me a better opportunity to reach out in a clergy role (there's only three of us west of the Mississippi) to our members out west.

### **Emerald Avalon RDG Protogrove: News from Kentucky**

A new protogrove is being organized in Owensboro KY.

See <http://www.reformed-druids.org/?q=node/121>

## **ANNIVERSARY ANNOUNCEMENT**

Reformed Druids of Gaia have celebrated their 8<sup>th</sup> birthday and have begun Year 9 on November 1<sup>st</sup>

**Ellen Hopman** announces the Tribe of the Oak <http://tribeoftheoak.com/>

Welcome to the online home of the Tribe of the Oak Druid Grove. The Tribe of Oak Grove is a Celtic Reconstructionist Druid Grove that seeks to preserve and pass on the traditional ways of the ancient Celts.

This group is by invitation only, please request to join the Grove only if you are seriously seeking to be a member and are prepared to study towards Druidic initiation.

## Druid Poetry

A Samhain Rite to Honour the Earth Mother and the Season of Sleep, this morning, at Dawn.

I offered sacrifices from my own indoor garden today, yet the Four Winds were silent, because the Earth Mother is sleeping in this Season of Sleep. Sleep deep and sleep long, warmed by the fires deep in the Earth, O Our Mother!

The Season of Sleep at Dawn  
In that quiet moment,  
When sound and light,  
Are nowhere to be found:  
Tending to the Earth Mother,  
In her time of sleep.  
Heal, as the silence gathers;  
Heal, as the light diffuses,  
Heal, as the Seasons turn,  
Once again as always.  
As the Earth Mother sleeps,  
She dreams a dream  
Where the Sun crests the horizon,  
As the Waters of Sleep  
Are raised in her name.  
-Jon D.

### **Dark Solstice Spirit**

She holds off the Sunrise,  
Just a little more each day;  
Longer for the world to  
Lie in darkness;  
Longer for the world to  
Dream the primal dream.  
She beckons the sunset,  
Just a little sooner every day;  
Quicker for the world to  
Gather towards the flickering light;  
Quicker for the world to  
Turn, quickly, within.  
As the Cold Moon announces  
The shortening of the days,  
You can see her in the shadows  
Black against that light;  
Lengthening,  
Cold,  
Unyielding,  
Insistent.

Dark Solstice Spirit,  
Beneath your cloak of darkness,  
Shards of light and recent memory  
Conspire as the Sun halts in its course.  
-Jon D.

### **I Hear You Calling**

It is in loss,  
That life reminds us of  
The cold, stark,  
Necessities that come  
With this arrangement.  
We forget death,  
When it is not present;  
We forget death,  
When it is not near;  
We forget living,  
When death seems so distant;  
We forget them both,  
In the comfort of the day.  
We honour the Departed,  
As though they have passed,  
Yet since they assume such an active place,  
They seem almost alive,  
Still present,  
Still resonating in our daily lives.  
I hear you calling:  
When a loved one is taken  
And one feels the depth of loss  
And the permanence,  
In this realm,  
Of the passing of life.  
I hear you calling:  
When the leaves fall  
And trees stand stark  
And vigilant,  
Arms stretched against the sky:  
"The warm days are over!"  
"The warm days are over"  
The wind cries to the sky.  
I hear you calling:  
When the crows,  
Your beloved,  
Insist their vision  
Against the grayest of skies.  
Night beckons and the crows,  
Pull the veil of night behind

The Sun;  
Day is done!  
Sun is gone!  
Let us become the night!  
You watch,  
Great Queen,  
This imposing vehicle of efficiency;  
Nothing done in anger;  
Nothing done in spite.  
Nothing done in haste.  
I hear you calling,  
Just maybe not my name.  
-Jon D.

sweetness  
and tangibility,

to be understood,  
to be more than pure light  
that burns  
where no one is--  
so it enters us--  
in the morning  
shines from brute comfort  
like a stitch of lightning;

and at night  
lights up the deep and wondrous  
drownings of the body  
like a star.

The Spirit," says Mary Oliver in her simply-titled  
"Poem,"

likes to dress up like this:  
ten fingers,  
ten toes,

shoulders, and all the rest  
at night  
in the black branches,  
in the morning

in the blue branches  
of the world.  
It could float, of course,  
but would rather

plumb rough matter.  
Airy and shapeless thing,  
it needs  
the metaphor of the body,

lime and appetite,  
the oceanic fluids;  
it needs the body's world,  
instinct

and imagination  
and the dark hug of time,

'Our names are written in immortal lines,  
By Brighid's Lake of Beer,  
Such brew inspires gladness, cheer...  
Amongst the happy few!  
The day never ends in Tir n'Og  
Our glasses never drained,  
Immortality is sustained  
By Heaven's sacred brew!  
The silken plaint of harps and songs  
Accompanies all desires,  
Flames of love in kindled fires  
Amongst a joyful crew.  
The Temple where we met and joined  
Not church or union club  
But risen from that local pub  
Sustained on Irish stew!'  
-David



When Shadows, Do Come a Calling Penny Young

In the still of the dusk air, shadows do form, and start, to stare.  
Trees that surround, the hallowed grove, reach out their fingers,  
stretching, begin to rove.  
Flames dance, in fire so bright, flames leap higher and shape your sight.  
Sounds in the distance, echoes, near your call, and night creeps in, and  
starts to fall.  
Crackle of timber, shedding its heat, it cajoles, it caresses, it dances, its  
feat. Summers caress gives way, to the edge of night, and the moon  
rises high and sheds her light.  
Stars, glistening like jewels, littering the sky, nocturnal callers, start to  
fly. The watchers arrive, guardians of old, keeping you company, new  
stories unfold.  
Drumbeat deep, in the damp, moist, earth, calling you now, to sacred  
turf. The watchers weave their wizened jest, whispering weaves that  
manifest.  
Flames flaunt, and start to spark, sending up, embers into the dark.  
Hushed voices, tone from within, the drumbeat deepens, to sounds of,  
kith and kin.  
Hush now my little one, dream if you will, I will tell, you a story, and  
ward of the chill. Do not be afraid do not fear, thine sleep, do not cry,  
my little one, do not weep.  
This isn't a tale of sorrow and unrest, but a tale of the raven, and the  
ravens crest. Sleep now my child on blackened wing, warmed by  
feathers, here I sing.  
Sleep now, my child, dream of the night, be still my child, spirit flight.  
Hush now little one, off you fly into the darkness into the sky.

when days are short  
and cold breaks my breath  
here I am longing  
for the kindness of your hearth  
with the first breaking of spring  
and storms tackling my lungs  
here I am longing  
for the softness of your hearth  
and when day equals night  
and the wind gently aches my face  
then, my love, then  
there is no greater worth than your hearth  
on the jolly early May  
breezes down my neck  
where can I be found  
but close at your hearth  
O, Summer on Top  
still air all around  
still I can be found  
near the goodness of your hearth  
first harvest makes melancholy  
chaff blown from the weed  
it is nice resting  
in the coolness of your hearth  
night as long as day  
softly red leaves sway  
I come running  
for the comfort of your hearth

death too close to some  
high tides hissing at seas  
I know where to go  
to the shelter of your hearth  
your hearth, your home, your sanctuary  
-Hennie

with the softening of the light  
the questions appear shady, scary  
the dreams get more confusing  
and the facts, well, what about them?

with the hardening of the fears  
who shall console me?  
what can still heal me?  
where will I hide?

with the diminishing of hope  
there is one thing  
that is true to me  
your love, my love, your love  
-Hennie

just before my feet  
the land opens to great depth  
to reveal the inner earth  
of life beneath the surface  
the land of our cousins  
and doubles and helpers  
where shades of bodies  
whisper their ominous wishes  
Oh, the joy  
to know of this  
sentient being  
of all inner worlds  
too big, the dream...

-Hennie

I think, I saw you smile  
over a red sunrise  
over little children  
over a singing blackbird

I think, I heard you weep  
over lost children  
over senseless wars  
over disappearing nature

I hope, you'll keep hope  
on world peace  
on loving kindness  
on the passing of sadness

may I hope with you?

-Hennie

feelings rise and fall  
with the changing tide  
hear the Full Moon call  
no need to longer hide

my fears and hopes  
my hate and love  
the heart that copes  
with below and above

no need for screams  
to the messaging tide  
on Moon's rays ride  
to the fulfilling of dreams

never thought off

-Hennie

So much Samhain  
I did not ask for  
but Death is always  
just a veil away

So much Samhuinn  
to be thankful and afraid  
ancestors long passed  
haunt today's reality

This is a Sow-en  
I will never forget  
and if it were  
for the love of Life

-Hennie

## Druid Blogs

OBOD's Druid Podcast episode 92 talks about Alchemy <http://www.paganmusic.co.uk/druidcast-a-druid-podcast-episode-92-alchemy/>

Penny recommends these pagan pastoral care resources <https://www.danaan.net/pagan-cat/pagan-pastoral-care-resources/>

Mike shares an excellent historical/scientific treatise on how Oaks and Humans re-colonized Europe together after the iceage in a symbiotic relationship. Very long, very good!

<http://oldeuropeanculture.blogspot.ie/2014/11/how-did-oaks-repopulate-europe.html>

Cerridwen recommends an article on the Coligny Calendar of the Gaulish Druids <http://www.ancient-origins.net/artifacts-other-artifacts/coligny-calendar-1800-year-old-lunisolar-calendar-banned-romans-002429>

Penny read that children of Druids often grow up to be something else –how wonderful!

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/02/pagan-families\\_n\\_5641954.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=paganism](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/02/pagan-families_n_5641954.html?utm_hp_ref=paganism)

Ellis shared photo and article of dried whisky under microscope: <http://www.iflscience.com/chemistry/stunning-photos-dried-whisky>

Helgalina writes in her recent blogs about rejecting misanthropy <https://helgaleena.wordpress.com/>

Ellen wrote in her blog about social justice <http://elleneverthopman.com/?p=886>

Maddy recommends these photos of 17 Amazing trees to wonder about. <http://news.distractify.com/jake-heppner/17-wonderful-trees-that-prove-nature-is-capable-of-amazing-things/?v=1>

Sebastien recommends a blog of what a Priest/Priestess means today by Yesherabbit.

<https://yesherabbit.squarespace.com/way-of-the-rabbit-contemplation/2014/7/11/priestess-on-wearing-many-hats>

Sebastien recommends a look at what Zen and Druidry can teach eachother by pagandharma at

<http://pagandharma.org/2013/04/zen-druids/>

Sebastien also found a few blogs on Shinto/Tao and paganism, here is part 1

<https://adruidway.wordpress.com/2014/05/09/boku-no-shinto-my-shinto/>

Penny shares news about Ravens in science <http://www.iflscience.com/plants-and-animals/ravens-have-social-abilities-previously-only-seen-humans>

Cerridwen recommends article by Lauren on Darker side of Druidry

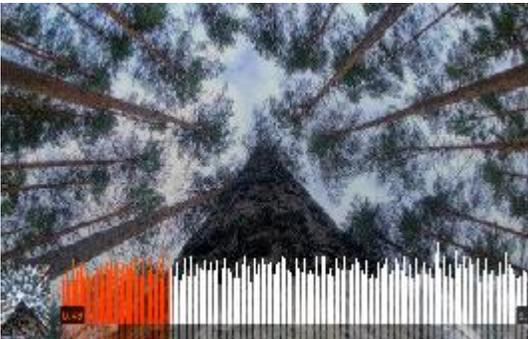
<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/johnbeckett/2014/10/the-dark-side-of-druidry.html>

Penny recommends 12 Yule Prayers <http://paganwiccan.about.com/od/yulethelongestnight/qt/YulePrayers.htm>

## Druid Videos



John of Oakdale held a semi-aquatic RDNA service Oct 26<sup>th</sup> on the shores of Lake Superior. Watch the fascinating video of the service <http://youtu.be/Nah6iuedyNk>



Rhiannon recommends her haunting harp and flute “Tall Trees: Invocation to Manawyddan” <https://soundcloud.com/rhiannon-hawk/tall-trees-invocation-of-manawyddan>

First song Tall Trees, an old Druid prayer which I composed to music, Second song Invocation of Manawyddan I composed to go with Tall Trees. In this version of this song I am playing with my old band members from Beltain, Dave Cowen on flute, Morgan S. McDow on flute, and J. Boyd on drums.



Another odd poetical ghost video by Celestial Elf!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KGZhnWHg5w>



Amusing “Druid ritual” <http://youtu.be/zZZ4S6BSBEE>



The Grizzly Folk : The Wassailing Song!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TV2rIDj26GM>



Sebastien recommends the History of Britain Rise & Fall of the Druids pt 1  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSVvf4qhHPk>



Why there is air on the earth.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5K6fM46DCqU>



Captain Planet turns into eco-terrorist? LOL  
4 parts. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwJaELXadKo>

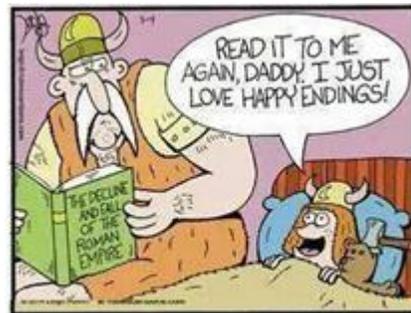
# Druid Pictures



From Mike

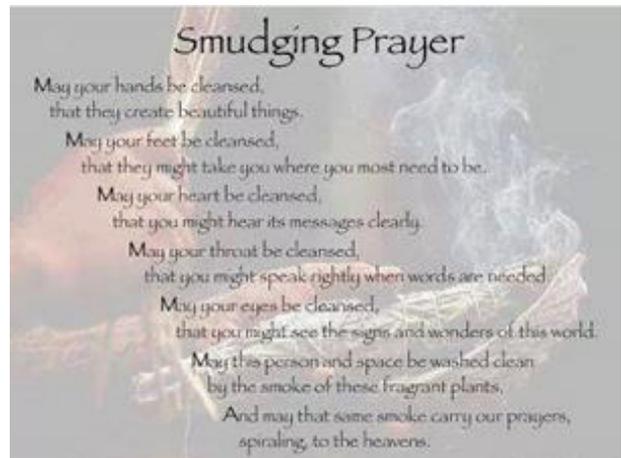


From Stacey

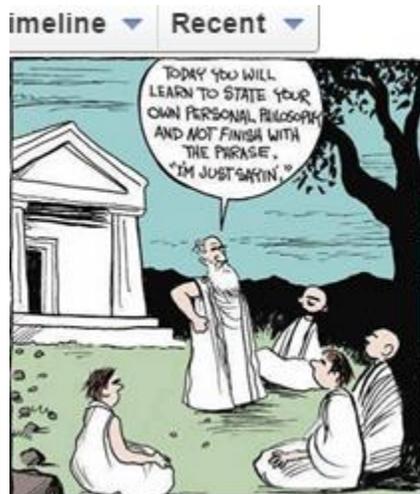


Bedtime with the barbarians

From Ellen



By Stacey

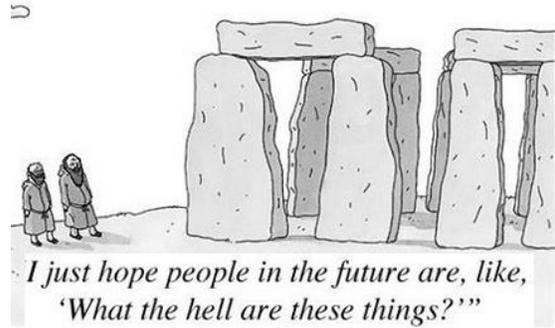


From Mike



*"Yes, the planet got destroyed. But for a beautiful moment in time we created a lot of value for shareholders."*

By Stacey



From Jeffrey

**IN SCOTLAND WE HAVE MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT GLOBAL WARMING, BECAUSE WE WILL GET TO SIT ON THE MOUNTAINS AND WATCH THE ENGLISH DROWN.**



From helgaleena



From Sebastien



By Penny



By Penny



By Sebastien



By Sebastien = [Watch the video](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwKzXsbTy0c>



By Penny. Been experimenting with colors and different oil blends, the last few weeks. I've changed the soap from a pure olive oil to a four oil blend this time round. I wasn't happy with the lather, on the pure olive oils soaps and they didn't retain the essential oils aroma as much as i would like, not too crazy about lumpy bits in my soap either. So i hope my grove pet guinea pigs, are feeling up for it, that is testing out the goods. More to come



Julie's "Bridget incident" reminds us to beware cotton robes around bonfires.



From Mary



From Sarah

*Winter Solstice*  
*Nature remembers what we humans have forgotten:*  
Every cycle must return to stillness, silence, the dark;  
Every out-breath requires an in-breath;  
Every outer endeavor turns back inward to its origins, its center, and begins again;  
From death comes new life, and from the darkest night, the new dawn is born.





## Zen Druids

Article from a Zen Druids blog discovered

<http://pagandharma.org/2013/04/zen-druids/>

Written 13 April, 2013

*Discovered December 2014*

*(Not by a known Reformed Druid)*

James Foster and I were discussing the possibility of Zen Druids today in email. This was the idea of the intersection of the immediacy and focus on presence and mindfulness of Zen practice (among other aspects) with the idea of a sacred or holy nature as present in Druidry, as well as the focus on hearth culture, celebrating the seasons of the year, and other aspects of Druidry as a modern, Neopagan practice.

In part, this came up because I recently joined *Ár nDraíocht Féin*, A Druid Fellowship (which is popularly known as the “ADF”). I did this in large part because of the work going on at the Solitary Druid Fellowship. This group within the ADF is working with individuals to craft their own rituals and work with a practice as solitary practitioners. Druidry was a path in which I was not involved during my Neopagan years, though the Druidry of the ADF and my own practice within Asatru and as a Wiccan were not far apart, really. As I believe I’ve mentioned before, I’ve been a member for a few years of the Shinto shrine in Granite Falls, Washington. I visit it when I’m up in the Seattle area, which is a few times a year to see my daughter and old friends. One of the things that I really appreciated when I visited Japan in 2007 was the extent to which their Buddhism was not wholly distinct from the common Shinto practice and you would commonly see nature oriented shrines and altars to the Kami even in nominally Buddhist places. The recognition of our place in a larger world, the natural world (to compare it against our created world, in a way) was very much present. One of the things that I’ve found really lacking in Buddhist practice where I am is any real recognition that the natural world is important, valuable, or that we are part of its webs of interconnection. For many Buddhists, we could be living in concrete boxes without any outdoors and it would make no difference to their practice or the relationship with the world. For these Buddhists, the Dharma really is a world denying faith and practice as so many people think of Buddhism. While I’m not an outdoorsman by any stretch, I do enjoy being part of the world and observing it and interacting with it (cue my hundreds of flower photos on flickr).

As I’ve made clear in other posts, I’m still very much culturally a pagan and my attitude towards the natural world plays a part of it. I’ve been surprised that this is the case at various points over the years. I thought when I became a Buddhist practitioner that I would leave that all behind but it turned out that the pagan (well, Neopagan) way of doing things and interacting with the world and spirituality doesn’t go away easily. I find that elements of pagan culture call to me much more than the way that the Dharma is popularly interpreted in the West. Buddhism in North America smells as much of Protestant Christianity or a need to get away from anything smacking of religion as two of its strongest elements. I don’t have a need to incorporate either of those into what I do or practice. This feeling is much of what led to this blog even existing.

So...Zen Druidry. This discussion was of a more personal nature for James and me, since we’re Zen practitioners (and he is, in fact, my primary teacher within Zen). How to take what we value from the Dharma and incorporate it in what we value in Neopaganism, specifically in the ideals of modern Druidism... This is an interesting idea and kind of a thought experiment at this point though I suspect that he and I may go further with it.

We tried to come up with what the Dharma, mostly Zen but not just Zen, has to teach Druids and other Neopagans:

- Disciplined, well tried, and well organized methods of meditation (shamatha, vipasyana, mixed, esoteric)
- A focus on practice retreats, alone and with others
- Methods of teacher/student interaction for insight (koan interviews and the koan curriculum)
- Well-developed underlying philosophical/metaphysical structure that supports awakening
- A focus on the goal of awakening to the nature of the world but also on the Bodhisattva Vow, which makes the goal of awakening to be for the good of ALL beings, and which focuses on helping others on the path.

What does paganism have to offer to Zen folks that they might be missing?

- A different view of community/grove/sangha
- A western approach to engaging with nature (important in Japanese Zen more so than anywhere else)
- An established lexicon for “translating” and understanding the aforementioned philosophy/metaphysics
- A freedom to change/play/innovate with methods and ways of practice or teaching (less rigidity)
- Less of a dogmatic attachment to history and 2,600 years of ongoing tradition leading often to ossification
- Ties to Western cultural roots instead of visions of Asian exoticism and “orientalism” (as a way of making Asia into an “other”)

One of the nice things about practicing from the Neopagan (and especially Druid) side of things, is that pagans \*realize\* people are putting things together and making up things as they go. They work out new things, inspired by tradition (or romantic ideals of tradition) and keep “what works.” Everyone involved with Neopaganism knows that people are making it up and folks are largely fine with it. There is no mystical Druid College off on the Emerald Isle to come offer oversight here. If an organization or grove does things in a way you don’t like, you can always leave or make a schism without \*that\* much of a problem. Buddhists, especially in the West, are often very conservative in approach and practice. There is little room for trying new things, making stuff up, and jettisoning things that don’t work well here. Instead, we become scholars of the Pali Canon and engage in Talmudic interpretation of what the Buddha said. There is a place for such things (and knowledge of history and traditions never hurts anyone!) but it can often feel quite stifling and rigid.

Right now, I’m very tempted to find a way to explain common “calm abiding” (shamatha) and “insight” (vipassana) practices in Druidic (or even larger Neopagan) terminology and combine teaching those and doing some celebratory and other rites into something similar to a short Buddhist retreat. Wouldn’t it be interesting for both pagans and open Dharma practitioners to come to a three or four day practice retreat near the woods or the ocean where we combined sitting meditation, instruction in some koan practice, hiking and nature walks with observation, and some actual celebration of being alive in this world and of the world around us. It sounds, to me, to be a lot more fulfilling than either a number of the Dharma practice retreats I’ve been on (sit...walk...sit...walk...eat...clean...sit...walk...) or just hanging out dancing around a maypole while having a campout. Both of these are caricatures but I do think there is a place where the union of the techniques and views of the Dharma could enhance the experience and views of Druidry and other forms of Neopaganism (and vice versa). I think that the Druids are likely to allow space for this kind of thing to be tried without being too against it. I fear that the Buddhist groups would be far less open to such ideas.

Does this sound interesting to you? I’m sure that Steve and the Zen Odinists would be open to this sort of thing (though they are on the other side of the planet from me).



## Zen Druidry and other meanderings

By Nimue Brown

*(Not a Reformed Druid, essay discovered Dec 2014 by Sebastien)*

My friend Jo van der Hoeven's lovely little book 'Zen Druidry' is out in paperback now. I've already read it, and can vouch for it being very nicely written and full of interesting and engaging ideas. I'm not a Zen person, but I enjoy reading about different paths. I believe we can learn a great deal by exploring the commonality between faiths, and also looking at the differences. There are enough overlaps between Buddhism and Druidry that plenty of people pair the two. Druidry, after all, suffers from a lack of ancient texts. Buddhism has plenty of source material, but is very much part of a different land and culture. Taking the bits that make sense and placing them where you are can work with many different paths.

I read widely and am fascinated by other faiths. Shinto, Jainism and Hinduism have recently featured a lot, and I've been reading about Zen (aside from Jo's book) and want to get some Zen Koan teachings. I want to be very clear that this is not about a pick and mix approach to religions, nor about any kind spiritual tourism. I want to learn about what it is to be human, and I think belief is a window to the human condition as much as anything else. Cultures and alternative perspectives fascinate me, I read what philosophy I can manage, I read atheist writers... I'm a bit of an omnivore.

Zen Druidry made a lot of sense to me. I might not choose to go that way, but I can understand it, I see the attraction and it has influenced me a bit in terms of my meditation practice. Recently I've also had a look at some reconstructionist Druid writing. Now, given that this is just Druidry, it would be fair to assume this would be even more appealing and meaningful to me than all the 'foreign' faiths. I'm hugely interested in history, in the Celts, archaeology, the mediaeval fiction... and yet I fall down entirely with Celtic reconstruction. Why is it that, when I can comfortably read so widely, I struggle with what *\*should\** be closest and most accessible? I can read, and know mostly what's being referred to, recognise the source material, it's not like I don't know my stuff. I'm not an expert on Celtic history, but I've got some awareness.

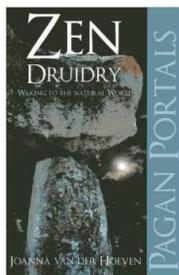
I think it's this. Religions evolve, and they do so slowly over long periods, punctuated by the occasional upheavals that, for example, bring Christianity out of Judaism, or creates splits into new subsets. Through the evolution process, religions stay with us. If I read about Shinto, I'm reading about something written for a modern audience. Even history is filtered through so that my mind can take it in. The one thing I struggle with is the idea that anyone, of any faith here and now could hope to fully understand the thoughts and beliefs of anyone from two thousand and more years ago. This is the premise on which reconstruction depends – that we can go to the source material, such as it is, and from that we can even viably attempt an understanding at the people who lived it at the time. That from our centrally heated houses with a supermarket down the road we could have some hope of comprehending what it would mean to be utterly dependant on the land you live on, just for starters.

I don't think most of us have the slightest chance of making the jump.

I remember being told once that Vikings couldn't have brightly coloured clothes, because as soon as you wash them, those old dyes run, and wash out. Of course he'd chucked his trousers in a washing machine. Soap. Hot water. If you don't wash often and you don't wash hot, you can have those colours just fine. A tiny example of how easily we fail to grasp the implications of difference.

Zen Druidry looks a little bit like modern, western Zen, which probably looks a bit like Japanese contemporary Zen which in turn bears some resemblance to other forms of Buddhism, and that no doubt has some stuff in common with forms of Buddhism through its history and through those roots back to the Vedic culture it began in and from there back into something I don't know much about yet. But apparently that was an oral tradition, teaching in groves. It could be that Buddhism and Jainism, as post-Vedic attempts at reviving pre-Vedic culture

have more relationship with something Indo-European that looks like Druidry than picking over Roman remains ever will. A living, evolving tradition may have more to say to us about how Druidry would have evolved, than the remnants of Druidry do. We'll never know.



In the meantime, you can find Jo's blog here [www.octopusdance.wordpress.com](http://www.octopusdance.wordpress.com) and here book here – [http://www.amazon.com/Pagan-Portal-Zen-Druidry-Natural-Awareness/dp/1780993900/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1365680961&sr=8-1&keywords=zen+druidry](http://www.amazon.com/Pagan-Portal-Zen-Druidry-Natural-Awareness/dp/1780993900/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1365680961&sr=8-1&keywords=zen+druidry)

A facebook page devoted to her intersection of topics <https://www.facebook.com/zendruidry>

## News



### **In a Nutshell: Oak Tree and Acorn Fats**

By Terry Krautwurst (*not a Reformed Druid*)

October/November 2003

<http://www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening/acorn-facts-zmaz03onzgoe.aspx#axzz3LvV9Cy71>

Learn about oak tree and acorn facts and how this tree nut provides food for a wide variety of wildlife.

*Editor: For an article on Oak/Acorn recipes see <http://www.rdna.info/druidinquirer36.pdf>  
Excellent follow on article on Oaks and Humans in ancient Europe at <http://oldeuropeanculture.blogspot.ie/2014/11/how-did-oaks-repopulate-europe.html>*

#### **Magnificent oak trees and their acorns sustain countless wild creatures.**

BLAM! BONK-BLAM! BLAM! For days on end at our house, this is early autumn's tune — a slow, staccato solo for pickup-truck percussion in A (for annoying) minor. No matter where I move my truck in our tree-covered driveway it sits beneath an oak, and acorns come raining down on it like oversized hailstones on a tin roof.

As startling as each resounding impact is to me, it must be a truly jarring experience for the little weevil larva curled inside the meat-filled shell. By summer's end many acorns carry the larvae, one to a nut, deposited as eggs in tiny pinholes drilled by feeding adult weevils. The jolt of an acorn's fall to the ground signals to the larva that the time has come to bore its way out of the shell. Once hatched, the larva burrows as much as a foot deep into the soil, where it remains for up to five years before pupating and emerging as a full-grown acorn-sucking beetle. The slam against unforgiving truck metal has to be a whole different kind of wake-up call.

Equally as eye-opening to biologists and ecologists, though, is the reverberating environmental impact of acorns — the countless billions that land with a gentle thud, and a collective bang, on soil and leaf litter from coast to coast. Scientists are only beginning to unravel the extraordinarily complex interplay between plants, wildlife and acorns in woodland ecosystems.

#### **Oak Tree and Acorn Facts**

Like other nuts, an acorn is a seed, an embryonic tree-to-be wrapped in a hard shell. But only the lower end of an acorn's innards is occupied by a rudimentary root and stem; the rest is nutritive tissue loaded with protein, carbohydrates and fat. Its purpose is to sustain a sprouting seedling until the infant grows green leaves and can stock its own larder via photosynthesis. But far more often than not, a forest creature gobbles the nut and its stored nutrients first.

Upwards of 100 species of birds and animals include acorns in their diets. For many — including gray squirrels, blue jays, black bears, chipmunks, ruffed grouse and deer mice — nuts are the main food source, a critical element of day-to-day survival. For many more, acorns are a lifeline to spring and beyond. Without the benefit of the nuts' energy, those birds and animals will starve or fail to reproduce successfully.

Fortunately, the United States is blessed with roughly 58 species of native oaks. I say roughly because many oaks readily hybridize, producing pesky crosses that feed the fires of the ongoing debate among biologists over what, precisely, makes a species a species. Scientists will likely never agree on the exact number of different oaks. Regardless, they all produce acorns. The nuts range from peasize (willow and pin oaks) to whopping jawbreaker-size (bur and white oak). In a good year, one tree can produce thousands of acorns, and an acre of oak woodland can yield a quarter-ton or more of nuts. And there, in a nutshell, is an important environmental catch: not all years are good years.

### **Acorns: Nut Boom and Bust**

Mast refers to fruits and seeds of trees and shrubs. Wildlife biologists distinguish two types of mast: hard and soft. Soft mast includes pine seeds and fruits from vines, shrubs and small trees — persimmon, dogwood, grape, blackberry, and the like. Soft mast is used by wildlife primarily during the summer and fall. Hard mast consists of nuts. This includes beech, hickory, walnut and others, but acorns are by far the bulk of the hard-mast crop. Some scientists say oaks produce more nuts annually than all other kinds of nut trees combined — both wild and commercial.

The hard-mast crop is hardly consistent, though, from year to year. Instead, it follows a boom-and-bust cycle. Bumper crops seldom occur back to back, and are typically succeeded by several years of average to poor production. Then, boom — another bumper.

The immediate effects of this fluctuating food supply are predictable. Following good mast years, animals are well-nourished, reproduction rates soar and wildlife populations increase. Poor years produce the opposite effect. Malnourished animals starve or die from disease, and breeding falls off.

### **Nut-Bearing Trees**

Scientists have barely begun to unravel the many ecological repercussions of the oak forest's wax-and-wane mast cycle. For that matter, they're not entirely sure why the nut crop varies as it does. Certainly weather and other environmental influences are a factor — a drought can sap trees of reproductive energy; a late spring frost can kill flowers. But weather doesn't appear to be the main influence. Bumper-crop years aren't always especially weather-blessed. Poor mast years occur even when conditions are ideal for acorn growth.

Many scientists now believe the mast cycle is an evolutionary adaptation; that over the eons oaks and other nut-bearing trees have developed an on-and-off mast cycle to ensure their reproductive survival. The theory makes sense. If oaks produced a consistently healthy crop of acorns every year, populations of nut-loving animals would rise to the point where all the acorns would be eaten no matter how numerous. None would remain to grow into mighty oaks.

The mast cycle solves the problem. During moderate to poor years, wildlife get by as best they can, seldom increasing and often decreasing in numbers. Then comes a good year, when the trees pour it on and produce far more nuts than the animals can consume, no matter how fast they reproduce. Nuts are left to germinate and renew the forest. Over the leaner years following, wildlife again dwindles to numbers too few to eat all of the next bumper crop. And so the cycle continues: The trees in effect keep nut predators at bay, like mother hens protecting their eggs.

### **Sustaining Oak Trees: Where You Come In**

The roles oaks and their acorns play in nature are numerous and, to a large extent, not yet fully understood. Certainly, the dynamics of wildlife populations are impacted in countless ways. There's no question the annual acorn harvest is critical to countless creatures. So it makes sense to carefully manage oaks on your property.

If you're blessed with forested land or a woodlot, you can help maximize acorn yields. Thinning the forest every few years, creating openings in the canopy, is essential. Crowded stands of tall trees block the sun and squelch mast production. Nut trees with crowns fully exposed to light are healthier and produce better than those with shaded foliage. Thin medium-height trees, too, so light can strike the ground and encourage growth of lower foliage important to ground-dwelling creatures for cover and nesting.

When thinning, remember that large-diameter specimens produce more nuts than those of small diameter. Leave the big ones, in other words, and those that promise to be. Also, retain a combination of both white-oak and red-oak species — the two groups into which all oaks are divided. They're easy to tell apart: Most white oaks have leaves with rounded lobes, or "fingers." Red-oak leaves have pointed lobes.

More importantly, red-oak acorns — which take two years to mature and are exceptionally high in fat — don't sprout until the following spring, even when buried. As a result, they're storable. Birds and animals rely primarily on red-oak acorns for their winter stash. White-oak acorns, on the other hand, mature in a single year, are sweeter than the reds, and sprout soon after falling, thus losing their nutty nature — and their nutrients. Wildlife generally eat them as soon as they find them in the fall. The white-oak acorns are critical for building energy reserves before cold weather strikes.

Remember to keep a mix of other types of hard-mast-producing trees — beech, walnut, hickory — if you have them. Likewise, maintain lower-growing vegetation that produces soft mast — dogwood, cherry, wild grape or berries.

Of course, the same principles apply, though on a smaller scale, to back yards and suburban lots. Keep any oaks and other nut trees thinned and healthy, and use a range of shrub species and other landscape plants that bear food. Think mixed nuts; think mixed everything, and wildlife will be the better for it. In nature, after all, variety is not only the spice of life, but also the force that drives it.

If you're looking for a mail-order source of inexpensive oak tree seedlings, check out OIKOS Tree Crops. Established in 1985, OIKOS offers more than 75 species and hybrid oaks, including selections that produce heavy crops of acorns suitable for wildlife or for making flour, as well as other interesting plants. Contact OIKOS at [www.oikostreecrops.com](http://www.oikostreecrops.com).

## **DRUID INQUIRER INFO**

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**Deadline for Oimeic January 18, 2015**