

SPRING 2021

KINDRED CONNECTIONS

Official Newsletter of Columbia Grove, ADF

Under the Oaks: Letters from the Senior Druid

BY ARIN D'WULF

Greetings friends and family,



Well we're already two whole rituals into 2021. For me, last year really dragged on, but this year has been just zooming past us. I don't know if it's because I've gotten used to working and living in a pandemic, or because of the positive changes we've been seeing the world around us as more and more of us are getting vaccinated. I know I can point to one thing for sure.

It was hard to connect to my spiritual practice last year; when this pandemic first picked up, then when it just became a part of life. I suppose we were all warned about how the monotony would affect us, but I for one wasn't prepared. For those of us who have the advantage of being able to work from home, we also have the disadvantage of having our workspace now inextricably associated with home space. Even once we get back into the offices, you'll still have those memories of the frustrated emails and unnecessary zoom meetings that took place at your kitchen table.

One of the things that has helped me out this year, is that I have started to have "contemplative meals", wherein I get myself some food that I've never tried before, or that I always associate with rituals (dulmas!) and I turn off my phone, and I sit facing the window, and I just devote a few minutes to tasting and experiencing the food as I eat. ***

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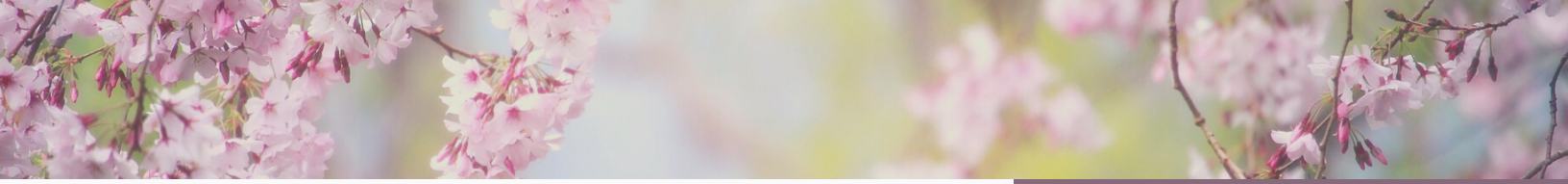
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Under the Oaks: Letters from the Senior Druid: *Continued*

BY ARIN D'WULF

Since my work computer and my home computer use the same monitor, I had a little altar space set up next to my computer for Imbolc, and I didn't really ever put it "away". I now have a little quick set-up altar next to my computer so that if I ever need to just take a couple minutes to stop and breath over some work annoyance, I can do that quickly, without having to go far. I can even say a quick prayer, or make an offering.

I don't know what things are going to look like this time next year. I have my guesses, but if last year taught me anything, it's that expectations can change. But I feel like I'm a lot more adaptable, and I'm more prepared for what is to come. Hopefully May 2022 will see us all around the Maypole together again.

But for now, what are you doing to bring the spiritual into your day-to-day in this strange new world?

Feel free to email me your responses, I'd love to read them!
Until then, yours under the trees,
Arin "Dwulf" H.
Senior Druid



Spring is
nature's way
of saying,
'Let's party!'

~ Robin Williams



Salutations from the Chief Druid

BY AMBER ARANEA (SPIDER)

Spring has officially arrived with it's beautiful fluffy willow catkins, sunny daffodils, baby ducks, chilly mornings, and bright blue skies. I step outside and smell the grass and blossoming cherry plum trees near my home and take it all in. Breathe in, breathe out, smile into the sun, and relax. It feels like it's been a VERY long winter this year to me and while I will miss the beauty of it, I am ready to embrace this seasonal shift.

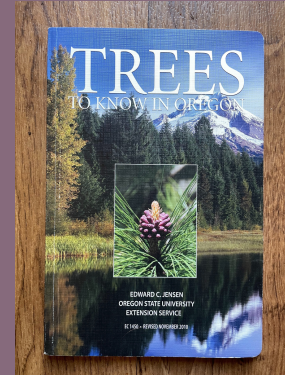
As all the new greenery appears and flowers begin to open it's encouraged me to bring out my plant identification books and push myself to learn a few new species. I consider myself fairly knowledgeable in Pacific Northwest plants (especially native species) but I wish I could take the Nature Awareness group out on an ID hike in Forest Park and share that wisdom with others. Unfortunately COVID-19 has shut down that option safely, but I look forward to having those adventures again in the future.

While I wait, my 12 year old son has been hearing ALL about our local flora! (Thankfully he enjoys learning about such things) I've set the personal challenge to learn 4-6 new plants this month and I issue a similar challenge to everyone reading this.

- I encourage you to step outside and look for 1 (or more) plant you may not be familiar with. Get to know it! If you can figure out its name, fantastic! If not, simply appreciate it in all it's beauty. You can draw it, say or write a prayer to it, meditate with it, or press and dry it. Take in all of it's details and simply enjoy it's company.

Columbia Grove's aim is to help fulfill the physical, spiritual, and intellectual needs of the Columbia-Willamette Pagan community. We hope to positively represent an Indo-European Polytheist religion through both public and private rituals, as well as through specific workshops and community projects. Our intent is to serve the greater good of the public and society as a whole through an adherence to meaningful social action. All pagans and pagan-friendly peoples are welcomed to join our rituals and they are Family Friendly as well. During our rituals we welcome the varied Gods and Goddesses of all our guests, their unique ancestors, and abundant spirits of nature.

Some of Amber's Favorite PNW Plant ID Books!

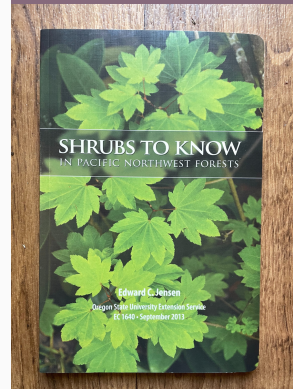
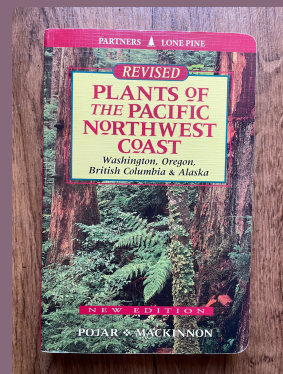


Trees to Know in
Oregon
by Edward C.
Jensen

Oregon State
University
Extension Service

Plants of the Pacific
Northwest Coast

By Pojar and
Mackinnon



Shrubs to Know in
Pacific Northwest
Forests
by Edward C.
Jensen

Oregon State
University
Extension Service



Grove Announcements

Membership seasonal report for Columbia
Grove!

17 Core Members

19 Friends of Columbia Members

**26 active ADF Druidry members affiliated with our
grove.**

We are currently the 4th largest grove in all of ADF!

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2021 Grove Calendar

Winter Cross Quarter (Imbolc)

Irish Celtic: Sunday January 31st

Spring Equinox

Slavic: Sunday March 21st

Spring Cross Quarter (Beltane)

Gaulish Celtic: Sunday May 2nd

Summer Solstice

Hellenic/Greek: Saturday June 26th

Summer Cross Quarter (Midsummer)

Gaulish Celtic: Sunday August 1st

Fall Equinox

Irish Celtic: Sunday September 26th

Fall Cross Quarter (Samhain)

Norse: Saturday November 6th

Winter Solstice

Slavic: Sunday December 19th

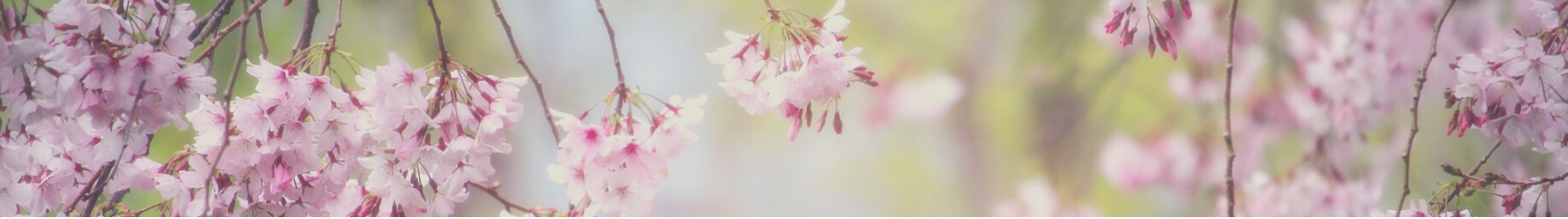


**Would you like to get
involved with
Columbia Grove,
ADF?**

Columbia Grove, ADF is
always welcoming excited
people with new ideas to
help us grow and strengthen
our community!

More info can be found on
our website at:
www.columbiaadf.org.

Or email us at:
ColumbiaADF@gmail.com



Columbia Grove's Virtual Spring Equinox Ritual: A Review

On March 21, 2021 at 4 PM, around 27 attendees came together online to celebrate Spring Equinox as Maslenitsa. We helped transition Morena, the Slavic Goddess of Winter, to her summer resting place in the depths of the underworld and welcomed Dazhbog, the Sun God, as he resumed his reign.

This was our eighth virtual ritual performed by Columbia Grove, and we had the pleasure of welcoming participants from all over the country. We were excited to close out a year of virtual rituals with this Spring Equinox ritual that had been originally planned for last year.

The deities honored for this ritual were: Mother Matka Syra Zemlya, our sovereign deity Columbia, our protectors: Zorya Utrennyaya (Morning Star) and Zorya Vechernyaya (Evening Star), Veles for inspiration, and Triglav to show us the paths between the worlds. Our deities of the occasion were Morena, the Goddess of Winter, and Dazhbog, the Sun God.

During the praise offerings, we played a recording made by the Columbia Grove Bards based on the Ukrainian New Year's song Schedryk or as this arrangement is called, Sing Swallow Sing:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=By8feEI55qg&list=PLYB9K6OVW6SWKu_CQwf4XFrLI9s3599d

Member SA took the omen using the Slavic themed Tarot of the Golden Wheel.

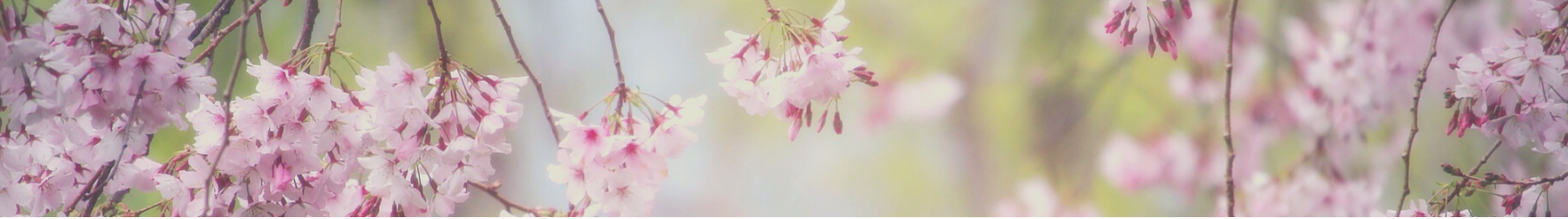
see next page for interpretation

As we blessed the waters of life with blessing from the kindreds, we also blessed hand painted wooden eggs with the hope that when we eventually return to in person rituals, we will be able to pass out these eggs to some of the local attendants of this ritual to spread these blessings around.

Our working for this ritual was to assist Morena in her transition to the underworld. Our straw dolly representative of Morena was submerged in our cauldron (portal to the underworld).

Farewell to Winter! Da budet tak! - May it be so!

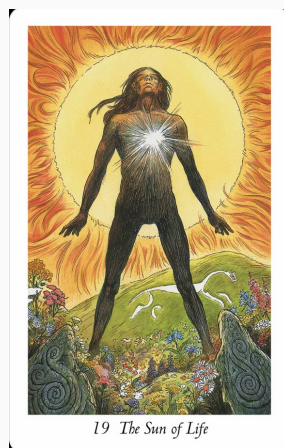
The ritual was co-lead and written by Zabet and Cynwise (with adaptations from two existing ADF rituals). They would like to thank Arin for coordinating video, Forest for moderating chat and SA, Arin, Forest, Claire, Spider and David for taking roles in the ritual.



Spring Equinox 2021 Kindred Omens

BY SA

Before the ritual, I asked of the Wildwood Tarot what card signified the ritual itself, and pulled The Sun ("The Sun of Life" in the Wildwood), which was so spot on! Nothing like getting the actual Sun for our equinox ritual celebrating the return of the sun!



Divinities

7 of Wands:

"Fortune Favors the Brave"! Encourages belief in oneself, a rightful confidence -- the divinities encouraging us to renew ourselves at this moment of seasonal change, to embrace the coming sun, the coming spring, and let it fuel us as the world around us is changing again after a year of quarantine and restrictions.

Ancestors

The Hierophant:

Our ancestors remind us that we have all the tools we need to build our paths forward, at this time of celestial change -- "build on what is", they say. Find value in the traditions we have, but use them for the building, not as constrictions on us. Reach out and engage deeply in community -- our community has strength, traditions, and tools to build our way out of the mad world of the last year. Invest your time and care into this community, our ancestors remind us from their collective experiences, and the community will support you in turn.

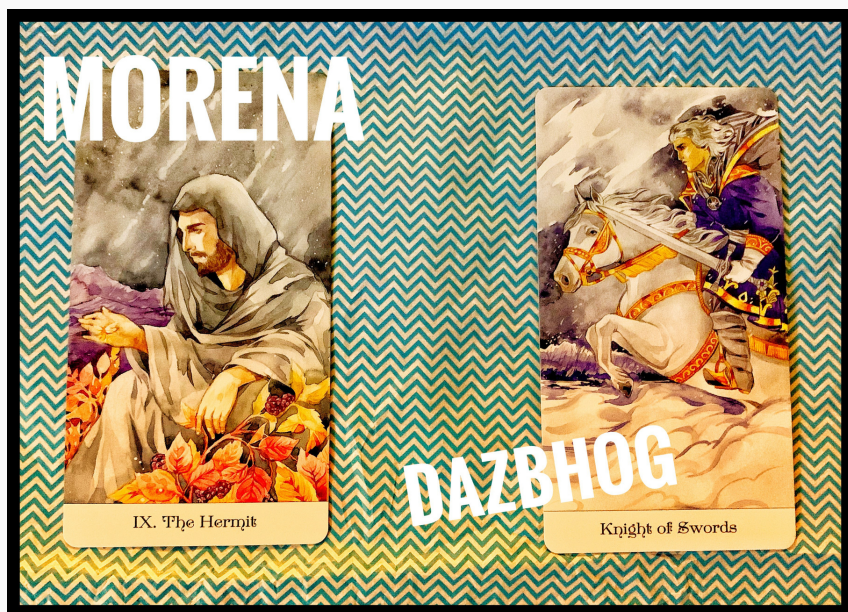
Nature Spirits

5 of Swords:

"No person is an island." The nature spirits double down on the message of the ancestors, and simultaneously support the omen of the Divine while cautioning against the darker side of excessive self-confidence, towards self-interest. Prioritize your needs, but don't be selfish. The benefits of your community support will not extend to one who only looks out for themselves. The 7 of Wands and the 5 of Swords are a duality -- a vision of what is needed to come through this time of change, and a stern reminder to, well, not be an asshole about it.

Spring Equinox Slavic Omens from Morena and Dazbhog

BY SA



Morena:

The Hermit, signaling the next stage on her journey -- going into seclusion, into the darkness, to rest and recover after her long winter work. The Hermit in this sense as a joy, and a relief -- not the isolation so many of us have experienced this year, but the reward of a comfortable bed to find peaceful sleep in after long, difficult work.

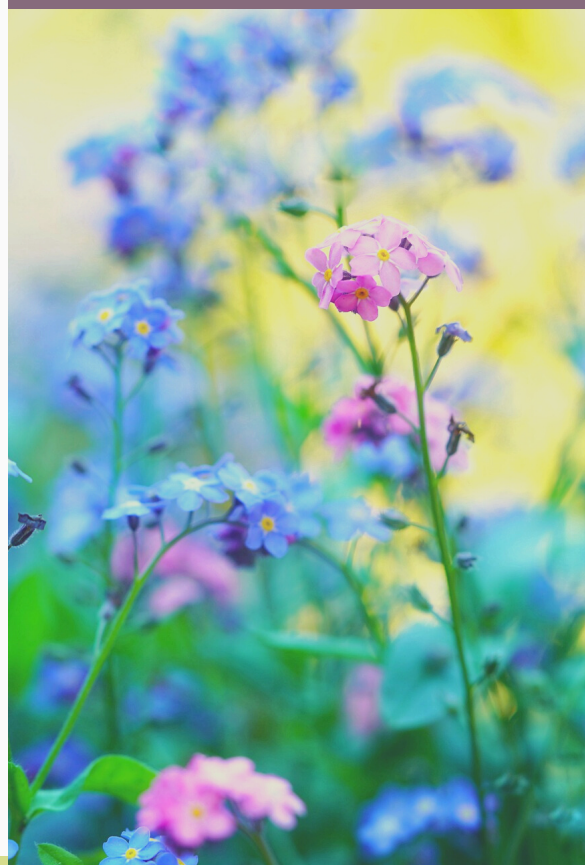
Dazbhog:

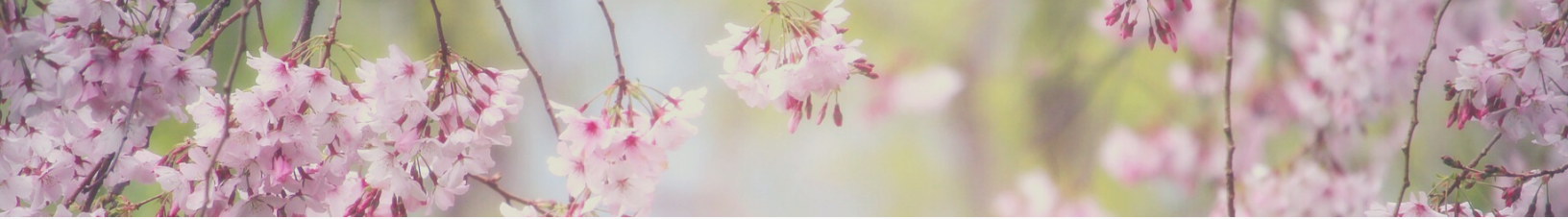
Knight of Swords -- the Dazbhog is ready and raring to go! The Dazbhog may cause temporary chaos in his wake, but his tirelessness in pursuit of an ideal, a cause, a purpose will usually put him on a direct path towards the conflict. There may be a sharp edge, a tinge of cruelty, in his demeanor, but as long as we are on our guard we can come out of the chaos with a sharper edge of clarity and affirmation to our goals. We follow the Dazbhog's path approaching the changes, both seasonal and societally, in the coming year.

Tread soft upon the earth,
She is our Mother,
She is our Mother.

Feel Her love beneath our
feet,
It is growing,
always growing.

- Jana Runnalls





Making Virtual Ritual Your Own

BY JAMES THOMA

When on yet another Zoom work meeting my mind is desperate for blessed distraction. Yes, I will take meeting notes, but you bet I am also looking at puppy pics. While I am grateful for work distractions, virtual ritual is different. I want to be present, connect like we are together, and feel the beauty of our rite. Distraction gets in the way.

Headspace:

When we are together in the same space, we feel the living energy of a singular Grove. We are an active participant in ritual. Our head is pulled into a shared, sacred space: fully immersing us.

In virtual ritual we are observers. We occupy the same space where we work, watch TV, fart.... not a sacred space; a mundane space repurposed. Our head is not pulled into ritual, it is pushed against the awful gravity of the everyday.

We can achieve escape velocity and be pulled into sacred headspace by being active participants performing along with the Grove's virtual ritual. We make offerings. We stomp to invite the three kindred. We hallow portals. We connect the remote to the present.

For example:

Happy Summer Solstice! Knowing the ritual's structure and theme - Cernunnos - our ritual leader has placed on their altar items that signify something about Cernunnos, Solstice, or ritual. Each a tool to get into sacred headspace and be fully immersed.

Many altar items have a clear connection: such as a sun mandala. But there is also a simple grey stone: barely noticeable to the rest of us. But that stone has a deep, personal meaning to the ritual leader. It is from the field where in ritual meditation they saw a stag emerge from the forest. The stone is completely unaffected to us, but for the ritual leader it is an artifact of pure summer as powerful as Cernunnos himself.

What items do that for you? Set up your own altar. On it place items appropriate to the occasion, but especially those with a personal, powerful connection. By empowering the altar this way, that awful gravity is reversed and our headspace is propelled towards the sacred.

Heck yeah, I think I got it:

The Grove thoughtfully considers each element of the shared ritual. Who is called upon, what songs or poems are used. Everything. Give yours the same consideration from pre-ritual setup to post-ritual practice. When the grove offers whiskey and bread, you choose acorns and wine because they remind you of a tree you love. When the ritual ends, blow out your candles and exit Zoom. Take the many offerings made to the park where your beloved oak lives. Leave your many offerings. It's roots drink the wine. It's resident squirrels chomp the acorns. The ritual's energy disperses into the wide world. Enormous energy because you made each step sacred, sacred, sacred.

It was even so engrossing you were unable to think about season 2 of The Mandalorian. I mean, does it want to be an anthology show or what?



Getting to Know the Neighbors: Natural Spaces in Lake Oswego

BY CLARE STEVENSON

As I completed the Dedicant Path early last year, I came to an embarrassing conclusion: for someone aspiring to the title of Druid, I hardly knew my local nature spirits at all. There were swathes of the Tualatin/Lake Oswego area I had never even heard of, let alone made offerings of hospitality to, in the five years since I've lived here. To rectify this, I made a plan: in 2020-21, I would pour a water libation to the spirits of every city-designated natural space within walking or running distance.

When I checked the cities' Parks & Recreation websites for listings of designated natural spaces, I was floored by just how many there were. Tualatin is a fairly small town and yet still has a couple dozen, and Lake Oswego has even more. I recommend checking out your local city's website -- you might be just as pleasantly surprised as I was.

It was challenging to choose where to start, so I turned to the Dedicant Guide's section on Nature Spirits for inspiration:

"When we seek contact with the Nobles we seek places wild and tangled, untouched as much as possible by human work. Go out from the cities and parklands and fields, or find places within them overgrown and untended. [...] In many places there are patches of relative wilderness even in habited places."

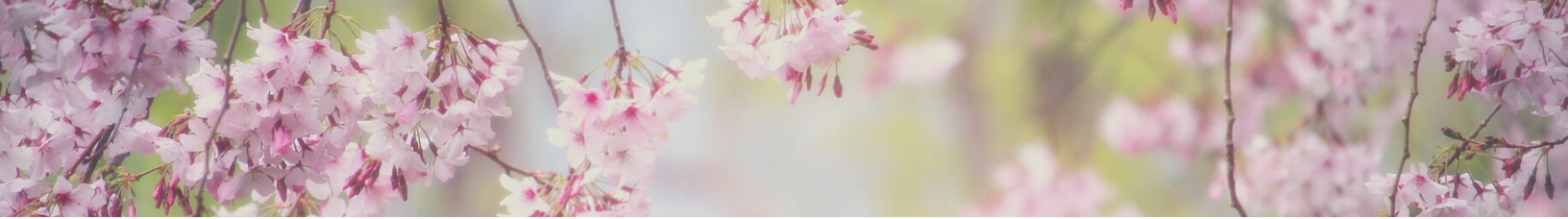
That descriptor of "overgrown and untended" resonated with me. I decided to start with the most out-of-the way places, one of which I'll share this week. Hopefully this inspires you to get to know your neighbors if you're in Lake Oswego too. ***

Continued on Page 10



Guide my feet on my path,
as I honor the old wisdom.
Guide my hands in offering,
as I honor the old Gods.
Guide my heart in strength,
as I honor the old ways.

~ Morgan Daimler



Getting to Know the Neighbors: Natural Spaces in Lake Oswego *Continued*

BY CLARE STEVENSON

Bryant Woods Nature Park (Lake Oswego)

- Location: 4163 Childs Road, Lake Oswego, OR
- Getting there: Lake Oswego has lackluster public transportation. The nearest bus stop is Line 36 at Jean Road & Bryant over 1 mile away. If you drive, this park has a designated parking lot.
- Accessibility: The parking lot and the unpaved main trail are wheelchair-accessible. However, the nearby canal can flood, leading to challenging muddy conditions.
- Additional Details:
https://www.oregonhikers.org/field_guide/Bryant_Woods-Canal_Acres_Loop_Hike

Within moments of walking into Bryant Woods, I felt like I had been transported onto a hiking trail deep in the woods surrounding Mount Hood, surrounded by old-growth forest, wetlands, and wildflower-filled meadows. In reality, I was in the middle of a Lake Oswego residential district.

When I last visited on a sunny Friday afternoon, I was the only (human) person there: the perfect opportunity to pour a small clean water libation and thank the Nature Spirits for their hospitality. Despite my good intentions, I immediately got lost on a side trail -- quite an accomplishment for a park this small. Somehow I ended up on a dry streambed (filled with sharp rocks that did not agree with my soft running shoes), and after passing the same tree for the third time, I wondered if I was being pixie-led. As Morgan Daimler, expert on the Good Neighbors ("fairies") explains, being pixie-led...

"is an extremely disconcerting feeling. You could be walking along a section of woodland you've walked a hundred times before, but find yourself totally lost despite being surrounded by well-known landmarks. The effect can last for minutes or hours, and can be broken by turning an item of clothing inside out, pulling some bread from a pocket and leaving it, or showing a wooden cross if you have one on your person."

I was too awkward to turn my sweaty tanktop inside-out, and I didn't have any bread, but I did have clean water; close enough, I hoped as I poured some out.

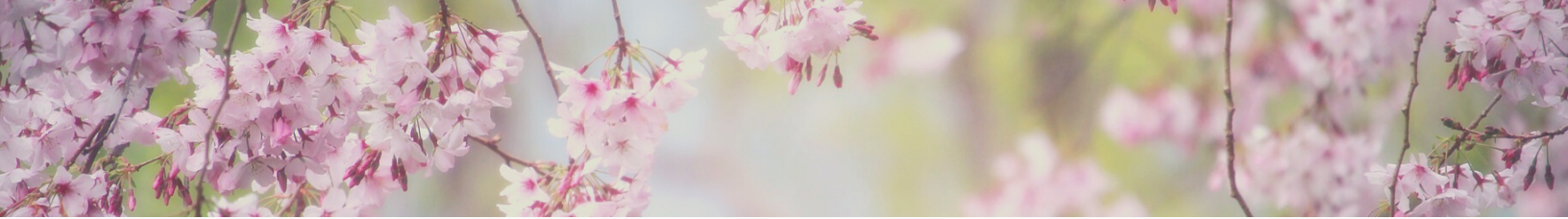
Eventually I did make it back to the main trail with the assistance of my GPS watch, and regardless of whether the cause of my detour was the Good Folk or my overall horrible sense of direction, I still didn't regret it - the unintended adventure brought me to the perfect spot to photograph some beautiful trillium flowers.

I highly recommend checking out this beautiful spot if you're in Lake Oswego. Just keep an eye on those side trails.

Source Credits:

Ar nDraiocht Fein: A Druid Fellowship. Dedicant Manual (Kindle Locations 708-711). ADF Publishing. Kindle Edition.

Daimler, M. (2017). Fairies: A Guide to the Celtic Fair Folk. Winchester, UK: Moon Books. Kindle Edition.



Overview: Second Battle of Magh Tuireadh

BY SAM THE OWL

In Irish mythology, one of the myth's purposes is to convey a message. In the Second Battle of Magh Tuireadh, the Fomoiré and Tuatha De fight each other. It is commonly speculated the Fomoiré represent nature, darkness, and chaos while the Tuatha De represent humanity, light, and order. We will take a look at this evolving relationship to show what the myth may be trying to teach us.

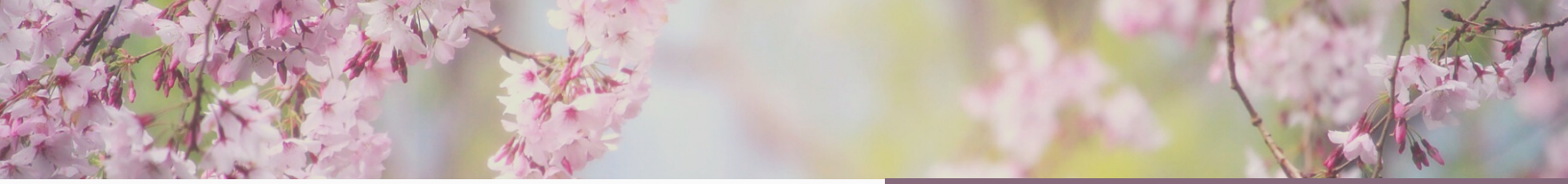
During this time, Nuadu is King of Ireland. When he loses a hand, Bres, being both a Fomoiré and a Tuatha De, takes his place. This will unite the two forces so they may coexist. Unfortunately this begins a time of great hardship for the Tuatha De. They bow to Bres (nature) and use what skills they do have to survive, until an opportunity arises for them to take back their sovereignty. They do succeed, but Bres asks for 7 more years.

Bres uses these 7 years to seek aid from the Fomoiré (nature) so he may take back the Tuatha De by force. The king of the Fomoiré, Indech, agrees. Meanwhile, the Tuatha De are in Tara. Lugh, the God of many skills, comes to Tara and, the Tuatha De sees in him an opportunity to defeat the Fomoiré. Lugh helps them to prepare for battle; using words of encouragement and motivational interviewing to increase their confidence and strength. Now ready to fight, they work on gathering their forces and strategizing how they will overcome the Fomoiré. When the time comes, the Tuatha De are brimming with many skills and each person has their proper place; it is a community effort.



The Fomoiré do not have these learned skills, but it doesn't make them any less superior, rather the two are well matched. The Fomoiré are strategic, sly, and creative. They use Ruadan, both Fomoiré and Tuatha De, to spy on the Tuatha De and trick them into giving him a spear which he uses to wound Goibniu. Goibniu doesn't die and uses the same spear to kill Ruadan. The Tuatha De have medicine though, so Goibniu is healed while Ruadan dies. Nature harms us, just like we harm nature, however we have the skills to heal ourselves but we do not offer the same back. Ruadan was just trying to survive, by trying to weaken the Tuatha De from within. This is neither right nor wrong. Neither chaos nor order. It just is. ***

Continued on Page 12



Overview: Second Battle of Magh Tuireadh *Continued*

BY SAM THE OWL

Lugh leads them and continues to reinforce their strength and confidence by reminding them of why they're fighting. Many casualties occur on both sides; continuing until Lugh kills Balor, who injures Indech with the crown of his head when he falls. Indech calls out for whoever wounded him, and Lugh answers, saying he does not fear him. This is important in that Lugh does not fear nature. He is a God of many skills, and has no need to fear it. We do not need to live in fear of nature, chaos or darkness. These things are not right or wrong; they just are and they are a natural part of the cosmos. Lugh recognizes this.

After the Fomoiré are driven back to the sea, they find Bres. The Tuatha De aim to kill him, but Bres pleads for mercy. It is granted to him in return for constant milk from the cows and knowledge of farming. In this way, the Tuatha De may now live off of the land and know how to work with it instead of against it. Nature gives and takes from us just as we give and take from nature.

In conclusion, we in essence, see a long and great battle between the men of Ireland and nature and how they came to coexist. The Tuatha De gained the means to provide for themselves without having to rely too heavily on nature to provide their most basic means. Lugh guides and strengthens this effort, but also seeks to be liminal by finding a way for both hosts to coexist. We would do well to learn from Lugh; he is a great teacher.

May you have the
hindsight to know
where you've been,
the foresight to know
where you're going,
and the insight to know
when you're going too
far.

-Irish Blessing



Žemyna: Lithuanian Earth Goddess

BY AMBER ARANEA

Žemyna is the Earth Goddess in Baltic Lithuanian Mythology. Her name literally means "Earth". She is the Goddess of nature, birth, growth and ripening. She was a deity of peasantry (rural dwelling farmers and cattlemen) She is the protector of all life and humanity. Baltic peoples lived in close relationship to the earth and when babies were born they would immediately be layed upon the Mother Earth as if she were it's true mother. Žemyna alone could "accept the child and embrace it as her own, granting vitality and power to the child.

The main ritual to Žemyna was the libation of beer which involved pouring the beverage on the ground while saying a prayer to her. Modern pagan movements keep this ritual alive and offer to her first in sacred rites. She was honored in the spring time before plowing the fields and and offered bread, salt, and/or and egg into her soil. It was believed that such an offering would strengthen her procreation and lead to greater crop yields.



Oh great Žemyna (zhe-MEE-nah), Baltic Mother Goddess, the blossom raiser, mother all humanity.

Daughter of the sun goddess Saulė (SOW-lay), beloved by all your children.

You nourish the life of us humans and the life of all plants and animals. May you be strengthened by your children's worship. I give the traditional offering of beer, poured upon your earth, to express my gratitude for all that you do.

Žemyna, may you be merry!

*Prašau mėgautis!

(pra-SHOW MAY-gow-tis)

"Please Enjoy" in Lithuanian

Source Credits:

Trinkūnas, Jonas. Baltic Religion Today. Vilnius 2011.

Laurinkienė, Nijolė. Žemyna and her Mythical World: Summary. Žemyna ir jos mitinis pasaulis. Vilnius : Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2013.



ADF 2021 Election Results!

SECRETARY

- Rev. Victoria Selnes

NON-OFFICER DIRECTOR

- Rev. Julie Desrosiers
- James Fielder

MEMBERS' ADVOCATE

- Mike Kaan

MEETING LOCATION

- Wellspring

CANADA EAST REGIONAL DRUID

- Brian Larter

CANADA WEST REGIONAL DRUID

- Rev. Diane Cacciato

EUROPE REGIONAL DRUID

- Rev. Ellie Lazzaro

HEARTLAND REGIONAL DRUID

- David Kleinschmidt

NORTHWEST REGIONAL DRUID

- Amber Reed

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL DRUID

- Aimee Brannon

UPPER MIDWEST REGIONAL DRUID

- Trevor Hanson



**Congrats to
all the
Winners!!**

AND THANK YOU TO
OUR MEMBERS WHO
VOTED THIS YEAR!