

# COVENANT OF THE GODDESS NEWSLETTER



Father Winter by Penndragon

YULE 2017  
VOLUME 43  
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*As is consistent with the values and beliefs of our religion, the Covenant affirms our belief in the spiritual and social wisdom of peace in the world. We aspire to stand in fellowship with the people of all religions, cultures, and ethnicities in our shared desire for peace. We do this for the sake of our shared love of the Earth and all living things that dwell upon it.*

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**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE AT IMBOLC**

Imbolc renewals are due on **February 2, 2018**. The Drop-dead date is **February 12, 2018** after which your membership will lapse and you will need to reapply. Renewal forms are emailed to the email address on file from your last renewal. If you have NOT received this form, please contact the National Membership Officer immediately (membership@cog.org).

**CALAFIA LOCAL COUNCIL:** NONE

**CHAMISA LOCAL COUNCIL:** NONE

- ❖ Circle of the Cauldron
- ❖ Our Lady of the Woods

**DOGWOOD LOCAL COUNCIL:**

- ❖ The Sylvan Forest

**EVERGLADES MOON LOCAL COUNCIL:**

- ❖ Amber Moon
- ❖ Coyote Morningstar
- ❖ Lady Circe
- ❖ Qabal

**HILLS AND RIVERS LOCAL COUNCIL:**

- ❖ Coven of the Wooded Vale
- ❖ Goddess Grove
- ❖ Grove of Gaia

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA LOCAL COUNCIL:** NONE

**ORANGE COUNTY LOCAL COUNCIL:** NONE

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LOCAL COUNCIL:**

- ❖ White Buffalo Clan

**TEXAS LOCAL COUNCIL:**

- ❖ Anastasia Lankford

**TOUCHSTONE LOCAL COUNCIL:**

- ❖ Ecclasian Fellowship

**NATIONAL COVENS:**

- ❖ A'in Qoph Nunn
- ❖ Church of the Earth
- ❖ Dragonweyr

**NATIONAL SOLITARIES:**

- ❖ Aracos Arendel
- ❖ Cronos
- ❖ Eibhlean
- ❖ Huthart
- ❖ Jerrie Hildebrand
- ❖ Kirk White
- ❖ Raniananda

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATES:** NONE



**REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

**FIRST OFFICER**

No report.

**SECOND OFFICER**

No report.

**MEMBERSHIP OFFICER**

It's STILL fire season in California. My thoughts are with those in Southern California who are dealing with unseasonable Santa Ana winds, and a truly frightening series of fires, filling the area with choking smoke. Let the rains come swiftly.

I was late sending renewal reminders again and have extended the grace period to renew until 12/31/2017.

**Reminder: PLEASE USE THE CURRENT RENEWAL FORM!** It can be found in every newsletter, on the public and members only website, and in my reminder emails. Send all membership forms to:

COVENANT OF THE GODDESS  
 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP OFFICER  
 P. O. BOX 12193  
 SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92423-2193

**Transitions of Note:**

- Hearth of Ember is transitioning from a Coven membership to a Solitary membership (Amber). This is the first notice of this, and if no objections are received within 90 days, this will be effective Ostara 2018. I don't know yet if Amber is staying in Orange County Local Council or will be transitioning to National AoS membership.
- We bid a sad good-bye to Lion Gate of NCLC as they have decided not to renew.
- Gus diZerega will transition to National or to Chamisa Local Council at Yule, I just don't know which yet.
- Regrettably, I have been informed that Dogwood Local Council has decided to fold. I was told that some members may go to a National membership, but I don't yet have the details.

We have 140 members total, consisting of 72 covens, 64 solitaries and 4 associates. Because things can change quickly between the Newsletter publishing deadline and the actual date of publication, this may have changed by the time you read it.



If you have sent your renewal in, and your name is listed below, PLEASE CONTACT ME ASAP so I can follow up. Membership(at)cog.org is the email address to use to reach me, but mail from me will come from a new address, Thea(dot)Bristlebroom(at)gmail.com.

The following members are OVERDUE and have until **12/31/2017** to renew:

Roster Name	Local Council
Charles (Ryan) Coe	Chamisa
House of Oak Spring	Dogwood
Edye Cheeseman	Northern California
Priestess Mata	Orange County
Jose Esparza	National
Terri Gans	National
Lord GoldenOak	National
Circle of the Moon	Texas

The following members are due at YULE and have until **12/31/2017** to renew:

Roster Name	Local Council
Circle of the Lavender Dragons	National
Circle of Wondrous Stories	National
Coven of the Mystical Merkabah	National
Grace Moonhawk	National
Gus diZerega	National
Amina Cunning-Jones	Orange County

In Her Service,  
Thea Bristlebroom

**PURSEWARDEN**

**CURRENT ASSETS**

- Chase Main Account: \$71,553.32
- Wells Fargo Interfaith Checking: \$5,588.83
- PayPal Account: \$8,673.61
- Synchrony: \$31,153.94 (from Statement ending 10/31/2017)

Before going on, please allow me to apologize for being unable to participate and report at the Mabon meeting, With Hurricane Irma, my mother entering hospice and me still not cleared from surgery, there was just too much going on at the same time.

**Current and Pending Issues & Activity:**

1. Canu has been added to our accounts and previous officers removed. This ended up taking somewhat longer than expected so the savings account with \$25,000 as the Deborah Ann Light gift of \$25,000 is not yet created. That will happen in the next coming days. Zenah remains having deposit privileges as she receives checks in our PO Box.
2. I was unable to do a PayPal drawdown to the Chase account. I will do that as soon as possible.
3. The Synchrony CD has proven to be little more complicated. I hope to have that resolved this week.
4. We ran out of time to manage the I will create a savings account in Chase and transfer \$25,000 as the Deborah Ann Light gift so it is secured away from the operating budget.

**Other notes:**

1. We received a mysterious Amazon credit for \$10.77. I'm tracking it down. It may be a donation, but it is not immediately listed as such. But it does give me the opportunity to remind us that if anyone uses Amazon for purchases, please consider using the [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) with donations to Covenant of the Goddess.
2. Two pending items from my previous report: (1) I suggest that we return to the conflict of interest forms we discussed before. Would the board like for me to draft it for each of our signatures? (2) I would like for us to discuss the purchase of D&O insurance.
3. Finally, the license for Adobe Connect will expire Monday 4 December 2017.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER**

I have complete access to Facebook and Twitter. Establishing baseline for 2017-2018: FACEBOOK: as of 11/1/2017 COG has 266,288 FOLLOWERS. There are 276,849 LIKES. The distribution of fans:

- 18-24 is 7% Women/4% Men.
- 25-34 is 15% Women/7% Men.
- 35-44 is 20% Women/6% Men.
- 45-54 is 18% Women/5% Men.
- 55-64 is 9% Women/3% Men.
- 65+ is 4% Women/2% Men.

As with other Wiccan sites, the male population is thin. Goals for 2017-2018 - test ways to increase these followers, along with age groups of 18-24 and 25-34.

The worldwide distribution of our fans through Facebook:

- US: 174,230
- UK: 16,152



Canada: 10,959  
Australia: 9,765

After gaining access to Twitter, I turned on Twitter Analytics to get a baseline for this platform. As expected our statistics dropped in November during the transition from 24.9 to 14.4 Impressions. Overall, there were 72 Tweets, 210 Profile visits, 9,956 Tweet Impressions, 7 mentions and 20 new followers. We currently have an audience of 2,257 fans that breaks down into 23% Male and 77% Female. Of those 2,257 51% are single and 49% are Married. We have 53% of our audience who have completed high school, 35% completed college and 11% completed graduate school. There is also a breakdown of interests, occupation and consumer buying styles that could help us as we look at membership options and future goals.

In October I attended Pagan Price LA/OC. As a volunteer at the OCLC booth I had conversations with people interested in COG OCLC. I also talked with parents and kids about ways we could help in their high schools and colleges. I reviewed COG social media and the COG website. I will look into creating a page on the WordPress COG site since access to original blog is not available.

**PUBLICATIONS OFFICER**

Greetings! It is fire season in sunny California and it seems like the entire state is ablaze. Only one fire was in my area and it burned itself out rather quickly.

I have received the passwords for the website, and the distribution list for the newsletter, so now I get to roll up my sleeves and get to work. By the time you read this, the newsletter should be finished. ;-)

Blessings,  
Stachia Ravensdottir

**CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER**

Since taking office, I have answered several inquiries to COG, including requests for information on the "Over the Moon" religious award, a request from a student for information on Wicca and the Salem Witch Trials, and a request for protection and strength from someone involved in a difficult family situation. I have responded to all these, and kept a printed record of the correspondence.

Inquiries from incarcerated persons are being held, pending the creation of a "prisoner packet" for COG. Zenah tells me there are some materials in the Members' section of the COG website, and I will be contacting Kirk Thomas of ADF to see what they are using for their prison ministry.

Oberon tells me that there is no current NCO Officer's Manual, so I hope to create one during my term of office.

I will be taking on the job of Religious Awards Coordinator, which should streamline the awards fulfillment, since parents will be dealing with the same person from initial inquiry through receiving the award and certificate.

**NATIONAL RECORDER**

A draft of the 2017 Grand Council minutes was circulated to the current and former Board officers on November 14th. Some officers have provided revisions and a revised version was circulated on November 25th. A draft of the updated Policy Manual was also circulated on November 25th. The annotated (historical) Policy Manual will be updated once the current Policy Manual updates have been confirmed. It is my intention to post all three documents to the website soon as possible. In any case, the Grand Council minutes should be published in the Yule edition of the Newsletter.

**WELCOME TO COG**



Please welcome:  
❖ Orion Foxwood, National AoS

**WELCOME TO THE NEW NATIONAL BOARD**

- Please welcome:
- Canu – First Officer
  - Lady Circe – Second Officer
  - Amber K – Correspondence Officer
  - Thea Bristlebroom – Membership Officer
  - Manny Tejedas-Moreno –Pursewarden
  - Janine Nelson – Public Information Officer
  - Stachia Ravensdottir – Publications Officer
  - Morgana RavenTree - Recorder

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW LOCAL OFFICERS**

**Calafia Local Council**

- Not submitted

**Chamisa Local Council**

- First Officer: Rowan
- Second Officer: David
- Pursewarden: AmberIsis
- Public Information Officer: KariIsis
- Membership: Dee
- Recorder: Lora
- Interfaith: Amber K





### Everglades Moon Local Council

- First Officer: Kasha
- Second Officer: Amber
- Pursewarden: Lady Circe
- Public Information Officer: Qabal
- Membership: Lady Bridget
- Recorder: Aequitas/Shaylee
- Publications: Alpandia

### Hills & Rivers

- First Officer: Faunina Del Bosco
- Pursewarden: Don Brady
- Public Information Officer: Jamie Dana
- Correspondence Officer: Jamie Dana
- Membership: Lady Magda

### Northern California Local Council

- First Officer: Don Frew
- Pursewarden: Anna Korn
- Public Information Officer: Felicity
- Membership: Thea Bristlebroom
- Recorder: Felicity, Thea & Volunteers

### Orange County Local Council

- First Officer: Pam Mottes
- Second Officer: Camille Lockyear
- Pursewarden: Mary Stuart
- Membership: Carolyn Dennison
- Public Information Officer: Janine Nelson

### Southern California Local Council

- First Officer: Leticia
- Pursewarden: Monica
- Public Information Officer: Barbara
- Membership: Tracy
- Recorder: Monica
- NetCo: Paul

### Texas Local Council

- First Officer: Bastion
- Pursewarden: Amarok
- Public Information Officer: Ruby
- Membership: Faelind
- Recorder: Willow

### Touchstone Local Council

- First Officer: Theresa
- Second Officer: Chad
- Pursewarden: Jack
- Public Information Officer: Mandy/Val
- Membership: Theresa
- Recorder: Val

## NATIONAL BOARD MINUTES

~ November 26, 2017

**Board Members Present:** Canu (FO), Lady Circe (SO), Manny (PW), Thea (MO), Janine (PIO), Stachia (PO), Amber K (CO), Morgana (Recorder)

The meeting commenced at 6:05pm EDT. A quorum of the current Board members was present.

### OFFICER REPORTS:

**National First Officer (Canu):** no report

**National Second Officer (Lady Circe):** no report

**National Membership Officer (Thea Bristlebroom):** *(Please see full report on page 2.)*

**National Pursewarden (Manny Tejada-Moreno):** *(Please see full report on page 3.)*

**National Public Information Officer (Janine Nelson):** *(Please see full report on page 3.)* Greg Harder contacted Janine and offered to continue to handle Facebook postings. He is only interested in handling Facebook, so he wouldn't really be an assistant. There were no objections. Janine reported that she has changed the Twitter password so she's able to get in, and she signed up CoG with an account to get Analytics. We don't have an Instagram page. Stachia was handling CoG's Pinterest page and Janine will discuss with her what to do about that. Greg didn't have access to the PIO blog, which is through Blogger. He had spoken with Zenah about doing a WordPress blog linked to the CoG website. Janine will discuss it with Stachia.

**National Publications Officer (Stachia Ravensdottir):** *(Please see full report on page 4.)*

**National Correspondence Officer (Amber K):** *(Please see full report on page 4.)*

**National Recorder (Morgana RavenTree):** *(Please see full report on page 4.)*

### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Review:** An email will be sent to AIR once the 2017 Grand Council minutes, Bylaws and Policy Manual have been posted to the website.

**Social Justice:** there has been no activity since the last Board meeting.

**Other Committees:** no reports.

### OLD BUSINESS:

#### New business:

**Appointment/Reappointment of National Interfaith Representatives:** It was formally read into the record that since the previous meeting, the Board agreed to support Macha Nightmare's request to be reappointed as a CoG National Interfaith Representative for the coming year, and funding her trip to AAR in the amount of \$600.

Oberon said he will not seek reappointment as an Interfaith Representative; he recommended



Rowan Fairgrove of NCLC be considered as his replacement.

Interfaith Representatives are appointed by the Board. In the past, people seeking to be Interfaith representatives submitted a request in writing to the Board so the it would know who is interested in doing the work. We don't necessarily have to continue doing it that way.

The NMO pointed out that if we appoint Rowan Fairgrove to replace Oberon, that means all the CoG Interfaith representatives will be from a single local council (NCLC). The NFO said he would contact Rowan.

The NFO reminded the Board that local councils can also appoint their own Interfaith representatives.

The next Parliament of the World's Religions will happen just after the current Board's tenure, but the current Board will have to make the decisions about how travel stipends will be funded. Some COG members may decide to represent other organizations

Manny mentioned that the Early Bird Registration for Parliament will close February 10th. Available funds will allow us to allocate \$350 per person for 10 or more people, or \$360 per person for 5-9, so that's a substantial outlay. The Interfaith funds at Wells Fargo total \$5400. We will hit up most of that amount, but we may need to increase the allocation of Interfaith funds. The next Grand Council will occur before Parliament and we should discuss at the next meeting

The NFO proposed that the current Interfaith Representatives, other than Oberon, continue in their positions until the next meeting, and meanwhile he will confirm that they want to continue. The proposal was approved by consensus.

**Assistants to National Officers:** The NFO is also acting as NetCo.

The NPO is handling the Webweaver position herself, but would like Jack Prewett to be her assistant. Zenah had also mentioned that she would like to continue helping with the website. There were no objections.

Anna Korn has offered to be the NMO's Assistant. There were no objections.

The NFO will talk to Jack Prewett (former NFO) about assistants to our Military liaisons and report at the next meeting.

See also NPIO report.

**Condolences to Zenah:** The Board wishes to send a condolence card and \$50 gift to Zenah. The Board approved this by consensus.

**Assignment of National Board Liaisons To Local Councils:** The next agenda item was the

assignment of Board liaisons to the local councils. The Board members volunteered as follows:

- Calafia – Janine
- Chamisa – Amber K
- Dogwood – Canu
- Everglades Moon – Manny
- Hills & Rivers - Manny
- Northern California - Thea
- OCLC - Janine
- SoCal - Morgana
- Touchstone - Stachia
- Texas – Stachia
- National Members – Lady Circe

The NFO reported that the Dogwood Local Council doesn't need a liaison because will likely dissolve. They have not had new people or covens join for some time and have had to recycle the same people in officer positions too often. They are experiencing burnout. Canu spoke with Lady Arden, First Officer, and her understanding is they're likely going to fold. Some members may transfer to National Membership. There's a bank account with a small balance that will need to be returned to National. Dogwood is incorporated in the State of Georgia. Canu will talk to Lady Arden about wrapping up their business if they decide to close.

**Status of Local Council Annual Meetings & Reporting Of Officers To National:** The NFO reminded the Board that the deadline for reporting the election of National Board officers is coming up. The liaisons should contact the local councils and report to Stachia if necessary.

**Conflict of Interest Forms:** National Pursewarden Manny recommended that the Board complete Conflict of Interest forms (that we are not supporting or doing business, not trying to enmesh financial business with our fiduciary duties). Manny and Morgana agreed to look for forms to present to the Board. Manny also recommended the Board think about purchasing Director & Officer Insurance to indemnify the Board members should anything happen at MerryMeet that might require that. He also recommended we have a statement of what our expectations are regarding insurance, by MerryMeet.

**Renewal of Adobe Connect:** Manny reminded the Board that the deadline for renewing the subscription to Adobe Connect is coming up. It will cost \$500 to renew.

Discussion points:

- We need a list of local councils that are using Adobe Connect for their meetings.
- If Zoom can be used for local council meetings, "afternoon teas" and Grand Council we should look into using it. If not, WebEx would be a good choice. Stachia, Morgana and Thea endorsed WebEx.



- Manny has been contacted by a new Adobe sales representative.
- Janine will work with Stachia on pricing alternatives to Adobe Connect.

The NFO proposed that we not renew the subscription to Adobe Connect. The proposal was approved by consensus. Janine will work with Stachia on researching WebEx.

**Meeting Dates & Publication Deadlines**

**For 2018:** The NMO proposed the following meeting dates for the Board:

- January 14th
- March 4th
- April 8th
- June 3rd
- July 8th
- Sept. 2nd
- October 14<sup>th</sup>

The Board members will check their schedules and discuss any conflicts before the next meeting.

Publication deadline is 10 days before each Sabat, generally. The deadline for the Yule issue is Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Appointment of A Religious Awards**

**Coordinator And Location Of Materials:** Amber asked where these materials are now and if anyone has stepped forward to coordinate fulfillment. If there's no one else, she can take over fulfillment, as she doesn't want to keep young people from earning their awards.

Amber K proposed that she be appointed Religious Awards Coordinator and she will get in touch with Becky to have the materials shipped to her. This proposal was approved by consensus.

**Transition of Officers:**

Canu reminded everyone to make sure they have any materials they will need going forward. The NPW said there's only one local council that requires a new bank signature card. Canu asked Stachia to ask Jack if there are any FO materials he needs to turn over.

**Public Statements by the National Board:**

Morgana summarized proposals made at the 2016 & 2017 Grand Councils concerning public statements issued by National. Thea circulated an email on November 17<sup>th</sup> with details about a proposal made at 2016 Grand Council. It did pass, but it was unclear what the exact wording was supposed to have been. Manny suggested only commenting on matters that specifically have to do with witches or Wicca. Miraselena prepared guidelines that Board members should review. It describes what kinds of things the NFO and NPIO can respond to. NPIO Janine said she would wait until she finds and has a chance to review Miraselena's guidelines.

**Afternoon Teas:** Participation has been uneven and recently has diminished to zero. The title doesn't grab people. Thea suggested making them topic-oriented. Canu suggested scheduling a week before each Board meeting. Amber K suggested asking the local councils to make sure questions about the teas make it onto their email lists as well. Canu suggested having 8 "teas" during the year, a week prior to Board meetings. We should come up with topics that will be more attractive to the members.

**Evaluation of Leadership Institute:** The NFO suggested we pick out 3 items from the Leadership Institute to discuss early in the next meeting.

**ByLaws & Policy Manuals:** Thea notified Morgana that she would like to be on the Review Committee that checks the GC minutes for the past several years to make sure proposals passed at those meetings were entered into the bylaws and policy manuals correctly. Manny expressed concerns that some items in the bylaws may actually belong in the policy manuals or vice versa (including the roles of officers). There are inconsistencies in both documents, including bylaw proposals that may not really belong in the bylaws. We should review these documents and have something to discuss with the membership before the next Grand Council, with the intention of making any clean up proposals then.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:54pm EDT.

**TRANSITIONING FROM COVEN TO SOLITARY**



**AMBER**

Orange County AoS  
California

Transitioning from Hearth of Ember  
First publication – Yule 2017

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS**



**NONE**

Local Council  
State







## LOCAL COUNCILS



### CALAFIA

#### ~ No report

Last published minutes in the Ostara 2017 edition.



### CHAMISA

#### ~December 3, 2017

#### Agenda

**Check-in:** Rowan

**Called to order at:** 11:57 a.m.

**Roll Call:** Circle of the Winter Moon, Our Lady of the Woods, Crowwymin, Coven of the Silver Moon, Circle of the Cauldron, Silver Moon Health Services (by proxy), KariIsis, Ryan, and O'Neal.

#### Officer Reports:

**First Officer (Rowan):** I have not been able to make any more progress on the Membership Report since Mabon, despite the fact that that Dee has pitched in to help me. I have simply been out of town too much. I do plan to report on the information I have collected so far at this meeting.

The CLC Pagan Pride booth distributed a lot of literature and spoke to several people. Falco and I were at the booth for most of the day. Thanks to Sylvia and Brian for pitching in.

**Second Officer (David):** Wendy Rule is our Mabon guest for 2018. The dates for the Mabon festival are Thursday, September 6<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, September 9<sup>th</sup>. The campground will be saved for Wednesday, September 5<sup>th</sup> as well. We are considering moving the festival to Oak Flat. MMM has out-grown Cedro Peak campground and we need a larger space. Because Oak Flat is more open, we will put RVs along the perimeter to become the perimeter of the festival space and contribute to festival security. We will always have the possibility of gate-crashers, but there are ways to deal with the problem. Heralding will continue to also act as security for the festival. We are also considering a large canopy for additional shelter.

**Membership (Dee):** Will be meeting with Kamy and possibly Panther. Desert Spirit is interested in joining and Dee will be talking to them as well. Alane asked about Jude's problems getting his elder credentials. Crowwymin have had trouble getting a response from National Membership. Amber will contact Thea.

**Recorder (Lora):** These minutes serve as my record.

**Pursewarden (AmberIsis):** Chamisa received funds from this year's Mabon festival and has ample funds to continue to sponsor the Mabon event and to pay for stipends for members going to Merry Meet.

**PIO (KariIsis):** Updated Facebook page about Wendy Rule as a Save the Date. Also, talking to the Denver people.

**Interfaith Committee (Amber K):** Lora and David attended the Fall meeting of New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light. The guest speaker was Lyla June Johnston, a Navajo activist who spoke of her experiences at Standing Rock and the Indian environmental movement.

#### Friendly Reports:

**Ardantane:** Spiritual Alchemy classes are starting. Ardantane has a GoFundMe for the Uncommon Room. On December 31, the mortgages for the land will be finally paid off! Two covens have made HUGE contributions that are much appreciated! Wendy Rule is giving a benefit concert for Ardantane on Yule Night (December 22). New classes will be added to the Ardantane starting in January. Chamisa has agreed to give \$1500 to Ardantane.

**Silver Moon Health Services:** SMHS is in the process of becoming a non-profit. We are expecting that to be completed before the 2018 events. We have a new point of contact for SMHS: Mariposa. Silver Moon is prepared to continue to serve the community at Mabon.

**Beltane Southwest:** No report.

#### Old Business:

**Report from the Membership Committee (Rowan):** Rowan shared some of her preliminary findings from the interviews with former CoG/Chamisa members.

**MerryMeet Report (Amber):** Amber is the new National Correspondence Officer. Leadership Institute was very good, discussing what CoG means. We also talked about having different levels of CoG membership, just as many organizations do, and about each council having a member on the board. The next Merry Meet is going to be in South Florida. The 2019 Merry Meet will be in New Mexico! Chamisa will look for suitable locations for the meeting.

#### New Business:

**Theme for Litha Retreat:** Given the current social climate, Rowan suggested we consider sexual harassment, and how our community can prevent it, and deal with it so that everyone can feel safe and heard. We will strive toward this goal equality and understanding



through education and conversation, including Elder Training and Leadership Training, through standing up for those who are afraid to stand up for themselves, and speaking up when necessary. Everyone must be vigilant. There will also be a standing Council of Elders. At the retreat, each member will do a mini-workshop on some aspect of this issue, for each of us has our own knowledge, skills, and understanding.

Adjournment: 2:28 pm



### EVERGLADES MOON

~ No report

Last published minutes in the Mabon 2017 edition.



### HILLS AND RIVERS

~ July 30, 2017

#### Officers present:

- First Officer – Faunina Del Bosco
- Pursewarden – Lady Annabelle
- Membership Officer – Lady Magda
- Public Information Officer – Jamie Dana

#### Those in attendance:

- Faunina Del Bosco (Circle of Diana)
- Lady Annabelle (Grove of Gaia)
- Lady Magda (Goddess Grove)
- Jamie Dana (Grove of the Ancient River)
- Desert Rose (Assembly of Solitaries)

#### Proxies:

- Coven of the Wolfa
- Moonfire Coven
- Coven of the Wooded Vale
- Lady Aradia
- Lady Emrys

#### Guests:

- Nick (Grove of the Ancient River)
- Cheryl (Grove of the Ancient River)
- James (Grove of the Ancient River)

Quorum reached

#### Officer Reports:

**First Officer (Faunina Del Bosco):** Hills and Rivers is happy to report that we are growing stronger and seeing much new interest in our local chapter and Covenant of the Goddess. This year we added two covens, Moonfire Coven in New Hope (PA) and Coven of the Wolfa in Columbia (PA), and one solitary witch in Pittsburgh (PA), Desert Rose. We recently approved the application of Coven of the Alpha Wolf in Carlisle (PA) to be sent and published in the newsletter. Coven of the Mystic

Heart from York (PA) has been sent an application and is gathering letters of support. Two solitaires are also interested in joining HRLC, one from Pittsburgh and the other from Mechanicsville, Maryland.

Our current balance in our checking account is \$3397.52, with \$32.53 in our PayPal account leaving a total of \$3430.05 in our treasury. Members are finding new ways to raise funds for HRLC within their local pagan communities. This is a very exciting time! We are indebted to Lady Annabelle, our Pursewarden, not only for her careful management of our accounts, but for her generosity. She has hosted numerous raffles and classes, all to benefit Hills and Rivers.

Much of our success has been because we are all actively promoting HRLC and CoG to our local communities. Hills and Rivers had an information table at Pittsburgh Pagan Pride Day 2016. We distributed brochures and chatted with attendees. We also attended Grove of Gaia Fest, a Beltane festival hosted by HRLC member coven, Grove of Gaia. It was a lovely event, with maypole dances, vendors, readers, and workshops. We handed out business cards and brochures, and sold HRLC logo buttons. Lady Annabelle organized a very successful raffle for our benefit, giving us more than \$400 to add to our account.

Circle of Diana saw the initiations of two members. Rowan Dandelion at the Second Degree and Faunina at the Third-Degree. Rowan also received new ministerial credentials in 2016 and officiated three weddings, one for Circle of Diana's former HPS, Tammy. Faunina also officiated a wedding last fall and will perform another in August. Early last December, Circle of Diana held a public rite honoring the Roman fertility goddess Bona Dea. Because of the positive response to this rite, Circle of Diana will now offer other Roman-themed open rituals throughout the year, such as the upcoming ritual to honor goddess Diana, huntress and caretaker of animals (August 13th). Donated supplies will be collected for the local animal shelter and wildlife rehabilitation center. We are also planning a "paint and pour" fundraiser for Hills and Rivers in late September. Faunina continued in the First Officer post and looks forward to new projects and new memberships.

Coven of the Wolfa has been studying their spiritual ancestors, such as M. Blavatsky, Annie Besant, Sybil Leek, and Doreen Valiente, and constructed an ancestral altar in their honor. Two new people were dedicated to the coven. Beyond weekly meetings, healing circles, sabbats and esbats, they are currently working at planning York Pagan Pride Day. Other community services they support are those for breast cancer research and victims and organizations that help feed the hungry. At summer solstice, Coven of the Wolfa's



HP was elevated, a spiritually and psychically intense experience. Coveners regularly use divination and share their daily readings online. A coven herb garden was planted and is doing very well... with only a few seeds lost to squirrels.

Goddess Grove offered the Philosophy & Magick of Wicca class in the fall and early summer of 2017, helping many new students learn about the beautiful path of Wicca. They also provided open Samhain and Midsummer Rituals to the Pittsburgh pagan community. Goddess Grove HPS and HP volunteered many hours converting an overgrown, trash-ridden vacant city lot into a beautiful community flower garden, "Jardin de Unidad" and are also active in maintaining the Beechview neighborhood community vegetable garden. HPS Lady Magda served as Membership Officer for Hills and Rivers and has done a fine job managing the inquiries and applications, helping two covens and one solitary gain membership and now helping with the coven and solitaires currently applying.

Grove of Gaia held its 11<sup>th</sup> annual Grove of Gaia Fest at Beltane 2017. The entire coven and coven's affiliates come together to hold this large Fest every year! A raffle was featured to benefit HRLC, which raised nearly \$500. Over 25 bags of food were collected for the local food pantry to feed the hungry. Lady Annabelle facilitated a legal handfasting at Grove of Gaia Fest, too.

Lady Annabelle sadly lost two of her own blood sisters within 8 months of each other. Georgia, AKA Lady Flora, her sister and HPS passed through the veil on October 7, 2016. Lady Annabelle facilitated a memorial service and requiem ritual for her in Pittsburgh. Her sister Gail passed on May 5, 2017. It has been a tough year for Lady Annabelle and Grove of Gaia's tradition, losing one of their elders and ancestors who was always available to give loving support. They also had to say farewell to Gerry, their beloved HP and Elder, who retired from Grove of Gaia. A happy occasion this year was Lady Annabelle's leading the initiation that brought Faunina up to her third level, going full circle with her as she had given Faunina her first initiation, as well. Another bright spot in this challenging year was the addition of three wonderful new apprentices brought into the coven. Grove of Gaia continued its teaching tradition with this year's Philosophy and Magick of Wicca class and facilitated a well-attended workshop on the Akashic Records with all proceeds donated to Hills and Rivers (\$80). Lady Annabelle also served as Pursewarden on the HRLC Board beginning to serve in November 2016.

Grove of the Ancient River continues to host open Sabbat rituals that are well attended, with Samhain and Beltane being particularly noteworthy. They hosted their annual History and Philosophy of

Wicca course. Ancient River clergy officiated two weddings in the last 12 months. This year, the coven came together for Cheryl, who celebrated her recovery from a potentially life-threatening disease. They also bestowed an honor for our brother James, of a sash adorned with the medals and awards he has earned in serving the US Army for 23 years. We would like to thank Jamie Dana, our PIO, who keeps our Facebook page active by posting relevant articles and maintaining a fun and safe environment for members in our secret Friends of Hills and Rivers Facebook group.

Moonfire Coven celebrated the sabbats and moons over the past year with good attendance and some interest from new seekers. The initiates joined with other sister coven's initiates to present a wonderful and well received Imbolc ritual for the greater community. Some members volunteered at a few pagan events as done every year, as they manage the medical and security teams. They also started a year-long project, developing herbology classes, in which teas and other herbal blends will be created for each of the sabbats. Next year, they will share these classes with the other covens and groves in the community.

Coven of the Wooded Vale members are part Lehigh Valley Network of Unified Pagans (LVNUP), whose mission is to help people interested in Paganism to find their spiritual path. Wooded Vale assists in this effort by providing information about Covenant of the Goddess, Hills and Rivers, and its affiliate groups. They teach free classes and workshops to the community and perform public rituals throughout the year. During the past year, they have gained one new member, Mona, and we are talking with two other interested individuals. At their metaphysical shop, they distribute brochures and direct interested people to the CoG and HRLC websites for more information. Their largest public events are the public Samhain Spirit walk and Pagan Pride Day. The Samhain Spirit Walk draws about 50 to 60 people, who process with lit candles through Main Street Bethlehem and then perform a full Samhain ritual. They support other pagan groups (Hills and Rivers, Reading Witches and Pagans, and Witch Camp at Four Quarters Circle Sanctuary) by sending baskets for their fundraisers and raffles. They also support fundraising with donations to the local no-kill shelters, sustainable community organizations, food banks, and Hogar Crea women's shelter. They show the positive impact that Pagan groups can have within the greater community.

Jodi A. continues her work on the board of Pittsburgh Pagan Pride Day. She is the Chair of Rituals, and led a Spring Equinox ritual at our Spring Spirit Faire.

The HRLC Annual Meeting is in Pittsburgh on July 30th this year. At the 2015 meeting, we



opened our HRLC social up to the public and hosted an open meet and greet for the local pagan community. We enjoyed chatting with new people from the neighborhood and sharing our positive experiences being members of Hills and Rivers LC and Covenant of the Goddess. Each year the event has grown. This year, our social on July 29th will be a Lughnasadh celebration. It will be a sort of gathering of the tribes featuring both a ritual comprising of elements drawn from our many different traditions and a competition to allow members to display their talents at games of skill, bardic arts, and visual arts. There will be a pot luck, but with a spin, there will be awards given for homemade dishes and treats, as done in county fairs and a bake sale to benefit HRLC. Pet and animal supplies will be collected for the local animal shelter and wildlife rescue. So far almost 90 people are interested in attending. No matter the numbers participating, it will be a wonderful event with wonderful people! Thanks to the Covenant of the Goddess for being such a positive force in our communities!

**Membership Officer (Lady Magda):  
Member Roster:**

**Assembly of Solitaries: 3**

- Lady Aradia, Whitehall, Lehigh Valley, PA
- Lady Emrys, Whitehall, Lehigh Valley, PA
- Desert Rose, Pittsburgh, PA
- In application process
  - Marie (Maryland)
  - Emerald (Pittsburgh)

**Covens: 7**

- Circle of Diana, Monroeville, PA
- Coven of the Wooded Vale, Bethlehem, PA
- Coven of the Wolfa, Columbia, PA
- Goddess Grove, Pittsburgh, PA
- Grove of Gaia, Pittsburgh, PA
- Grove of the Ancient River, Ashley, PA
- Moonfire Coven, New Hope, PA
- In application process
  - Coven of the Alpha Wolf, Carlisle, PA (forwarded to national CoG)
  - Coven of the Mystic Heart

**Associates: 0**

**Pursewarden Report (Lady Annabelle):**

\$3397.52 in checking account  
 + 19.45 Square (Annual Meeting fundraising)  
 + 87.00 Cash (Annual Meeting fundraising)  
 - 107.00 Hampton Inn (Annual Meeting conference room)  
 \$3396.97 Bank account  
 + \$32.53 in PayPal  
**\$ 3429.50 TOTAL in treasury as of 7/31/2017**

As your Pursewarden and member of the HRLC Board, and due to the fact that we are a non-profit organization, I propose that we could give up to \$200 each year to any charity or need we wish, (Hills and Rivers Cares) based upon the consensus

of the HRLC Board. In addition, we require supporting documentation for the Pursewarden's files for any gift or donation.

The exception would be to support HRLC members who wish to attend CoG's annual Merry Meet and Grand Council. In that case I propose that each HRLC member wishing to attend CoG's Merry Meet and Grand Council may apply for up to \$150 in support funds from HRLC. These would be distributed by check by the Pursewarden, in advance of Grand Council.

I also propose that ads to market HRLC cost no more than \$100 per year, and that they cover more of our territory and/or boundaries. I propose that sound and prudent fundraising costs that will result in a direct increase to the HRLC budget, are not to exceed \$200 per year, including the cost of the gaming license, now to be absorbed by HRLC's budget.

-- Lady Annabelle

Lady Annabelle encouraged members to try to arrange giving in kind contributions for table space and/or ads at Pagan Pride Day events to keep our expenditures to a minimum. If one volunteers to help set up or cleanup, the table fee may be waived. Individual covens might consider paying the table fee as a "donation" to HRLC. For example this year, Pittsburgh - (this year Lady A donated \$150, so HRLC and GoG split a 8ft table with each getting half-page in the booklet. At the York PPD, Coven of the Wolfa sharing their table and distributed information on Hills and Rivers and National CoG.

**Proposal:** Allocate HRLC funds for attending local council Annual Meetings instead of (or in addition to) Grand Council - members may ask for up to \$50 for covens traveling 150 miles or more. **APPROVED**

**Proposal:** Final approval of budget for rest of this year and for 2017-18, with a change in the distribution of funds for advertising HRLC to be \$150 and fundraising costs not to exceed \$150 per year. This includes the gaming license (\$25).

**Proposed Budget as of 7/31/17**

Total Funds \$3,429.50  
 Tabling & Ads -150.00  
 Gas Annual Meet (may include more) -50.00  
 Fundraising (incl. \$25 gaming license) -150.00  
 Grand Council (may include more) -150.00  
 Charity -200.00 (Total est. annual expenditure \$700.00)  
 \$2,729.50  
 Future Long-Range Financial Goal for Grand Council Host \$5,000 **APPROVED**

**Proposal:** Change signers on PNCBank account to reflect the change of board officers for 2017-2018 term. (This is the removal of former Pursewarden Annabelle Clippinger and addition of



newly-elected Pursewarden, Donald C. Brady, Jr.)  
APPROVED

**Public Information Officer (Jamie Dana):** Jamie has kept our Facebook page active by posting relevant articles and maintains a fun and safe environment for members in our secret Friends of Hills and Rivers Facebook group.

#### **Additional Business:**

**Proposal: Annual Meeting 2018:** After speaking with leaders of member in the central and eastern par of our territory, we are proposing York, PA as next year's Annual Meeting location. The tentative date would be the last weekend in July (28th -29th), with the Lughnasadh Ritual and Meet and Greet on July 28th and business meeting on the 29th. In addition to the open public ritual, include a members-only social event to become more acquainted with distant members. **APPROVED**

**Proposal:** Set length of terms of office and the number of terms that officers are allowed to serve consecutively before required to take a break. Set limit to 2 two-year terms (4 years total at one post) with yearly confidence vote to get approval to continue. An officer can do another 2 two-year terms at another elected post on the board (total of 6 years), but then there is a required 2-year break from serving on the board. **APPROVED**

**Proposal:** HRLC Facebook page be used as a bulletin board for regional open events, classes, and workshops as sort of pagan directory. Add another page to our website highlighting our credentialed clergy and the various services they provide. **APPROVED**

**Proposal: Increase presence at regional public pagan events (PPD and others)** Suggested events are: Lehigh Valley Pagan Pride Day, Morgantown Pagan Pride Day, Cleveland Pagan Pride Day, Philadelphia Pagan Pride Day, York Pagan Pride Day, Central New York Pagan Pride Day. Also, reach out to Mid-West regions adjacent to HRLC territory. **APPROVED**

**Proposal: Hills and Rivers members explore ways to team up to do Hills and Rivers sponsored public rites in their area ... and areas not yet represented.** Hills and Rivers Covens join to do open events in their region (ex. eastern covens do a joint event with open ritual). **APPROVED**

**Proposal:** Because Yule is not good for fundraising, explore having a large Spring HRLC-sponsored event (or smaller events) with fundraisers (possibly Imbolc, Ostara, or Beltane). **APPROVED**

**Election of Officers to begin terms at Samhain for 2017-2018 -- Candidate statements:**

#### **FO: Faunina Del Bosco, Circle of Diana:**

Although this is my third year as First Officer (having served one year as interim FO), I will continue with the board's approval. This is necessary for the smooth functioning of HRLC, given no candidates have stepped forward. I would like to train someone as FO and recorder to assume these posts next year so that HRLC continue to grow and evolve with new faces in leadership positions. While we have our founding members who are the stable core group of the local council—people who are dedicated and inspired, we also have new members with new ideas. I am eager to see what we can do both for the local pagan community and within the national CoG organization. I hope you will allow me to continue to serve another year as we try to make these plans a reality. **APPROVED**

**MO: Lady Magda, Goddess Grove:** I was elected for last year and am running again to continue for a second year of the two-year term. During the first year I have focused on learning the role and processing new memberships. We have two new covens and one new solitary member. There is one new coven pending approval by National and two open inquiries. I am happy to continue to serve Hills & Rivers as local membership officer and will focus on continuing to expand our membership across the region as well as assist current members with any renewal or credentialing needs. **APPROVED**

**Pursewarden: Don Brady, Grove of the Ancient River (Phone interview with Don Brady of Ancient River, who is running for Pursewarden.):** I would like to be considered for the office of Pursewarden. I have served as treasurer for a local pagan group along with Jamie Dana. Because I currently work in an insurance agency as a Property Casualty Commercial Agent, I am very comfortable with numbers and record keeping. I have been wanting to become more involved with Hills and Rivers and believe I can help by contributing my services as Pursewarden. **APPROVED**

**PIO AND Correspondence Officer: Jamie Dana:** I would like to be continue for a third year as PIO. I have served to the best of my abilities on for the past two years by posting to the main Facebook pages and serving as an admin on the Friends of HRLC page. I would like to continue to assist HRLC as much as I can. **APPROVED**

**Closing:** Faunina.  
Meeting ends 12:30

These minutes  
were approved 11/19/2017





## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

~ No report

Last published minutes in the Litha 2017 edition.



## ORANGE COUNTY

~ No Report

Last published minutes in the Beltane 2017 edition.



## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

~ September 17, 2017

The meeting was held at the home of Maureen and Barbara on September 17, 2017 and was called to order at 2:29 p.m.

**Covens Attending in Person:** Alani's Eyes (Maureen & Barbara), White Buffalo Clan (Tracy & Leticia), The Circle of The Dragon and the Phoenix (Monica), Ghostwheel (Morgana)

**Covens Attending by Proxy:** Moon Birch Grove (via proxyholder Barbara)

**Covens Not Attending:** Ashesh Hekat

We have quorum.

### OFFICERS REPORTS:

**First Officer (Leticia):** Merry Meet was attended by several SoCal LC members this year. Tracy, Leticia, Morgana, Tom and Monica all participated in the Leadership Institute. LI used a business protocol known as SWOT to help us figure out what the most important issues are facing COG today. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Attendees were grouped at tables seating four to six people who worked together for one phase before the members were shuffled to different tables. So each phase had fresh sets of brains working together. Brainstorming lists were developed by each table for each of the SWOT phases, and then presented verbally to the entire room. Following that, lists were posted on the walls, where each attendee ranked the ideas. From that exercise a final list was developed which identified the top concerns in each of the four areas. Top of the list was a widely discussed topic we can call Path to Membership. It thus became obvious that COG as a whole needs to focus more attention on this problem.

Grand Council filled two whole days but the entire Agenda was addressed and completed. Virtual attendance was low this year and for most of the time it was very problematic. Three National Board members attended virtually – Pursewarden, PIO and Correspondence. We recalled a couple of

years before we had virtual attendance when the First Officer was unable to attend and someone else filled in for them. It seems to us that the rationale for officer attendance stipends – that being that they have to attend – isn't really the case. Membership and Recorder have to be physically present and Second Officer most likely should. All the other officers, not so much.

Merry Meet is going to be in Fort Lauderdale, Florida next year, provided there is a Florida and there is a Fort Lauderdale.

### Membership/Correspondence (Tracy):

We lost The Clan of The Well and The Web during the last renewal period but otherwise membership has been stable.

More discussion about the Path to Membership. Monica and Leticia volunteered for that Committee at Merry Meet. The prevailing themes appear to be individual vs. coven membership, as well as streamlining and simplifying the membership application process.

**Pursewarden (Monica):** All Pursewarden reports have been completed and submitted in a timely manner to date. Reports are submitted on a quarterly basis, due on February 1<sup>st</sup>, May 1<sup>st</sup>, August 1<sup>st</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Reports are no longer submitted on paper but are done in a multi-page spreadsheet format.

The money we paid to the Long Beach Unitarian Universalist Church for rental space for the cancelled animal blessing ritual have been returned to us and have been deposited into our checking account.

Pursewarden advised the group of the updated checking account balance.

**PIO (Barbara):** Nothing specific to report. Barbara is forwarding material to the group via the Yahoo page when she deems it of interest and appropriate. She encouraged members to forward items to her that they find relevant and of interest.

**Recorder (Monica):** Minutes of the last meeting were taken by Maureen in Monica's absence and Monica forwarded them to National for publication. Thank you, Maureen!

### OLD BUSINESS:

**Public Outreach:** Following last meeting's discussion of a possible public coffee house salon this coming winter, Barbara has been in contact with the proprietor of The Fox in Long Beach. Questions have been going back and forth, but we don't have any definitive answers or plans yet. It was felt that we ought to check out some other places as well. Tracy suggested that Paul, who is in our former member coven The Clan of The Well and The Web, might be willing to do tarot or psychic readings at the event as he does that sort of thing



**TEXAS LOCAL COUNCIL**

**~ No report**

Last published minutes in the Samhain 2017 edition.

on a fairly regular basis. Monica said we should begin to pull together a list of local places to contact for publicizing the event. Publicity will be different now than it was in the days of The Winter Witches Ball and the Mountain Magick campout, since we didn't have social media then.

The idea of a SCLC COG ritual/Yule party for local council members retained its appeal since the last meeting. We decided on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> as the date and Barbara and Maureen's house as the location. Potluck format, to run from around 5 p.m. till whenever. Alani's Eyes will produce the ritual. Members may bring games to be played. We will have a gift swap table. Each attendee should bring one nice item, pagan in nature, unwrapped, that they will place on the table. They will then select another item to take home as their gift.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**VARIANCES:** We approved and renewed the following Variance for the coming year:

*We hereby waive term limits for uncontested Council offices. Local Council members will hereby be allowed to serve multiple terms in the same office as long as no one else is willing to accept the post.*

**ELECTIONS:** Barbara said she would like to continue as PIO if no one else was interested.

Leticia said she was willing to continue as First Officer if no one else was interested.

Monica said she would be willing to continue as Pursewarden and Recorder if no one else was interested.

Tracy stated that he is willing to continue as Membership if no one else was interested.

Maureen indicated that she would like to take over the position of First Officer from Leticia.

Morgana indicated that she would like to take over the position of Recorder from Monica.

At this point the following slate of officers was unanimously approved.

- First Officer: Maureen
- Membership: Tracy
- Pursewarden: Monica
- PIO: Barbara
- Secretary/Recorder: Morgana

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28, 2018 at 2 p.m. at Barbara and Maureen's house.

This meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m. on Sunday, September 17, 2017.



**TOUCHSTONE**

**~ November 6, 2017**

**In attendance:** Ecclisian Fellowship, Temple of the Sapphire Sky, Circle of the Emerald Forest, Temple of the Amethyst Moon.

**Beginnings:**

- Invocation – Chad
- Vibes Watcher – Jack
- Time Keeper – Val
- Quorum – Yes

**Announcements:**

**Ecclisian Fellowship (Jack):** We had a nice private Samhain.

**Temple of the Sapphire Sky (Chad):** We are doing our usual Yule rituals now.

**Circle of the Emerald Forest (Joanne):** We had a really great Samhain along with Temple of The Amythest Moon and it was a lovely ceremony.

**Temple of the Amethyst Moon (Theresa):** We had a marvelous Samhain at the Crystal Fantasy in Palm Springs and we are grateful for all the hospitality that we received.

**Temple of the Diamond Sands (Theresa):** We continue to teach students at The Crystal Fantasy in Palm Springs.

**Officer Reports:**

**First Officer (Theresa):** This has been a remarkably trying few weeks and I appreciate everybody's courtesy. I would also hope that everyone possible who might have students that have achieved their 1<sup>st</sup> degree or are dedicated to the study of their particular tradition would please bring those people to this meeting.

**Second Officer (Chad):** Nothing to report yet.

**Pursewarden (Jack):** An email was sent from the previous pursewarden showing an end of the year bank balance of \$2,654.23 and saying that the 4th quarter financial reports will soon be sent to the National Pursewarden.

**PIO (Val):** So far I've created several smaller postings regarding the TLC Yule event in December so what I need to do now is combine all those smaller postings and create one huge final



posting of the event to be sent out over every social media site that I have access to.

**Membership Officer (Theresa):** So far I've been notified of no new membership applications.

**Recorder (Val):** The minutes for the October 2017 meeting were posted over the TLC website; they have been passed out and are awaiting approval by the council before I send them off to National. Some changes were added by Stachia, the changes were made and the minutes were accepted and will be sent off to National at a later date.

#### **Old Business:**

**Pagan Pride Day:** Chad has reached out to Riverside and L.A. regarding our creating an event as TLC which will be similar to Pagan Pride Day for the Inland Empire but has not gotten any response yet.

**TLC Inventory:** The remaining TLC Supplies (except for one bin that needs to be restocked for Yule (Santa's Sack) have been transferred over to Chad and Lari's possession. They will be inventoried and re-condensed and consolidated by Chad and Lari at their leisure as mentioned in the previous minutes.

**Event Calendar:** Jack mentioned that we as TLC have approximately 5 events throughout the year and it was agreed upon that they will be discussed at a later date.

**TLC Yule:** The date set for our Yule event will be on December 10<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) at the Moose Lodge in Mentone, CA. Some of us will be arriving for set-up as early as noon and the rest will be arriving later as time permits. The doors will be open to the public at 5pm and the ritual will be starting at 6pm.

Chad and Lari will be performing the ritual of a Norse Tradition as mentioned in minutes of our last meeting.

A food list has been created for the event and sent out over the TLC email list, along with an email requesting volunteers (set-up, decorations, tear-down, and clean-up) and will be resent over the TLC email list as information progresses. Val will also purchase a Yule tree for the event (provided transportation for the tree can be arranged) and has gotten in touch with a Belly-Dancing troop known as the Furies to welcome our guests in. It also appears that a few Valkyries and Vikings may show up as well.

Jovial also volunteered as our first vendor of the event; his group is called "The Kindness Squad" and they create hand-crafted beaded jewelry. Our own "Lady-O" will be joining us as a

vendor with her hand-crafted designs, and Diana Davis will be there as well with her Crystals.

#### **New Business:**

**Chad mentioned** that there was an interest in creating a Pagan/Renaissance Fair up in Idyllwild by the community and will be following up on that. Also, the Lady of the Lake up in Idyllwild is closing. Chad also volunteered his & Lari's house/cabin up in Idyllwild as a possible location to create some type of Summer event (perhaps a Murder Mystery/Bar-B-Cue).

Joanne mentioned that we haven't gone to the Sizzler in Banning lately and suggested that as a fundraiser/meet and greet for an event for 2018.

It was also suggested by Chad that we revisit the dates for future events for 2018 at a later time due to time constraints.

**Love of the Goddess in TLC:** discussed doing an outreach to members of The Touchstone Local Council who have experienced a major loss in their lives to provide some type of emotional or financial re-compensation for all their time spent in TLC. Therefore, as a group we have decided to make a personal financial contribution to one of our members of TLC for their loss.

**The two emails of October 23<sup>rd</sup>** were discussed.

**Revisiting the election** was also discussed and decided against.

**2017-2018 TLC Budget:** tabled

**TLC Donations to Ardentane, Cherry Hill, etc.** were also discussed.

**Local Council Requirement for written proxies** according to the bylaws of C.O.G. there is currently no written policy regarding the handling of proxies issued to other coven members to achieve quorum for local council meetings.

**Closing:** Was done by Theresa and was very nice, and sweet...

## **BLAST FROM THE PAST**

### **MOTHER BERHTA'S COMING TO TOWN**

**From Vol 9 Issue 1**

**Yule 1983**

By S. Posch-Coward

Oh, you better watch out when winter comes nigh;  
don't you dare doubt, I'm telling you why:  
Mother Berhta's coming to town.

She carries a sack made out of skin:  
she dumps the toys out, she stuffs the kids in -  
Mother Berhta's coming to town.





She rides on Gnasher Skeggi, a goat whose back is strong;  
her beard is grey and scraggly, and her tail is ten feet long.

With six or eight horns, a moustache or two;  
make no mistake – she's coming for you!  
Mother Berhta's coming to town.

She knows with whom your sleeping, she knows with whom you wake;  
she knows each thing you're thinking, so don't think for goddess' sake!

So when the winds howl way up in the sky,  
listen as she and Skeggi pass by –  
Mother Berhta's coming to town!

At our house, the bringer of gifts at Yule is no comfortably plump, jolly, unconditionally-affectionate Jehovah-substitute. No, she's scrawny and mean, with an iron nose and teeth of flint, hair like a gorgon, and a tail like a buffalo cow. She also has horns – six or seven of them. The only real similarity between her and Santa Claus is that she, too, has a beard – of sorts.

Last year we called her Mother Berhta<sup>1</sup> Nobody knows what we'll call her next year. She leads the Wild Hunt across the skies of European folklore and has at least a thousand names: Perht, Skuld, Hulda, Babushka, Befana, Gryla, Holle, Budelfrau, Buzebergt... even Hekate. True, she carries a bag of gifts over one bony shoulder. But in her other hand she clutches a bundle of stinging birch rods. Mother Berhta is no department store pushover. She is, in fact, Old Witch Winter, in all her ambivalent glory.

Sometimes Mother Berhta comes alone, walking through the snow; but more often she rides in on a huge goat with a snotty nose, and an outsized pizzle. This is Gnasher Skeggi, her son and boyfriend, though he has almost as many names as Berhta herself.<sup>2</sup> We say "You know Mother Berhta's been around by the gifts in your shoes and the goat-turds on your roof."

If, on Mother Night – the eve of Midwinter's Day – you leave your shoes or hang your stockings by the hearth or under the Yule tree, Mother Berhta may leave gifts for you – if she's in the mood, and if you've left enough gin for her. (Still, firewater of any kind will do – Mother Berhta isn't picky.) Or, if you want to, stay awake to welcome her yourself. Be warned: she'll smear soot all over your carpet,

because she climbs down a lot of chimneys. She may bitch you out because you forgot to leave a window open for her to climb in through. But once she's got enough gin in her, she'll probably pound you on the back and shout "You asshole! When did you start believing in Mother Berhta?"

You'll awake Solstice morning with a hangover and a sore back, but your shoes will be filled with presents. (Why shoes, you ask? Easy: feet are Mother B's favorite fetish!) And you'll have remembered something important: that Yule is as much a celebration of darkness – within and without – as it is a celebration of light. Good Yule to you – and may Mother Berhta bring you what you deserve!

## MEET THE 13 YULE LADS

*From Smithsonianmag.com By Rachel Nuwer*

Icelandic children get to enjoy the favors of not one but 13 Father Christmases. Called the Yule Lads, these merry but mischievous fellows take turns visiting kids on the 13 nights leading up to Christmas. On each of those nights, children place one of their shoes on the windowsill. For good boys and girls, the Yule Lad will leave candy. If not, the Yule Lads are not subtle in expressing their disapproval: they fill the shoe with rotting potatoes.

Don't think well-behaved Icelandic kids have a sweet deal all around, however. They may enjoy 13 Santa Claus-like visits, but they also have to contend with a creature called Gryla who comes down from the mountains on Christmas and boils naughty children alive, and a giant, blood-thirsty black kitty called the Christmas Cat that prowls around the country on Christmas Eve and eats anyone who's not wearing at least one new piece of clothing.

Apparently, the Yule Lads used to be a lot more creepy than they are today, too, but in 1746 parents were officially banned from tormenting their kids with monster stories about those particular creatures. Today, they're mostly benign--save for the harmless tricks they like to play.

Like Snow White's seven dwarves, each of the Yule Lads has his own distinct personality. Their names, however, remained a point of much interpretation and debate until recently. As the National Museum of Iceland describes:

*Dozens of different names for the Yule Lads appear in different folk tales and stories. A popular poem about the Yule Lads by the late Jóhannes úr Kötlum, which first appeared in the book *Jólin koma* (Christmas*



<sup>1</sup> "Berhta" is pronounced with a sound like the ch in Scots Loch or German achtung in the middle. Her name is, in fact, German; it's the same word as bright. Mother Berhta is, it would seem, a Goddess of Moon or Sun gone punchy in her old age.

<sup>2</sup> Hackle, Pelznickle, Berhtold, Old Nick, Herne, Strawgoat, Julbokk, Grim, Klapperbock, Schmutzbartel, Leppa Ludi...



is Coming) in 1932, served to make their names and number much better known. The names of the 13 Yule Lads that most Icelanders know today are all derived from that poem.

Today, as the Museum describes, the Yule lads are:

- Sheep-Cote Clod: He tries to suckle yews in farmer's sheep sheds
- Gully Gawk: He steals foam from buckets of cow milk
- Stubby: He's short and steals food from frying pans
- Spoon Licker: He licks spoons
- Pot Scraper, aka Pot Licker: He steals unwashed pots and licks them clean
- Bowl Licker: He steals bowls of food from under the bed (back in the old days, Icelanders used to sometimes store bowls of food there - convenient for midnight snacking?)
- Door Slammer: He stomps around and slams doors, keeping everyone awake
- Skyr Gobbler: He eats up all the Icelandic yogurt (skyr)
- Sausage Swiper: He loves stolen sausages
- Window Peeper: He likes to creep outside windows and sometimes steal the stuff he sees inside
- Door Sniffer: He has a huge nose and an insatiable appetite for stolen baked goods
- Meat Hook: He snatches up any meat left out, especially smoked lamb
- Candle Beggar: He steals candles, which used to be sought-after items in Iceland

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND COG?

### COMMITTEE FORMING

The CoG to Pay for Future Grand Councils committee was formed at the last grand council to include myself (Jack), Manny, Theresa, Monica and Thea. If you are interested in being on this committee please speak up.

From the Grand Council 2017 minutes:

*"A line item shall be added to the budget called "Basic Grand Council costs" which is intended to spread the cost of the required annual membership meeting to the entire Covenant, not just the people attending Grand Council. The amount shall be determined by (insert way to do it here). This line item shall be used only to offset the costs for a basic, minimal annual membership meeting to conduct the business of the Covenant; specifically, the meeting room, and items required to enable virtual attendance. This money may not be used for travel, Board compensation, Leadership*

*Institute, etc. It also may not be used for any festival activities - i.e., parties, social events, workshops, etc. - attendant to the meeting. Any unused money shall be returned the Covenant's General Fund. The sponsors of the Grand Council are encouraged to raise any additional funds needed."*

*Discussion: Jack pointed out that as written, the proposal isn't complete.*

*TABLED: As none of the committee members were able to finalize the proposal it was sent to committee comprised of Jack, Thea, Monica, Theresa and Manny with the intention of presenting the proposal at next year's Grand Council.*

Blessings

Jack

## TREE OF TRADS SUITE AT PANTHEACON

Hail, and be welcome! Visit the Tree of Trads suite (room 957) at PantheaCon in San Jose, CA, Feb. 16-19, 2018. Offering a gathering place open to all; with food, beverages, conversation, receptions, ritual, and illuminating presentations. Sponsored by Covenant of the Goddess (NCLC), NROGD, New Wiccan Church International, and Fellowship of the Spiral Path. Open hours: Thursday soft opening at 7 pm. Fri-Sat-Sun 10 am till midnight.

Got a favorite subject to talk about? Like to teach a small group about something you're good at? Love to sing, and want to share your favorite songs in a small circle? Submissions for presentations in the suite are being accepted now. Please contact Thea Bristlebroom at [thea.bristlebroom@yahoo.com](mailto:thea.bristlebroom@yahoo.com) for more info!

## REACHING FOR THE MOON

Hoopla, CoGKin! I'm pleased to offer the Yuletide episode of EMLC's [Reaching for the Moon podcast](#). Kick back with your favorite yuletide drink (and save us a cup), and enjoy a bit of sunny Winter from Florida. In this episode you'll find:

- Yule Tree Symbolism from Lady Bridget
- Making Witch Bottles with Coyote Morningstar (part of our Sea Spells by the Sea Shore series)
- Remembering the Beloved Dead at Yule with Rayna Templebee (part of our Beloved Dead series)
- Alpania interviews Coyote Morningstar about the Morganic Tradition (part of our new Get to know EMLC series)



We also have wonderful music by CoG's own Crow Women, as well as Mama Gina and Emerald Rose! Love the O Tannenbaum on the Harp? That's our own Lady Bridget!

Our episode is available [at our site by clicking on this link](#). If you're subscribed in your

favorite podcast player, you'll find a copy waiting for you there! You'll also be able to enjoy more than three years of podcast episodes if you head to our site.

**YULETIDE FUN:**



**Instructions:**

Chop fruit and combine with cranberries and cinnamon stick in bottom of pitcher. Combine liquid and cinnamon. Pour over fruit. Stir well. Chill for a few hours or overnight. Stir again before serving.

**Notes:**

The fresh cranberries are just for color (you don't want to eat those), but they look too festive too leave out!!



**HOT BUTTERED RUM**

- 1/2 stick butter
- 1 C light brown sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp ground cloves
- 1 pinch of salt.

Mix all ingredients together and refrigerate until firm. Spoon 1-2 tablespoons of the mixture into individual cups. Pour 1 shot of dark rum into each cup. Top with boiling water, stir and serve. Garnish with a cinnamon stick. (Serves 4 -6)



**WINTER SANGRIA**

**Ingredients:**

- 1 bottle (750mL) sparkling white wine
- 1 Cup sparkling water
- 1/4 Cup + 2 Tablespoons dark rum
- 3/4 Cup apple juice
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 whole pear, seeded and chopped
- 1/2 Cup fresh cranberries
- 2 Tablespoons sugar