

# COVENANT OF THE GODDESS NEWSLETTER



LITHA 2018  
VOLUME 43  
NUMBER 5



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By Spiral Path Designs

*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.*





## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE AT LAMMAS

Lammas renewals are due on **August 2, 2018**. The Drop-dead date is **August 12, 2018** after which your membership will lapse and you will need to reapply. ***This grace period overlaps with the start of Grand Council.*** For the sake of the NMO's sanity, **PLEASE RENEW OR CANCEL prior to Grand Council.** 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:

- ❖ Circle of Wind and Wave

### CHAMISA LOCAL COUNCIL:

- ❖ Crowymmin
- ❖ Lady Athena

### EVERGLADES MOON LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

### HILLS AND RIVERS LOCAL COUNCIL:

- ❖ Lady Aradia
- ❖ Lady Emrys

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

### ORANGE COUNTY LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

- ❖ Celtic Circle of Wisdom

### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

- ❖ Alani's Eyes

### TEXAS LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

### TOUCHSTONE LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

### NATIONAL COVENS:

- ❖ Gryphonsong Clan

### NATIONAL SOLITARIES: NONE

- ❖ Lady Cliona Nic Tavish
- ❖ Lady Phoenix Duir
- ❖ Link
- ❖ Miraselena
- ❖ Robin Almaas

### NATIONAL ASSOCIATES: NONE

## AMAZON SMILE

*Smile* is a GREAT program where Amazon donates .5% of your purchase to the charity of your choice.

Simply select your charity (*ie*, CoG) and then go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) to make your purchases. Anyone can select CoG, not just CoG members -- so friends and family, and even our enormous Facebook following can select CoG as their Amazon Smile recipient.

I Smile for CoG. Do you?



## REPORTS OF OFFICERS

### FIRST OFFICER

No report given.

### SECOND OFFICER

No report given.

### MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

**The email purge was very smooth, with only a handful of resubscribe requests, easily handled.** Kudos to Canu (in his role as NetCo), and honorable mention to our NetCo during the purge last year, Link, for some good advice which I was able to take advantage of this time around.

**Grand Council Quorum/Proxy/ Attendance forms are due July 1<sup>st</sup> from every member regardless of attendance at GC.** The form has been posted to the website and on AIR.

**Success!** Huge thanks to Canu and Cat. With the help of the lovely Cat Perron (a previous NMO) and Canu with his NetCo experience, I can now use Outlook to send a pre-filled out form with your renewal reminder. This will start at Lughnasadh, so be on the lookout! <Happy Dance>

**Next up on the NMO's plate:** I am continuing the printing of hard copy Clergy Wallet cards, wall credentials, membership charters, and handfasting certificates. I didn't start mailing these until early June. If there was something you were expecting from the NMO but haven't gotten it by the end of June, please feel free to email membership@cog.org.

I continue to facilitate twice monthly online meetings of the Path to Membership Committee, as well as participating in the Bylaws Review Committee, and at least one other committee started up at the last Grand Council.

**New applications:** We have FIVE applications for new membership!

- Circle of Earth Sea Sky (Texas Local Council) 1<sup>st</sup> mention, if no objections will become effective at Mabon.
- Circle of Shadow and Light (Texas Local Council) 1<sup>st</sup> mention, if no objections will become effective at Mabon.
- Circle of Danu (Texas Local Council) 1<sup>st</sup> mention, if no objections will become effective at Mabon.
- Rita Rippetoe (NCLC AoS) 1<sup>st</sup> mention, if no objections will become effective at Mabon.



- Temple of the Obsidian Oak (Touchstone Local Council) 1<sup>st</sup> mention, if no objections will become effective at Mabon.

**Transitions of Note:**

- Regarding the dissolution of Dogwood Local Council – effective May 27, 2018 Miraselena along with The Sylvan Forest joined EMLC, and Lady Magdalena’s membership will transfer to National AoS effective at Litha.
- Moondrake Coven and Grove has changed to a Solitary membership (Lord Gwydion) in EMLC, effective at Litha.
- A'in Qoph Nunn has changed to a National Solitary membership (Scott Rhodes), effective at Litha.
- Temple of the Sapphire Sky has requested to change to a Solitary membership (Minos Lugh) in Touchstone Local Council, if no objections are received, this will become effective at Lughnasadh. (2<sup>nd</sup> mention)
- A member of Crowymin Coven is applying for a solitary membership (Jude Harrison) in Chamisa Local Council, if no objections are received, this will become effective at Lughnasadh. (2<sup>nd</sup> mention)
- Ryan Coe (Chamisa Local Council Assembly of Solitaries), has changed his Roster Name to Amergini.
- The following members have voluntarily lapsed or been cancelled due to non-renewal: Juliette Ashmoon, Huthart and Rev. Peter Hertzberg (All National AOS).

This means we currently have 125 members total, consisting of 66 Covens, 59 Solitaries, and no 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. You can also feel free to call me – I’ve put my phone number on AIR previously.

The following members are due at **Litha** and have until **7/1/2018** to renew:

Roster Name	Local Council
Circle Athenaeum	Calafia
Circle of the Winter Moon	Chamisa
Coven of the Silver Moon	Chamisa
Dragonwhisper Coven	Everglades Moon
Spiraling Heart Coven	Everglades Moon
Circle of Diana	Hills and Rivers

Grove of the Ancient River	Hills and Rivers
Frodo	National
Lance and Grail	National
Susannah Faith	National
Circle of the Wild Wood	Texas
Temple of the Amethyst Moon	Touchstone

The following members are due at **Lughnasadh** and have until **8/11/2018** to renew. Note: This grace period overlaps with the start of Grand Council. For the sake of the NMO’s sanity, **PLEASE RENEW OR CANCEL prior to the start of Grand Council.**

RosterName	LocalCouncil
Circle of Wind and Wave	Calafia
Crowymmin Coven	Chamisa
Lady Athena	Chamisa
Miraselena	EMLC
Lady Aradia	Hills and Rivers
Lady Emrys	Hills and Rivers
Gryphonsong Clan	National
Lady Cliona Nic Tavish	National
Lady Phoenix Duir	National
Link	National
Robin Almaas	National
Celtic Circle of Wisdom	Orange County
Alani’s Eyes	Southern California

The following members are due at **Mabon** and have until **10/1/2018** to renew:

RosterName	LocalCouncil
Pantera Apolonaris Draconus	Everglades Moon
Ceos	Everglades Moon
Raven	Everglades Moon
Alpandia	Everglades Moon
Arnold Kameda	National
Circle of the Ancient Grove	National
MoonFire	National
Dragonstar Rising	National
Bendith y Cynr	National
Inanna Arthen	National
Greenheart Grove	National
Gypsi	National
Katana Keller	National
Silver Serpent Coven	National
Stardust Coven	Northern California
William Baldwin	Northern California
Owl Moon	Northern California
Daduchos Coven	Northern California
Brigid Lutrasong	Northern California
DragonStone Circle Coven	Northern California
Lady Bhride	Northern California
Cary the Faerie	Northern California
Coven Trismegiston	Northern California
Darkmoon Circle	Northern California
Deborah Bender	Northern California



Felicity Grove	Northern California
M Macha NightMare	Northern California
Priestess Mata	Orange County
MD Talyn Ray	Texas
Circle of the Emerald Forrest	Touchstone

In Her Service,  
Thea Bristlebroom

### **PURSEWARDEN**

#### **CURRENT ASSETS**

Chase Main Account: \$73,969.65  
Wells Fargo Interfaith Checking: \$5,585.62  
PayPal Account: \$12,814.45  
Synchrony: \$31,370.61 (from 4/30/2018 Statement)

#### **CURRENT AND PENDING ISSUES & ACTIVITY**

I have two board requests for travel funds:  
[names withheld]

I have 3 requests for general travel funds:  
[names withheld]

I recommend we get information out to membership again.

We need to decide the platform we plan on using for Grand Council Virtual Attendance.

#### **FORTHCOMING ISSUES:**

Parliament of World Religions

### **PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER**

I have continued my efforts to contact colleges determining if students are looking for additional support and information about Paganism and Witchcraft. I have received only two responses from California schools. Working with their liaison, I have shared reading lists, local events, and general information about Wiccans and speak with their campus groups.

For a recent OCLC CoG event I created a small binder with information about our Youth Awards. This gave parents the opportunity to learn more about Over the Moon and Hart and Crescent award requirements and ask questions. They took our business cards with links to the information online. This binder will be present at SoCal events and I encourage other local councils to create a similar binder so parents and guardians can learn more. In the meantime, I will work on a flyer that can be distributed at a local level.

Our COG social media continues to share interesting news, images and events from around the world. I am monitoring local/regional posts and events to determine impact/support as it translates with metric data. Posts for local events receive

strong views/reach and I saw results in how it helped attendance for a recent SoCal fundraiser event.

Janine Nelson

### **PUBLICATIONS OFFICER**

Work on the website has been progressing. Just as I had gone over everything on the main/public side of CoGs website, I have now gone over everything on the members only side. There has been some reorganization, so hopefully things will be a little easier to find. I've also uploaded a presentation on mandated reporting (in Archives under Training), the 2014 Visioning Survey results, the Membership Map that was presented in 2016 (both under All the Rest>MerryMeet/Grand Council>Visioning) and LOTS of MerryMeet photos (Archives>Photos). Thank you to Chuck and Andrea for providing them, and to everyone who has been playing Name That Witch!

Everything you need for Grand Council can be found under All the Rest>MerryMeet/Grand Council>2018 Grand Council Agenda. Please send all reports, proposals, etc to **both** [first@coq.org](mailto:first@coq.org) and [newsletter@coq.org](mailto:newsletter@coq.org).

I was also thinking of adding a section for Academia as I know that several of our members have presented papers at events like the Conference on Current Pagan Studies. If you'd like to contribute your presentation, please send it to [cogweb@coq.org](mailto:cogweb@coq.org). I'll still take MerryMeet photo's and anything else you'd like to send me too!

In Her service,

Stachia Ravensdottir

### **CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER**

With the exception of a couple of inquiries from incarcerated persons, I am caught up on the correspondence that I have received via direct email or scanned letters from our esteemed Mail Witch.

Communications received include requests for information on the religious awards, requests for contacts in various parts of the country, offers of website services, requests for magickal help on individual problems, and of course requests for resources for incarcerated individuals or groups.

I am collecting hardcopies in an NCO binder, of all major communications received and my responses. The binder also contains the proceedings of the Board during this term, and resources that may be helpful to the next NCO. I did not receive any materials or resources from my predecessor, and want to make sure my successor



has everything they will need to hit the ground running.

I have put together a rough information packet for incarcerated people seeking information, but it is far from adequate and I plan to get put together a more thorough package. This would seem helpful since many incarcerated people do not have access to the Internet or to books on Wicca or Witchcraft.

Aside from general information about Wicca and Witchcraft, I want to include class/discussion resources for Wiccans/Pagan groups in correctional facilities. Each sheet will include some basic information on the topic, followed by discussion questions and exercises. They will be designed to be used with or without the assistance of an outside chaplain or mentor. Topics that I have in mind include the following:

- History Of Wicca
- Gods And Goddesses
- Ethics And The Rede
- Wheel Of The Year And Sabbats
- Moon Phases And Rituals
- Nature, Ecology, Animals, Plants
- Magick
- Creation And Cosmology
- Ritual Tools And Clothing
- Divination
- Creating Rituals
- Daily Practice And Lifestyle
- The Charge Of The Goddess
- Book Of Shadows
- Covens And Solitaries
- Spellworking
- The Pentagram
- The Elements

I plan to make this information as generic as possible, and avoid the impression that we are endorsing any particular tradition of the Craft or a limited approach to these topics. Once this package is complete, I want to make it accessible on the Ardantane website, but also offer the materials as a gift for COG National Correspondence Officers to use in the future.

This concludes my report. I want to thank all the other National Officers for their cooperation and support in dealing with COG's correspondence.

Blessed be, Amber K

### NATIONAL RECORDER

The Recorder's Manual is almost ready to be posted to the website. I am determined to complete it this month so Recorder candidates can review it before announcing candidacy in the run up to Grand Council.

### WELCOME TO COG

Please welcome:

- ❖ Lord Gwydion
- ❖ Scott Rhodes

### NATIONAL BOARD MINUTES

~ June 3, 2018

#### Call to Order at approximately 3:00pm

**Eastern Time:** Canu - National First Officer, Thea Bristlebroom - National Membership Officer, Stachia Ravensdottir - National Publications Officer, Janine Nelson - National Public Information Officer, Manny Tejada - National Purswarden, and Amber K - National Correspondence Officer were present and represented a quorum. Lady Circe, National Second Officer, and Morgana RavenTree, National Recorder, were absent.

#### Officer Reports:

**First Officer:** No report submitted.

**Second Officer:** No report submitted.

**Membership Officer:** *(Please see full report on page 2).* Canu rec'd some emails re the purge. People seem to have received the new password information as there were few questions about it

**Publications Officer:** *Please see full report on page 4).*

**Purswarden:** *(Please see full report on page 4).* We need to remind members to register for MerryMeet/Grand Council. At Grand Council we will need to decide how much to set aside for people going to the Parliament of World Religions. At about this time last year we started sending out emails about officer positions so people would know what is involved. Canu said we may need a year to write new bylaws to restructure the governance of the Covenant and in the meantime we should proceed as we have in the past. He asked the officers to post job descriptions about the Board positions. Thea asked if we restrict the funds to the official Interfaith Representatives or is the money available to anyone. Manny replied that the funds are for all members, but we have to set aside how much will be for each individual. Money currently set aside in the Interfaith account is \$5500, but 5 people going would use it up. Canu asked if we should we set a deadline. He offered to contact the official Interfaith Representatives for their input. Manny said NAIN membership dues are \$100, but the website is down, so he cannot check. Rachael and Greg have not yet received a renewal bill. Anyone requesting attendance funds for Interfaith events should remember that the amount for reimbursement is based on double occupancy. He added taking into account the cost of renewing the



NAIN membership, the actual amount in the Interfaith account is \$5400, not \$5500.

**Public Information Officer:** *(Please see full report on page 4).* Janine will run some posts regarding MerryMeet through the PIO website & blog. Several Board members discussed the idea of providing a refresher on consensus during GC. The idea of using a presentation would help facilitate the update. Janine mentioned she created such a presentation. Amber K suggested circulating it to the FO of each local council. Thea suggested having a co-presenter. There are some materials relating to the consensus process already on the website. Janine said that during the recent Orange County Local Council Psychic Faire, she put together a small binder describing the two youth awards so people at the faire could find out more about the awards mean and the process for awarding them. She also handed out business cards so they could check the website for additional information. Janine suggested that Local councils that are interested are encouraged to use the National Facebook page for surveys, sharing events and other information not just on their local council pages.

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

**National Recorder:** *(Please see full report on page 5).*

#### Committee Reports:

**Social Justice Committee:** *(Please see full report on page ?)* Canu mentioned Morgana's request to bring up what to do with the Social Justice Blog, since she is no longer the Chair, but so long as her email address is on the account, she continues to receive spam. Janine offered to archive the site so that if anyone wants to revive it they won't have to start over.

**Path to Membership Committee:** No report submitted This committee has had two online meetings. She will set up more meeting dates so that there will be a total of four meetings by Grand Council. This committee is focusing on three areas: prepare proposal to delete from bylaws wordage about associate program because there's no one in it right now, start ease of facilitating membership process, clean up the bylaws and policies looking for loopholes and inconsistencies.

Deborah Bender of the Northern California Local Council has expressed interest in reorganization of the National Board. She would like to know what other Local Councils are doing about this.

**Review Committee:** No report submitted. This committee has had several meetings. They have found several problems in bylaws and are now discussing how to best present this material at

Grand Council. They are aiming to have something put together by the end of June.

**National First Officer Committee:** This committee will likely put out a proposal for review of the award process by the end of June.

**Appointment as National Interfaith Representative:** Stachia said Andrea Kendall has asked to be appointed an official Interfaith Representative. Andrea is the author of the "Merry Part" article on the website. She has attended a past Parliament and has been working for local Interfaith projects on the local level. She is based in Oregon currently. Canu asked if we need to consult with our current interfaith Representatives before appointing a new one, but no one was certain. Manny suggested we contact them as a courtesy. Stachia said Andrea may be able to get Interfaith training from the Interfaith elist that is for Interfaith Representatives only. Canu will contact Don, Rachel, Macha as a courtesy. Pending any objections, Andrea's appointment as an official Interfaith Representative passed.

**New Membership issue:** Thea said that "who is a member" is an important issue. Lammas renewals are due by 8/11 but Grand Council begins 8/10. Do we count last minute renewals as members. Canu replied that covens renewing late must be communicating about their intent to renew. Quorum is established at the beginning of Grand Council, but the quorum is not used for anything unless it needs to be. If those members renew by the beginning of Grand Council, they count towards quorum.

**Sustaining Memberships:** Amber K has contacted other organizations about how they handle sustaining memberships. The Arbor Day Foundation responded, but it won't work as an example for us because they have 700,000 members and professional staff. There are smaller organizations, but we will most likely have to handle everything in house. This is doable once we have our professional staff person. This absolutely means having a professional support person for continuity.

Also, if we hire a professional staff person, we need to be mindful of California labor requirements. We cannot fly under the radar by using an independent contractor. She will have more information at the next meeting. Thea said whoever we hire needs to be expert on Microsoft Access. Manny added that we need to come up with a budget for this position. This person could be helpful to the National Membership Office and the National Pursewarden. Also, some churches have exemptions from paying payroll taxes, that could be an avenue for us.

**Conflict of Interest Forms:** Manny will recirculate the form.



**Purchase of D&O Insurance:** Manny has not looked into this further.

**List Clean Up:** Canu said some lists have very low enrollment so he is looking for purges and may clear out some lists that are not being utilized.

**Quorum Proxy:** Canu and Thea discussed circulating the proxy forms. Thea said there seems to be confusion among solitaries about what they can do with proxies. Canu will add himself and Thea to that elist.

**Dogwood update:** They have a bank account and need to transfer it to Everglades Moon Local Council, National, or another nonprofit. We need to find out who, if anyone, is still a signatory on that account.

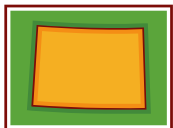
**Virtual Attendance at Grand Council:** What platform are we going to use? Stachia & Thea will send out an invitation to a demonstration of WebEx. A discussion of past problems followed. Last year there were complaints about requiring people to take training before attending virtually, but training cannot be done at Grand Council. Attendees need to have basic tools and know how to use them before Grand Council. Thea asked if the Board would like a demonstration of Zoom as well and said she or Stachia would send out another invitation for that.

**Award of Honor Process:** Amber K asked wasn't the process going to be revised? Stachia replied yes, after the applications are submitted they will be reviewed by the committee of First Officers. Thea asked weren't we supposed to clarify what is meant by "acclamation?" Canu replied that we will discuss that again at Grand Council. Amber K offered to prepare a proposal to clarify language. Manny had concerns that the budget is approved by acclamation and said we should make sure not to interfere with that process. Thea said that "voting" is not consensus. It is a "plus 1" vote (50% of the room plus 1 member).

**List of Past Officers:** Stachia asked if she could "publish" for members only the list of past officers and the Board agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:20pm Eastern time.

## TRANSITIONING FROM COVEN TO SOLITARY



### JUDE HARRISON

Chamisa AoS  
Durango, Colorado

Transitioning from Crowymmin

First publication – Beltane 2018

Second Publication – Litha 2018



### MINOS LUGH

Touchstone AoS  
Palm Springs, California

Transitioning from Temple of the Sapphire Sky

First publication – Beltane 2018

Second Publication – Litha 2018

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS



### CIRCLE OF DANU

Texas Local Council  
Bedford, Texas

### STATEMENT OF PRACTICE

I Initiated as a McFarland Faerie Dianic Witch in 1995 and became a High Priestess in 2000. My primary focus of worship is Goddess as Creatrix of All and I do follow the Wiccan Rede. Along with my husband and High Priest, Jason, and initiates, we maintain the Circle of Danu, a Faerie Faith coven. We have been meeting monthly to celebrate for more than six months.

My husband and I took a sabbatical from the community while were raising our children, but it is time to return. Having a connection to different generations of witches, I feel we can help build bridges and grow the Craft.

Bonnie Mote, HPS  
Circle of Danu

### LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION #1

I met Bonnie Mote for the first time in July of 2017. She is kin to me through our McFarland Dianic lineage, with us both sharing the same initiatory HPS. In the time I have known her, I have seen and heard her enthusiasm for reconnecting to the DFW pagan community. She has shared her ideas with me for how to reach out to seekers and newbies, and took a leadership role in making sure there is a dianic presence at Pagan Unity Day. Bonnie has further demonstrated her belief in the Rede by seeking to make and maintain peace and harmony in our community. She is a hard worker that has encouraged me to become more active in seeking out and nurturing future generations. I believe her coven, Cirde of Danu, would be an asset to our council. I am honored that Bonnie asked me to write her recommendation, and it is with honor and full trust that I wholeheartedly give it.

Sincerely,  
Christal Bloomer, HPS  
Sunna's Dance







## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION #2

To whom it may concern

I've known Bonnie Mote for many years. I believe she would be an awesome member of CoG. She is active in the larger community, and supports the growth of the Craft. She is ethical and a Witch.

Rose Marie Stroup (aka SilverMoon Withers)  
HPS, Coven of Diana's Moon.



### CIRCLE OF EARTH, SEA AND SKY

Texas Local Council  
Lewisville, Texas

## STATEMENT OF PRACTICE

My name is Delfin Pythia. I am a Wiccan High Priestess of the American Tradition of the Goddess since 2008. As of 2013 I have an active Coven called Circle of Earth Sea Sky. We are currently three members and three students. We practice the old ways, in service to the Lady and Lord. I have been an initiate in the Wiccan tradition for over 17 years. I am a daughter coven of Gaelen's Circle of the Serpent and granddaughter of Raven's Circle of the Moon. I love the COG community and have been a volunteer over the years for events as I was able to volunteer for.

I look forward to serving the light as a COG member for years to come.

Delfin Pythia

## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION #1

Greetings,

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Delfin Pythia to join the Texas Local Council of the Covenant of the Goddess. I've known Delfin for almost twenty years. She is an initiate of my coven and now a High Priestess in her own right. I'm proud of the work she and her coven, Circle of the Earth, Sea & Sky, do for the Goddess and the community. I believe she will make an excellent addition to the Texas Local Council.

Blessings & Peace,  
Gaelen Ananat, HPS Circle of the Serpent

## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION #2

I wanted to recommend Delfin Pythia for entrance into CoG Texas Local Council. I think that she would be a great fit. I have known her for over 15 years – and have stood in many rituals with her. She truly walks with the Goddess and God. She sees the light in the darkness – and is always filled with joy. She has helped out in many community events and is a worker bee. Her coven is made up of very solid folks. She is always there if needed

and is not afraid of hard work. She is community minded.

Bright Blessing  
Raven, HPS Circle of the Moon



### CIRCLE OF SHADOW AND LIGHT

Texas Local Council  
Arlington, Texas

## STATEMENT OF PRACTICE

Circle of Shadow and Light is a Wiccan coven within the American Tradition of the Goddess. We honor both the Goddess and God in all their aspects at each full and new moon. We fully believe in, and adhere to; the ethics and etiquettes set forth by the Wiccan Rede and both the American Tradition of the Goddess and the Covenant of the Goddess.

Formerly under the leadership of Lily Moon, Circle of Shadow and Light changed hands to Willow McKenna in June of 2015. The current 6 initiates of the coven have been meeting together at least once a month since December 2015. As we continue to grow, we would like to take the step of joining our Texas Local Council Covenant of the Goddess.

It is Willow McKenna's goal that this coven be an active community member and helper and an example of Wicca and its practitioners. It is said to be just as harmful to sit back, to not act, to not aid, as it is to perform a harmful act in the first place. The Texas Local Council Covenant of the Goddess is a forward moving force of positive energy for the Pagan community and one Circle of Shadow and Light would be proud to be a part of and act in accordance with.

Willow McKenna,  
HPS, Circle of Shadow and Light

## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION #1

It's with great pleasure that I recommend Willow HPS of Circle of Shadow and Light for membership in the TX local council. I know her to be above reproach as to her magical practice. She has carried forth with love and peace when she took over her training coven. She and her folks would be ready and willing to do whatever is needed for the local council. I've stood in many a circle with her and know her to be a very spiritual person and a keeper of the old ways. I have seen her grow into a powerful and magical person with a lot to give.

Bright Blessing  
Raven, HPS Circle of the Moon  
Matriarch American Tradition of the Goddess



## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION #2

Greetings~

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Willow McKenna and her coven Circle of Shadow and Light to join CoG as part of the Texas Local Council. I have had the honor to watch her grow in The American Tradition of the Goddess from student through High Priestess and begin her own coven. They all show a great ethical and moral center that I believe will help both the Local Council and CoG grown as a whole.

The coven has been active since its inception at many different TxLCoG functions and I believe that they will continue to remain active. Already Willow has brought ideas to the Council to expand our community presence and increase the education of the greater DFW pagan community. The rest of the coven has shown willingness to step forward and help as well.

Willow McKenna and her coven will be a great asset.

Blessings,  
Bastion, High Priestess, Coven Firemoon  
American Tradition of the Goddess  
First officer, Texas Local Council



### **RITA RIPPETOE**

Northern California, AoS  
Orangevale, California

## STATEMENT OF PRACTICE

Craft name: Aelfwine Ealasaid

My training began with the New Reformed Orthodox Order of the Golden Dawn. I was initiated into New Moon study group and moved to Silver Star coven where I eventually served as HPS until 1982. After moving to Sacramento I became a member of the Winged Horse coven of the Kingstone tradition. I was elevated to 2<sup>nd</sup> degree in Kingstone. I am now a member of Semper Virens, a coven in the California Line of Gardnerian Wicca. I am an elder in this tradition.

As a Gardnerian, I worship the Lord and Lady, celebrate the eight sabbats and monthly esbats, usually on the full moon. I follow the Wiccan Rede as interpreted by my teachers, which allows whatever does not cause harm and cautions careful consideration and full responsibility for any action that may cause harm.

I abide by the CoG statement of ethics and consider myself a Witch.

Rita Rippetoe

## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION #1

Rita Rippetoe and I took up witchcraft together and helped form Ursa Maior, one of the thirteen original founding covens of CoG. She was my HPS in Silver Star, another CoG coven, and we have circled together on many occasions. Rita is levelheaded, honest, reliable and easy to work with. She is an asset to any organization she belongs to. I am happy to recommend my friend's application to join CoG and NCLC again.

Deborah Bender NCLCAoS  
NCLC Emerita FO

## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION #2

To whom it may concern:

I heartily recommend Rita Rippetoe for membership in the Covenant of the Goddess (as I understand she has been previously).

My name is Kenneth Capps, also known as Oakseer and Durwood, and, although I am not a member of CoG, I believe that I know and am known to many of the Bay Area members.

I have known Rita for about twenty years, and she has been a valued member of our Coven, Sempervirens, for a decade. We have always valued her wisdom and dedication to the Craft, and have raised her to the degree of Elder within our tradition.

Kenneth Capps (Durwood)  
HP Sempervirens Coven, Gardnerian  
(California Line)



### **CIRCLE OF THE OBSIDIAN OAK**

Touchstone Local Council  
Cathedral City, California

## STATEMENT OF PRACTICE

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Circle of the Obsidian Oak is a Shamanic Wiccan Teaching Coven that was formed during October or the year 2017. Our mission is to gather, support, teach and organize the local Wiccan/Pagan community in the Idyllwild and Palm Springs Areas.

We, Lord Tarsus and Lord Tatanka, have been a practicing Wiccan/Witch for three years with the Temple of the Sapphire Sky. The Circle of the Obsidian Oak teaches within the Sapphire Sky Current of Wicca, in which we are practicing Clergy. Obsidian Oak holds public monthly on the first and third Thursday of the month to teach classes at a local metaphysical store, and several private weekly Wicca classes/meetings at members' homes, coffee houses, and other public locations (parks).

We celebrate the 13 Esbats in private Temple space, and occasionally in a local park



(when the weather permits) and we collaborate with Sister Covens to organize 4 public Sabbats (Solstices/Equinox's), and 4 semi-private Sabbats a year. At times, we also join the Sabbat celebrations of other groups as a local social event or a class trip to another city. Our goal is to network with other local groups, so we can attend larger Pagan events as a group, such as PantheaCon, California Witch Camp, and Reclaiming's Spiral Dance event, just to name a few. We two Elder High Priests that are working with 2 students, 1 of which is committed to becoming clergy, some with prior Wiccan and/or Reiki Healing experience, and service.

We are privileged to be in collaboration with High Priest, Lord Lugh, of the Temple of the Sapphire Sky, and High Priestess, Lady Sage; of the Emerald Forrest, and Lady Io of the Temple of the Amethyst Moon.

This Statement of the Obsidian Oak's Pagan Religious Practice that is followed within our Temple and within all affinity groups, study groups, or associated houses, lodges or circles.

- We honor and worship-the Goddess in Her many avatars, together or distinctly, and hold sacred Her Esbats monthly.
- We honor and worship the God in His many avatars, together or distinctly, and hold sacred his Sabbats on the equinoxes.
- We honor and remember all our Ancestors, and we expect that They will return as our newborns.
- We honor and remember our Mighty Dead, the long list of powerful Witches and Priesthood that stretches back to the First Time before us and resides with us.
- We work with healing energy in many ways in ritual, spells, and reiki.
- We recognize that Divinity is within all of us, everywhere, and always.
- We feel that the whole Multiverse is alive and aware.
- We follow the Wiccan Rede of "An ye harm none, do as ye will.
- We subscribe to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- We identify with the old rhyme: .Our Method is Science; Our Goal is Religion
- We study and work with sources from many periods in the evolution of our Religion, and we are inspired by many old and new ways.
- Some of our seekers study with us without having the goal of joining the active clergy. Others among us are busy developing a modern Pagan Seminary. There's room for everyone in our community and we welcome the diversity of humanity.
- We expect to keep evolving with our membership's interests, while enjoying the company of our neighbor witches in chatty social hours.

Circle of the Obsidian Oak does hereby pledge to abide by all of COG's Ethics, Charters, Bylaws and policies.

We thank the Covenant of the Goddess, Touchstone Local Council for taking and reviewing our application for membership and we look forward to a long relationship with the Covenant

Blessed be,  
Lord Tatanka / Elder High Priest  
Lord Tarsus/ Elder High Priest

#### **LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION #1**

Members of Touchstone Local Council, Covenant of the Goddess:

I would like to take this opportunity to strongly recommend the Circle of the Obsidian Oak for membership in the Touchstone Local Council - Covenant of the Goddess.

Lord Tatanka and Lord Tarsus have studied with me for years, they are very well prepared clergy, and they have now properly hived from the Temple of the Sapphire Sky.

They keep up the Sapphire Sky Tradition and the Rede in all ways. The Circle of the Obsidian Oak is teaching with very high Wiccan ethics.

These new clergy love the Goddess and the God, and they are serving our local community very well.

I have circled with them for many years and they are currently active in our local council. They are a fine-asset for the Covenant of the Goddess.

Sincerely,  
Minos Lugh, HP  
Sapphire Sky Tradition Elder

#### **LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION #2**

I am writing this letter of recommendation to the council for the Circle of the Obsidian Oak to join the Touchstone local council. I have circled with them many times and I am very proud to be asked to write this letter in their name!

Lord Penndragon of Ecclesia

#### **LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION #3**

It is my great pleasure to recommend the Circle of the Obsidian Oak for membership in CoG, I have circled with both Lari Clark and Chad Shipley many times and know them to love the Goddess and God. I have initiated them to be high Priests in our eclectic tradition of Wicca as High Priestess of both Temple of the Sapphire Sky and Circle of the Emerald Forrest. They have started teaching and dedicating their own students. Their coven will be a great asset to CoG.

In Her Service,  
Lady Sage, Circle of the Emerald Forrest



## LOCAL COUNCILS



### CALAFIA

~ No report

Last published minutes in the Beltane 2018 edition.



### CHAMISA

~ No report

Last published minutes in the Beltane 2018 edition.



### EVERGLADES MOON

~ No report

Last published minutes in the Beltane 2018 edition.



### HILLS AND RIVERS

~ No report

Last published minutes in the Mabon 2017 edition.



### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

~ No report

Last published minutes in the Beltane 2018 edition.



### ORANGE COUNTY

~ February 8, 2018t

Called to Order at 7:09 pm. Time Keeper - Mary. Invocation/Blessing by Mary. Introductions/Sign-in complete. Warden (Vibes Watcher) - n/a. Quorum achieved - Pam

**Attendance:** Greenwood Glen: Pam, Bran Faol Rennaige: Janine, CCoW: Mary

#### Officer Reports:

**First Officer (Pam):** Gutosky Park is under construction - we will need a new location for our Spring Meet & Greet

**Second Officer (Camille)** [not present-report by Pam]: **Pantheon** - We have enough ribbons left; Janine & Mary will disseminate at PCon.

**April 14<sup>th</sup> - 1pm to 4pm; OCLC Meet & Greet Spring Celebration** -at Eisenhower Park on E. Bixby Ave off Tustin Ave in Orange. Janine to create Promotional items Pam can place at Goddess Temple Fair. Activities:

- Make a Faery Ring - Camille & Mary will contribute beads, etc.
- Make & Take Wish Eggs - Camille has 3 dozen plastic eggs and washi tape

Tables - Camille & Pam have long tables, Mary has 4' table & 2' table; Pam card table. Canopies - Janine (OCLC), Pam, Camille & Mary; also OCLC Banners. Signs - Mary to order.

**Psychic Faire May 19<sup>th</sup> at Dragon & The Rose:** Potential Readers:

- Linda C - 3 Card Spread
- Lilith - Naughty Tarot
- Camille - Reiki & Crystal Healing
- Mary - Oracle & Spirit Messages
- Janine - Spell Candles
- Sarah - Henna tattoos
- Linda F - Tarot & Oracle Cards
- Mata - Tea Cup Charm Readings
- Nicole - Rune Readings
- Michelle - Pendulum (TBD)

Signup & Tickets: Pam & Andrea L. Time Keeper (Bell Ringer) - Catherine. Pop-ups: OCLC, Tamale Vendor. Tables - Pam (long and round); OCLC (long 6ft); Camille (5ft); Janine 4ft (for candles). Could use more tables. OCLC Banners/Signs: Have them out front to direct attention to the back of the plaza. Need signs out front. Mary will order. Raffle Prizes: Tickets \$1 each or 6 for \$5 A Donated Orion Reading. Ice chest with water - Camille. Pam will bring a couple of TV tables. We will continue our new process for distributing raffle prizes. We will be taking items to donate to Isaiah House. Janine will post link on our website.

Merry Meet dates August 9-12 in Florida which will delay our meeting in August to the 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Pursewarden (Mary):** Beginning balance \$1765.04 (minus postcard & advertising expenses yet unpaid; reimbursements to Janine).

**PIO (Janine): FACEBOOK:** This period covers January 11<sup>th</sup> to February 7<sup>th</sup>. Our Facebook garners the most attention and has been doing pretty good so far this year. We have had 5,907 total page views, 11 new page likes (which is up 57% over the previous 28 days) and 5,408 people reached (up 73%). We added 11 new followers for a total of 1,032 followers and as of today we have 1,048 Likes.

**TWITTER:** Our 28-day summary for Twitter indicates we have posted 10 Tweets, 991 Impressions, and 983 Followers. At the end of January our Top Media Tweet was "Save the Date" for our Psychic Faire with 74 impressions. Our Top Tweet was a meme, "Dance like a Maiden, Laugh



like the Mother, Think like the Crone" with 98 impressions.

Even though it's early in February, our Top Tweet so far was our WP post for Full/Blue Moon with 51 impressions. We published 5 posts to our fans.

**WORDPRESS** - There was a slight uptick in January with 473 views for our WP site. There were also 355 visitors, 14 likes and 3 comments. One comment was from a woman interested in vending at our next Psychic Faire.

We have 200 WP followers and 43 email followers.

**Membership Officer (Pam for Carolyn):** Greenwood Glen has their paper work ready to send in. Pam to contact Amber to see if she got her membership issues resolved as it still shows "pending." Amina is still not responding and she was due December 2017.

**Acting Recorder (Mary):** December minutes approved, January minutes approved.

#### Old Business:

**Want to consider a redesign** of sign-up sheets using landscape orientation to be ready by March 14th.

**Do we want Radiance** to publish our events in their magazine? Is there a fee? Mary will research.

#### New Business:

**Janine to take pictures** of Raffle Items for Psychic Fair and post to drum up interest.

**Closing:** Next meeting will be held on March 8, 2018 at Polly's Pies on Tustin Ave, Orange; Next Acting Recorder will be Mary; Next Invocation / Blessing - Camille.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm with a blessing from Mary.



#### ~ March 8, 2018t

Called to Order at 7:12 pm. Time Keeper: Mary. Blessing by Camille. Introductions/Sign-in complete. Quorum achieved: Pam

**Attendance:** Greenwood Glen: Pam, Camille; Bran Faol Rennage: Janine; CCoW: Mary.

#### Officer Reports:

**First Officer (Pam):** Disseminated fliers for our Spring Meet & Greet at Goddess Temple's Spirit Fair and at Crystal Cave. There was good interest at the Temple for our Psychic Faire and a member was interested in Joan, making "Fairy Doors" at our Psychic fair. A new professional reader offered to read Tarot at our Psychic Faire as well.

**Second Officer (Camille): Pantheacon** - Janine & Mary disseminated ribbons at PCon; there are still enough for next year.

**April 15<sup>th</sup> - 1pm to 4pm; OCLC Meet & Greet Spring Celebration** -at Eisenhower Park on E. Bixby Ave off Tustin Ave in Orange.

Janine created Promotional Cards and posted to WitchVox, OCLC FaceBook as an event; and on Twitter and Pagan Pride Newsletter. Pam will disseminate cards at Goddess Temple and Crystal Cave, Dragon & The Rose and Visions & Dreams. Activities:

- Make a Faery Ring - Camille & Mary will contribute beads, etc. Mary will provide Elemental Qtr offerings to the Fae and we will open the well, etc.
- Make & Take Wish Eggs - Camille has 3 dozen plastic eggs and washi tape; Pam donated 4 dozen plastic eggs.

Tables - Camille & Pam have long tables, Mary has 4' table & 2' table; Pam card table. Canopies - Janine (OCLC) also OCLC Banners, Pam, Camille & Mary. Noon to 12:30 to set up. Signs - Mary to order this week

**Psychic Faire May 19<sup>th</sup> at Dragon & The Rose:** Potential Readers:

- Linda C - 3 Card Spread
- Lilith - Naughty Tarot
- Camille - Reiki & Crystal Healing
- Mary - Oracle & Spirit Messages
- Janine - Spell Candles
- Sarah - Henna tattoos ???
- Linda F - Tarot & Oracle Cards
- Mata - Tea Cup Charm Readings ???
- Nicole - Rune Readings
- Michelle - Pendulum (TBD) ?????
- Joan - Tarot Readings
- Jane Doe - Fairy Doors
- Tamale Vendor - Aura Readings
- Faux Orion Photo Opportunity

Signup & Tickets: Pam & Andrea L. Time Keeper (Bell Ringer) - Catherine. Pop-ups: OCLC, Tamale Vendor. Tables - Pam (long and round); OCLC (long 6ft); Camille (5ft); Janine 4ft (for candles). Could use more tables. OCLC Banners/Signs: Have them out front to direct attention to the back of the plaza. Need signs out front. Mary will order this week. Raffle Prizes: Tickets \$1 each or 6 for \$5 A Donated Orion Reading. Ice chest with water - Camille ? Pam will bring a couple of TV tables. We will continue our new process for distributing raffle prizes. We will be taking items to donate to Isaiah House. Janine sent a link to each of us via email.

Merry Meet dates August 9-12 in Florida which will delay our meeting in August to the 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Pursewarden (Mary):** Beginning balance \$1765.04 (minus \$158.56 in reimbursements to Janine) leaving a balance of \$1606.48



**PIO (Janine):** FACEBOOK: This period covers February 8<sup>th</sup> to March 8<sup>th</sup>. During this period we have had a total of 4,904 page views which is down 17% since last period. Facebook currently has 1,046 Likes and our engagements and video views are up. This would be due to Camille’s support and posting to the site on a regular basis.

Our Spring Celebration Event has been posted on Facebook. We have reached 124 people with 17 responses. It will be shared again in early April.

Locations	Sept	Oct	Nov	Jan	Feb	Mar
LA	28	35	43	43	41	45
Anaheim	28	27	25	26	28	25
Santa Ana	17	13	13	14	14	12
Orange	15	13	16	14	15	14
Fullerton	14	15	18	17	17	17
Huntington Bch	11	10	9	10	11	10
Costa Mesa	8	7	7	6	8	8
Garden Grove	8	5	7	8	6	7
Irvine	8	7	9	9	9	10
Long Beach	19	22	22	22	21	23

**TWITTER:** We finished February with 5 Tweets, 691 Tweet Impressions, 90 profile visits and 2 new followers. As of today we have had 1,422 Tweets, a total of 993 Followers. After reposting, “Out of the Broom Closet” it earned 85 Tweet impressions and a post from WP was our Top Media Tweet.

**WORDPRESS:** There is more traffic going through our blog. Our views for 2018 have been strong since January (J/473; F/334; M/71). We have 200 WP followers and 43 email followers.

**Membership Officer (Pam for Carolyn):** Greenwood Glen has sent in their renewal paper work and receipt was confirmed via Email. Is it mandatory for Renewals to include names of non-credential holder coven members who want to subscribe to Air list?. Mata’s renewal has been received and processed. Amber is still resolving her membership and address issues. Amina is still not responding and she was due Dec 2017.

**Acting Recorder (Mary):** December and January minutes sent to National, February minutes approved.

**Old Business:**

We redesigned our sign-up sheets using landscape orientation; Mary to print copies to be ready by March 15<sup>th</sup>.

Janine to take pictures of Raffle Items for Psychic Fair and post them to drum up interest.

Janine researched the fees to publish our events in Awakenings Magazine and they are \$20 for up to 50 words and must appear 3 consecutive months totaling \$60.

Radiance magazine will charge events announcement at advertising rates – we may not be a good fit for their audience.

**New Business:**

Janine will be speaking in April at Fullerton College about Wicca, Witchcraft and Paganism.

**Closing:**

Next meeting will be held on April 12, 2018 at Polly’s Pies on Tustin Ave, Orange;

Next Acting Recorder will be Mary;

Next Invocation / Blessing - Pam

Meeting adjourned at 9:18 pm with a blessing from Camille.



**~ April 12, 2018t**

Called to Order at 7:00 pm. Time Keeper – Mary, Blessing by Pam, Introductions/Sign-in complete. Quorum achieved – Pam

**Attendance:** Greenwood Glen: Pam, Camille; Bran Faol Rennage: Janine; CCoW: Mary

**Officer Reports:**

**First Officer (Pam):** Pam received the okay from National Membership Officer to fill in as Acting Membership officer for this term. Pam distributed the information cards for the Spring Meet & Greet this weekend. Visions and Dreams, now under new management, was happy to have the cards at the shop.

**Second Officer (Camille):** April 15<sup>th</sup> – 1pm to 4pm; OCLC Meet & Greet Spring Celebration at Eisenhower Park on E. Bixby Ave off Tustin Ave in Orange. The event has been promoted throughout Orange County via Promotional Cards and social media. Activities:

- Make a Faery Ring – Camille & Mary will contribute beads, etc. Mary will provide Elemental Quarter offerings to the Fae and we will open the well, etc.
- Make & Take Wish Eggs – Camille has 3 dozen plastic eggs and washi tape & scissors; Pam donated 4 dozen plastic eggs; Mary is providing paper for petitions/wishes; and Janine is providing colored sharpies for drawing symbols, etc. on the eggs.

Tables – Camille & Pam have long tables, Mary has 4’ table & 2’ table; Pam card table. Canopies – Janine bringing Canopy & OCLC Banners, Pam bringing OCLC table and her canopy & table,



Camille & Mary have canopies. Arrive Noon to 12:30 to set up.

Psychic Faire May 19<sup>th</sup> or June 2<sup>nd</sup> at Dragon & The Rose: Potential Readers:

- Linda C — 3 Card Spread
- Lilith — Naughty Tarot
- Camille — Reiki & Crystal Healing
- Mary — Oracle & Spirit Messages
- Janine — Spell Candles
- Linda F — Tarot & Oracle Cards
- Nicole — Rune Readings
- Joan — Tarot Readings
- Jane Doe — Fairy Doors ???
- Tamale Vendor — Aura Readings
- Faux Orion Photo Opportunity

Signup & Tickets: Pam & Andrea L. Time Keeper (Bell Ringer) – Catherine. Pop-ups: OCLC, Tamale Vendor. Tables – Pam (long and round); OCLC (long 6ft); Camille (5ft); Janine 4ft (for candles). Could use more tables. OCLC Banners/Signs: Have them out front to direct attention to the back of the plaza. Need signs out front. Mary will order this week. Raffle Prizes: Tickets \$1 each or 6 for \$5 A Donated Orion Reading. Pam will bring a couple of TV tables. We will continue our new process for distributing raffle prizes. We will be taking items to donate to Isaiah House. Pam will deliver them.

Merry Meet dates August 9-12 in Florida which will delay our meeting in August to the 16<sup>th</sup>. Janine won't be back from Florida by Aug 16.

**Pursewarden (Mary):** Beginning balance \$1606.48 (minus checking account fees)

**PIO (Janine):** Facebook - current results based on past 28 days (3/15 - 4/11). We have a total of 1,043 page likes and 1,332 page views. Both our reach and engagement are up as well. There has also been a slight in change when our fans are online. Our upcoming event, Spring Celebration has reached over 3.4K since 2/25/18. There have also been 31 responses (including shares, and comments).

Locations	Sept	Oct	Nov	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
<b>LA</b>	28	35	43	43	41	45	48
<b>Anaheim</b>	28	27	25	26	28	25	25
<b>Santa Ana</b>	17	13	13	14	14	12	11
<b>Orange</b>	15	13	16	14	15	14	16
<b>Fullerton</b>	14	15	18	17	17	17	18
<b>Huntington Bch</b>	11	10	9	10	11	10	12
<b>Costa Mesa</b>	8	7	7	6	8	8	7
<b>Garden Grove</b>	8	5	7	8	6	7	6
<b>Irvine</b>	8	7	9	9	9	10	8
<b>Long Beach</b>	19	22	22	22	21	23	22

Twitter - 28 Day summary: While I haven't spent much time on Twitter, we had 7 posts. Profile and impressions are down, but followers are up. In March our top tweet was a post on Wild Edibles with

103 impressions. Our top media tweet was our Spring Celebration with 70 impressions.

For the month of March we had 7 tweets, 82 profile visits and 6 new followers. To date, we have had 1,442 tweets, with 994 followers, and 829 likes.

Wordpress - In March we had 477 views, 359 visitors, 14 likes and no comments. Our most popular day is Friday and most popular hour is 8 AM. Bit of a change from our previous data.

Promo cards for our upcoming Spring Celebration were delivered to the students at the Fullerton College Religious Studies class. There were about 25 in attendance.

**Membership Officer (Pam for Carolyn):**

Amber's membership issues have been resolved and she is a Solitary Elder with Credentials through OCLC. Is it mandatory for Renewals to include names of non-credential holder coven members who want to subscribe to Air list? If so, can there be a separate page in the membership renewal form for Air sign-up.

**Acting Recorder (Mary):** February, March and April minutes approved and ready to send to National; and send copies to OCLC Board members.

**Old Business:**

We redesigned our sign-up sheets using landscape orientation; Mary to print copies to be ready by April 15th.

Janine to take pictures of Raffle Items for Psychic Fair and post them to drum up interest.

Janine spoke at Fullerton College about Wicca, Witchcraft and Paganism for the Religious Studies class. There were about 25 students in attendance for the presentation and there were several thoughtful questions afterward. Some attendees were interested in learning more and connected with Janine afterwards. She was invited to come back in the fall for the next semester's class. She had a blog post about the college event on Wednesday on the NPIO page on CoG.org

**New Business:**

We will review dates for our spring psychic fair and possibly change the date to the first weekend in June.

Closing: Next meeting will be held on May 10, 2018 at Polly's Pies on Tustin Ave, Orange; Pam will be absent. Next Acting Recorder will be Mary; Next Invocation / Blessing – Janine.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm with a blessing from Pam.





### ~ May 10, 2018t

Called to Order at 6:50 pm. Time Keeper – Mary. Invocation/Blessing Introductions/Sign-in complete. Quorum achieved – Camille

**Attendance:** Greenwood Glen: Camille; Bran Faol Rennage: Janine; CCoW: Mary

#### Officer Reports:

**First Officer (Pam):** Pam is out of town

**Second Officer (Camille):** April OCLC Meet & Greet Spring Celebration –at Eisenhower Park in Orange. Eleven people attended the event. Activities: The Make & Take Wish Eggs and the Faery Ring with Elemental Quarter offerings to the Fae were well received and several people commented on how much they enjoyed them.

Psychic Faire May 19<sup>th</sup> at Dragon & The Rose: Confirmed Readers:

- Linda C – 3 Card Spread
- Lilith – Naughty Tarot
- Camille – Reiki & Crystal Healing
- Mary – Oracle & Spirit Messages
- Janine – Spell Candles
- Linda F – Tarot & Oracle Cards
- Nicole – Rune Readings
- Joan – Tarot Readings
- Rebecca – Tarot Readings
- Faux Orion Photo Opportunity

Signup & Tickets: Pam; Time Keeper (Bell Ringer) – Catherine. Pop-ups: OCLC; Tamale Vendor brings their own pop-up. Tables – Pam (long and round) & OCLC (long 6ft); Camille (5ft); Janine 4ft (for candles). Could use more tables. OCLC Banner/Signs: Have them out front to direct attention to the back of the plaza. Need signs out front – Mary has them. Raffle Prizes: Tickets \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Photos of some raffle items are being posted on social media. One of our newest CoG members, Orion Foxwood, donated a Reading to OCLC as a raffle item. Pam will bring a couple of TV tables. We will continue our new process for distributing raffle prizes. We will be taking items to donate to Isaiah House. A list of items desired will be posted on social media. Pam will deliver them.

Merry Meet dates August 9-12 in Florida which will delay our meeting in August to the 16<sup>th</sup>. Janine won't be back from Florida by Aug 16.

**Pursewarden (Mary):** Beginning balance \$1606.48 (minus checking account fees)

**PIO (Janine):** Psychic Faire promo cards have been printed and began distribution, leaving some at The Dragon and The Rose and for Fullerton College. The rest will be dropped off at The Crystal Cave and Visions and Dreams on Friday. A new post was written for our website and to share on the CovenantPIO.com web page which will go to Twitter and Facebook platforms. I will also be sharing on the CoG Facebook page.

**FACEBOOK:** In April we had a total of 1,044 likes. Our event post was published on 4/16/18 and has reached 1.1K with 74 responses.

**TWITTER:** For April 2018 we had 9 Tweets, 641 Tweet impressions, 33 Profile visits and 3 new followers. To date we have a total of 998 Followers

**WORDPRESS:** Our stats in Wordpress for April include 204 views, 158 visitors and 5 likes. For 2018 we have had 17 posts, 5 comments, 39 total likes for an average words per post of 30. There are 202 WP fans and 46 email.

**Membership Officer (absent):** Still asking if it is mandatory for Renewals to include names of non-credential holder coven members who want to subscribe to Air list? If so, can there be a separate page in the membership renewal form for Air sign-up.

**Acting Recorder (Mary):** February, March and April minutes were sent to National; and copies to OCLC Board members. May minutes approved and copies sent to OCLC Board members.

#### Old Business:

We reviewed dates for our spring psychic fair and have changed the date with Karen at The Dragon & The Rose to the first weekend in June starting in 2019.

#### New Business: n/a

Closing: Next meeting will be held on June 14, 2018 at Polly's Pies on Tustin Ave, Orange; Pam will be back. Next Acting Recorder will be Mary; Next Invocation / Blessing - Janine

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm with a blessing.



### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

#### ~ No report

Last published minutes in the Mabon 2017 edition.



### TEXAS LOCAL COUNCIL

#### ~ January 21, 2018

Bastion did Invocation to Coventina  
Present: Gaelen of Circle of the Serpent; Bastion, Amarok, Ruby Rose, Mysst, Sparkling Amethyst of Coven Firemoon; Circle of the Unicorn; Glenda of Amethyst Dragon; and Rune

Absent: Circle of the Wild Wood, Circle of the Blood Moon, Talyn, Anastasia

Phone In: Tree of Knowledge Coven

Proxies: NONE





No Guests

Roll Call and Confirmation of Quorum:  
Quorum Met

No Additions to Agenda

### Officer Reports:

**First Officer (Bastion):** New meeting location: Simons Agency. If a larger, more central, inexpensive location can be found, the Council will discuss moving. Meeting Dates: (subject to change if needed) April 15, July 22, October 14

**Public Information Officer (Ruby):** Working on completing Press Packets, which will contain information on the Local Council (what we do, what we offer, etc.)

**PurseWarden (Micheal L.):** Current Balance: \$1375.84. Samhain: \$514 in donations; \$257 to CCDS and \$257 to CoG. Yule: \$150 in donations; \$75 to CCDS and \$75\$ to CoG.

**Membership Officer (Faelind):** Circle of Shadow and Light Membership: Faelind working to follow up with National to find out if check and application were received. Local Council will work with Circle of Shadow and Light on membership status.

Brainstorm: How can we attract new members to Local Council? Discussion ensued, several ideas presented how to attract members.

**Recorder (Open Position, Brandee S. standing in):** Brandee S. nominated to become Recorder. All in approval. Brandee S. new Recorder

### Committee Reports:

**Wicca 101 Classes – Arlington (Ruby/Bastion):** Classes are going very well. There are a lot of new people showing up to the classes. Bastion wondered if the series had become too long at just under two years to complete. Discussed possibility of streamlining classes for next series.

**Wicca 101 Classes – Addison (Faelind):** New series of classes beginning in Addison with the addition of several new requested classes that are planned out through January 2020. Attendance in Addison has been very high, with many consistent attendees.

Discussion ensued regarding name of classes. The classes have been called Wicca 101 since the beginning, but the Local Council has heard that some seekers are turned away at the use of the word 'Wicca', feeling that it follows too closely to one path. Motion put forward to change the name to "Pagan 101." Motion seconded and passed.

Discussion ensued about teachers for classes. Decided that most teachers should come from within the Local Council.

**Webweaver (Faelind):** Discussion regarding use of pictures on Website and Facebook. Local Council Facebook page received a notice that we had been reported for copyright infringement. Faelind sent a reply message to Facebook and we have received nothing further from Facebook. Reminded members to be careful of what pictures we post online.

**Upcoming Sabbats (Gaelen):** Imbolc: Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. Spring: Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup> (Still need someone for ritual).

Sabbats Sub-Committees: Vending: Will be handled by Registration Table. A dedicated vending notebook will be kept with the registration paperwork and brought out to each Sabbat. Motion for Vending: \$25 per Sabbat or \$45 for 3 Sabbats to be used within the year by Bastion. Seconded by Ruby. Motion passed.

Grounds: Mysst will be sending out an email requesting volunteers for Saturday to pick up limbs in ritual area

Parking: Dragan: Good. Continue to work with neighboring houses and business to make parking better.

Youth Activities: Ruby: Continue to provide coloring pages and bubbles. Kids are happy.

Food Table: Bastion: Good. No problem continuing to purchase feast items.

Charity: Rune: Looking in to Habitat for Humanity and Youth First Teens. Also, she might look into American Cancer Society.

Marketing: Bastion. Always looking for places for flyer advertising. Brandee suggested Half Price Books. Employees have previously mentioned that they advertise for various organizations. Local Council Brochures are always available to give out. Bastion keeps printed copies in the Registration tote. Anyone can print and distribute brochures.

Continue advertising on Facebook. Encourage members to share events to reach a larger audience. We have seen a large growth in attendance since regular use of Facebook.

Instagram: PIO will work on setting up and using Instagram to reach the younger demographics.

### New Business:

Mission/Vision Statements: Proposal sent out by National after Grand Council 2017 to update/change the Mission and Vision Statements.

Mission: To assure Witches/Pagan religious rights: to clarify common misconceptions about Witchcraft; to foster solidarity; to work towards restoring the balance of the Earth that is our home; and to contribute to understanding and world peace through involvement in interfaith activities.



Vision Statement: A world in which all religions and spiritual paths are respected and free to practice without interference or obstruction and a healthy life-sustaining Earth.

Discussion regarding word 'Witchen.' Most members of local council unfamiliar with word 'Witchen' and feel Wiccan would be a better word to use. However, the Texas Local Council will go with the National consensus to use the Mission and Vision Statement as is.

Regarding membership records: Faelind has almost 20 years' worth of membership documents. Discussion on how long to keep membership documents. It was agreed that, since tax documents are kept for 7 years, membership documents would be kept for 7 years. Motion made by Bastion to keep membership records for 7 years, with anything over 7 years always shredded, and to keep thing electronic where/when available. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gaelen. All approved, motion passed.

Dismissal of Coventina. Meeting adjourned.



~ April 15, 2018t

**Present:** Gaelen - Circle of the Serpent; Faeling - Tree of Knowledge Coven; Rhys, Breila - Circle of the Wild Wood; Bastion, Amarok, Ruby Rose, Mysst, Sparkling Amethyst - Coven Firemoon; Christal - Circle of the Unicorn; Christal - Circle of the Blood Moon. Solitaires: Rune. Proxy: Amethyst Dragon - held by Gaelen. Absent: Anastasia L, Talyn. Guests: Bonnie & Jason M., Delfin P. Phone In: Chaos

Bastion - Invocation to Coventina

Roll Call and confirmation of Quorum:  
Quorum Met

#### Officers Reports:

**First Officer (Bastion):** New Meeting Locations: Simons Agency for now, unless someone can find a bigger location at a centralized location. Meeting Dates: July 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting has now been changed to June 24<sup>th</sup> to allow a meeting prior to Grand Council; October 14. Mention of Grand Council, members of COG must fill out Proxy form. It is in Florida and there is available assistance for anyone interested in going. This is a Very Active Council and we recommend that anyone want to attend, do so.

**Public Information Officer (Ruby):** We are reaching people on all our sites: Witchvox/Website/ Facebook. Did anyone see the notice of request for the Handfasting. It was sent from person asking from the COG Facebook page. It was mentioned YES it was seen and YES, that has been replied to at this time by Faelind.

Also, a Gentleman who has been attending the COG Rituals asked about if we wanted a band

out there at ritual. Bastion will respond to him directing him to Pagan Unity as we just don't have the permits or equipment for a band at these rituals.

**PurseWarden (Michael L):** Went over Balances per Agenda. Current Balance \$1,302.44. Imbolc: \$186 Donations; \$92 to CCDS, \$92 to TxLCoG. Ostara: \$326 donations; \$163 to CCDS, \$163 to TxLCoG

**Membership Officer (Faelind):** Renewal Forms must be sent to National Membership Officers and a copy to the Local Membership Officer. Next Renewals due at Beltane: Circle of the Serpent, Tree of Knowledge Coven, Rune - Rune stated she is focusing on other things in her life and will not be continuing her membership in CoG.

What is going on with Circle of Shadow & Light Membership? Circle of Shadow and Light present at meeting, and all paperwork and dues given to Faelind.

Rhys had a Question: Are we still only getting Credentials back, via email. Are they not being mailed as well? Faelind responded: Email only at this time.

Rhys stated she is not getting any emails from National, or Credentials. Faelind advised that if anyone does not get any response from anyone please send her a note, or CC her on your request. She provided her email address to everyone.

**Recorder (Sparkling Amethyst):** Minutes from January 2018 were sent in but have not been published. Will reach out to National and find out where minutes are.

Make sure to send 2 separate emails - One about these April minutes and a separate email to find out about January minutes. What happened? Where are they? Why they were not published? Is the email reaching the intended person who is handling these?

#### Committee Reports:

**Pagan 101 Classes -Arlington (Ruby/Bastion):** Arlington classes continue to grow. We are officially moved into the BIG room. We are finishing up our current series now and we will need new teachers for the new classes that will be starting the end of July. If you know a class you want to teach, please see Bastion so she can get you on that list.

Question (Gaelen): Do you know what class's people are asking for? Answer (Cassie): Kundalini was one specific request.

People from the UU Church are attending, John from the UU sends out information about the classes, times & dates to church members.

Bastion stated that she wanted to make Runes a 4 series class for the summer.



Cassie is posting on Witchvox/Facebook: She has password for Witchvox and has been posting on there, but she needs Admin for Facebook, so she can start posting for classes there as well.

**Pagan 101 Classes –Addison (Faelind/Breila):** Classes are doing well with an average 18 – 20 people per class. People are finding us off Google Search (Wiccan Class/Pagan Class/Wiccan Rituals).

\$282 cash received for Addison classes. Money held and used to help pay rent. For a while hard to get people to step up and pay for the classes (\$5 per person) but now they we make sure we are stating we really need to get funds for this class as it pays for the rent here. More and more people are stepping up and making that donation.

Faelind stated that she keeps track of everything on the spreadsheet, including the attendance numbers and total donation amount.

**Webweaver (Faelind):** National Changed their website and the links on our sites needs to be fixed and I will be working on that. For Local: Take National Wording and put on our site also keeping hard copies/blank forms and requirements on hand for what you need to join. Discussion about adding a Single File that can be downloaded on Local site. Faelind advised that it is that way currently because she only has 3 tabs on the Web/Internet package we have and pay for. Discussion opened up that we find out what the cost would be getting 5 tabs, so we have enough pages for everything that needs to be on there. Faelind will check on those rates and let us know.

#### **Upcoming Sabbats (Gaelen):**

- Beltane: April 29<sup>th</sup>: Circle of Shadow and Light
- Midsummer: June 16<sup>th</sup> (Saturday): Amethyst Dragon
- Lammas: July 28<sup>th</sup> (Saturday): Coven Firemoon
- Autumn Equinox: Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>; Tree of Knowledge Coven
- Samhain: Oct 28<sup>th</sup>: Circle of the Serpent
- Winter Solstice: Dec 16<sup>th</sup>: Anastasia/LFG Group

A discussion ensued about the Sabbats. It was encouraged for people to choose that they were "going" on the Facebook event, so that the event would be shared on individual Facebook pages as well.

There is a large amount of new people who are attending rituals. Please mention on the events page for them to bring their own chairs so they can "Pop a squat" during chit chat and conversation before and after ritual. Also, please everyone let's open up the conversation space that you have before/after ritual where you are conversing. Also, be sure people know not to bring their chair into circle, unless of course medically they need it, the chair is only for before and after ritual. Thanks!

Sabbats Sub Committee: Vending \$25 for 1 event (\$25 cannot be applied towards \$45 later), \$45 for 3 events. Bastion has the Cards/Notepad to keep track of everyone and up to date on payments

Grounds: Mysst will be sending out email requesting Volunteers for Saturday to go out to pick up limbs in ritual area. Faelind thank you for sending additional people at last sabbat to help with grounds. Next grounds cleaning day will be on April 28<sup>th</sup>. A notice will be sent out on the email list asking for volunteers to come out and help.

Parking: Dragan - People were complaining about the dog for person that lives right next to CCDS. Half of that driveway is their driveway, so the dog that is there, can be there. Last Sabbat, the wife finally came out and told husband to move dog away, as she did not want it to get hit. Bastion stated there is additional parking at some of the businesses that are just up the road, insurance agencies that are closed and there is additional parking around the corner and up the road if needed. Beltane, we need to plan for at least 100 being out there.

Youth Activities: Good, Bubbles seem to go over very well. Coloring Books and crayons/markers as well.

Community Table and Food Table: Bastion – We are fine there

Charity: Rune: Nothing New. Grant Found, will put it out on the list before we go into discussion here. If the Coven doing the ritual wants to find their own charity for their ritual that is fine. Just let me know who and when.

Marketing: Bastion (Flyers at different Location). Gaelen recommended to check with other churches and event venues to share those flyers. Bastion stated also adding Cassie to FB to help set up future events and sharing on Facebook.

#### **Old Business:**

**Friday Family Dinner:** Letter dated April 12th, 2018

*Dear Covenant of the Goddess,*

*In Honor of the Maiden and Warrior during the 2018 Spring Equinox, the Texas Local Council hosted a Friday Family Dinner on March 23 for Youth First Texas. Youth First Texas is a 501(c)3 certified organization in Dallas "committed to providing opportunities for life skills, leadership development, peer support , and educational advancement ... to LGBT youth and their Allied friends" ([www.youthfirsttexas.org/about/](http://www.youthfirsttexas.org/about/)).*

*Several Texas Local Council members volunteered their resources and time to cook and/or serve hamburgers (both meat and veggie) and vegan friendly side dishes. Two*



homemade dishes – mac n’ cheese and black bean hummus – were particular favorites of the youth. Vegan friendly chocolate and Vanilla cupcakes (dusted with edible glitter!) rounded off the delicious dinner, graciously donated by ButterCream Duo – a Dallas cupcake shop owned by a Texas Local Council member.

The LGBT youth enjoyed full tummies and happy hearts by the end of the night, and our Texas Local Council volunteers shared beaming smiles. Youth First Texas invited Texas Local Council to host another dinner, which the volunteers agree will be a lasagna affair.

As the herder of cats, I want to offer special recognition and heartfelt thanks to the following members who worked diligently to ensure a successful Friday Family Dinner: Circle of the Serpent, Tree of Knowledge Coven, Circle of the Wild Wood, and Coven Firemoon. (This Sabbat report respectfully submitted from the Charity Sub-Committee.)

Rune also added to the Old Business Conversation: These Kids were very cautious of the fact that we were adults as Teenagers do, but they were very opening once they slowly let their guards down. They were so Grateful and appreciative about what we were there for and what we were doing. This was so inexpensive, and it made such a huge impact on these kids.

Per Gaelen who also attended as a volunteer, these kids will open up, but they are guarded just because of the situations that they always deal with. We are looking forward to the next one. It was mentioned during this time that per asking the kids they were not very excited about having Lasagna, so it is unsure what type of food to do, but we would like to do something again for them in the Summer of 2018.

They are doing a 1920’s Murder Mystery play - Breila stated that she has some contacts into the theater and send her the information and she would be sure to spread the word. During this next volunteer event, they are looking for a Max of 5 Volunteers. Too many Volunteers make these kids very uneasy.

**Pagan Unity Fest:** May 19 – Vendors will be on one side and Information Booths will be on the other side. Gathering people for Ritual by Gaelen. Information Booths will be handled by the Vendor organizer.

**Circle of Shadow and Light Membership:** We now have everything for them to join CoG. Everything was provided to Faelind who will be sending that in for her. Per January Meeting we voted to paying for her first year.

**New Business:**

Rune had to step out. She had other appointments to be at and gave proxy for new membership. YES.

**New Memberships:** Bonnie - Circle of Danu: Faerie Faith. Read her Statement. Recommendations Read by Christal B & Rosie S (Read by Bonnie). Paid Check. All documents & Check were given to Faelind to process to National

Delfin – Circle of the Earth, Sea & Sky: American Tradition of the Goddess. Read her Statement. Recommendations Read by Bastion for Raven & Gaelen Read her Recommendation. Payment 50% paid by Gaelen and 50% paid by Local. All documents and checks were given to Faelind to process to National.

**Gaelen proposed:** Currently working on LGTB Panel, like the Transgender Panel that was presented last year. Renting out UU Church: Proposal that TxLCoG help with that cost as a Sponsor. Bastion Second the Motion. Everyone was in Favor. Motion Passes

**Gaelen Proposed:** Witches Ball (Dates unconfirmed - Sometime in October) Possibly at the Jefferson Church (for the room). The UU Church in Arlington is too small for event. If we can rent Jefferson Church will update with the Cost. Bastion Seconds the Motion. Everyone was in Favor. Motion Passes.

**Voting for New Covens to Join TxLCoG:** Delfin- Circle of the Earth, Sea and Sky, Bonnie & Jason M – Circle of Danu. Both covens voted in

Thanks to Coventina. Adjourn



~ June 10, 2018

X = Present, P = Proxy, C = Call-in, A = Absent

X/P/C/A	Coven Name
X	Amethyst Dragon-Glenda
X & C	Circle of Danu – Patricia, Bonnie & Jason
A	Circle of Shadow and Light
X	Circle of the Blood Moon-Chaos
X	Circle of the Earth, Sea & Sky-Delfin
X	Circle of the Serpent-Gaelen
X	Circle of the Unicorn-Chuck
X	Circle of the Wild Wood-Rhys, Breila
X	Coven Firemoon-Bastion, Ruby, Essynce
X	Tree of Knowledge Coven-Faelind, Dragan
	<b>Solitaires</b>
A	Anastasia
C	Talyn

Invocation to Coventina by Bastion. No guests today. Bastion states Gaelen has agreed to be the recorder today. Roll Call by Gaelen and



Bastion stated that we have quorum. Bastion asked for additions to agenda. None were stated.

### Officer Reports

**First Officer (Bastion):** This location will remain our meeting space unless someone else has a different and free suggestion. Our next meeting is October 14. Please consider running for a position if you're interested. Faelind plans to run again for membership officer. Delfin shared an issue a circle member of hers was having with an ex who tried to get information about her through CoG and applauded the lack of information that the local council was unwilling to share. Bastion stated that no officer should be sharing personal information about someone.

**Public Information Officer (Ruby):** It's been fairly quiet and will most likely pick back up as we get closer to Samhain.

**Pursewarden (Micheal L.):** Current Balance is \$1059.06. Beltane brought in \$234, which half (\$117) we kept and half went to CCDS as our rental donation.

**Membership Officer (Faelind):** It's proxy time. She will help you find your charter # and if you need one, a proxy holder. Proxies can be completed online. Please be sure to send a copy to Faelind. Bonnie was unsure if she should do a proxy since she's so new. Faelind encouraged everyone to do a proxy regardless of how recently you joined CoG. She also has shredded all membership information and paperwork that she had outside of the last seven years. She has several items missing and asked everyone to send her copies of anything they had about their membership. She also completed Delfin's credentials. Talyn and Circle of the Wild Wood need to renew their CoG membership. Gaelen offered to email her the Excel spreadsheet we had of coven data that she sent to Glenda before she rolled off as Membership Officer a few years ago. Bonnie mentioned she plans to attend Grand Council virtually.

**Recorder (Bastion):** Our last two meetings' minutes will be submitted today. There were not submitted due to changes needed. The previous recorder had never taken minutes nor was she taught. Corrections have been done and they will now be submitted for publication. Today's minutes will be posted by dinner time on the list. Please check them for accuracy and respond.

### Committee Reports:

**Pagan 101 Classes –Arlington (Ruby & Bastion):** Arlington classes are doing well; however, this month had low attendance. We think it's due to the tarot series in Addison as many of our attendees go to classes at both locations.

Bastion said she would send out a class sign up list this week so keep an eye out. Bastion read a

Facebook message from an attendee about how much she appreciates the classes and how much they've helped her. We've been told repeatedly how they've helped people find their path in Wicca and the community at large.

**Pagan 101 Classes –Addison (Breila & Faelind):** Classes are going very well and numbers are growing. We are averaging 18-22 attendees at a time. 22 were at the first tarot class and it raised \$187. The rental for this series is \$200 and we've almost covered it in the first class alone. With our growth, we're doing fine, but if we outgrow the space, we may see if we can use the other room.

**Webweaver (Faelind):** Faelind mentioned that the website costs less than \$100 a year; however, all that gives us is email addresses such as [membership@txcog.org](mailto:membership@txcog.org), etc. Discussion ensued about whether or not we should drop this and go to Wordpress for no money, though we'd lose these addresses. Everyone felt it was worth keeping these addresses for under \$100/year.

**Sabbats (Gaelen):** The next Sabbat is Midsummer: June 16, Saturday afternoon starting at 5 pm. Amethyst Dragon is doing ritual. If you're interested in your circle doing a ritual for 2019, contact Gaelen. Faelind mentioned her coven had signed up for Samhain 2019. Gaelen will be putting a request on list soon and add "Bring Chairs" to the Facebook events.

**Sabbat Sub-committees: Vending (Bastion):** Gaelen will be sharing with Bastion the vendors that she connected with at Pagan Unity Day. Bastion will reach out and see if they're interested in vending at our Sabbats.

**Grounds (Mysst):** She will post an email to the list about going out the morning of the rites to mow and clean up that day, if anyone would like to join them.

**Parking (Dragan):** Park has a lot of soccer going on and filling up quickly. Cars can't park in the shopping strip west of the site due to complaints. They can park at the Cobblestone Trail Park or at the Texas Department of Health Services nearby. Faelind will post that on the website. Gaelen will add it to the Facebook posts and Bastion will see about adding it to the physical sign on site.

**Youth Activities (Ruby):** Ruby is going to get bubbles to Bastion so she can bring them to Midsummer for the kids. Gaelen offered to help with any child whose parents need located at the events.

**Community Table & Food (Bastion):** Food table is going well.

**Charity:** Bastion stated that Rune is no longer on the local council and stated if anyone would like to take on the role, they are more than welcome to do so. Gaelen stated that she will first ask the circle doing ritual if they wish to host a fundraiser as well and if not, anyone who has a



suggestion and wishes to take care of the delivery, can do so. They just need to communicate it with Gaelen.

Marketing (Bastion): Flyers are at Enchanted Forest and the UU Church in Arlington. Bastion plans to take them to Years to Your Health.

### Old Business

**Pagan Unity Day (Trish):** Had approximately 400 in attendance and made a profit. They plan to donate to their charity this week.

### New Business:

**Youth First Family Dinners (Gaelen):** Gaelen explained Youth First and the family dinners. The council agreed to offer to do it again on September 7<sup>th</sup>. It was decided we'll do burgers and hot dogs this time. Breila offered to do her amazing vegan cupcakes again and mentioned she was working on a gluten free recipe. Gaelen will email the contact at Youth First and will email the list for attending and food volunteers.

**LGBTQ (Gaelen):** We have a panel set for Saturday, July 7 at 1:30 pm in Trinity Metropolitan Community Church at 933 E Avenue J, Grand Prairie, TX 75050. Council was encouraged to like and share the event on their social media. This event is to help more people better understand LGBTQ, definitions, concerns, and perspectives. Trish said we could put the panel info on the Pagan Unity Day Facebook page.

**Grand Council Proxies (Faelind):** Faelind went over Grand Council proxy pair ups for all that she had done during the meeting today and encouraged members to read the proposals that will be out in the next few months and communicate their thoughts to their proxy holder.

**Witches Ball in October (Gaelen):** At the last meeting, Gaelen to head up a Witches Ball event. Bonnie is a member of the First Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Church in Fort Worth. We can rent the sanctuary, Coleman Hall, and the library for \$237.50. Gaelen made a motion that we pay the \$237.50 to the church for a Witches Ball on Saturday, October 6. Bastion seconded it. Motion passed. Bonnie will take a \$100 deposit to the church after Midsummer.

The event will include:

- Up to 3 divination readers – Delfin will do rune readings
- One photographer – Ruby will reach out to Vega about being the photographer
- Costume contest
- Wicca contest? Maybe
- DJ – Gaelen will ask Jander. Bonnie will ask about the details of the sound system at the church.

- Bastion & Gaelen will get together and do food purchases of premade items: hors d'oeuvres, snacks, drinks (non-alcoholic only), and paperware
- Silent Auction – everyone please donate nice items. Bastion will ask for donations from vendors.
- Community Table – for groups, events, and community vendors to post information as well as our own
- Gaelen and Micheal will work out the registration, payment, and ticketing system for the event.
- Gaelen will organize volunteers and post information about it on the list
- Liability forms and photo policy were discussed and will be utilized. Similar to CCDS.
- Faelind motioned that we pay the divination readers \$50 each and the photographer \$100 for the event and that they are allowed to set out tip jars, if desired. Bastion seconded. After some discussion, motion passed.
- Difficulty in getting people to setup and cleanup was discussed. People encouraged to help.
- Trish offered trash cans and sign boards she has from Pagan Unity Day.
- Glenda offered some strong trash bags for use.

Thanks to Coventina by Bastion. Adjourn at 12:30 pm.



## TOUCHSTONE

~ April 9, 2018

In attendance: Ecclesian Fellowship (Val), Temple of the Sapphire Sky (proxy held by Lari), Circle of the Emerald Forest (Joanne), Temple of the Amethyst Moon (Theresa), Obsidian Oak (Lari, Chad), Debbie Smith: (Visitor)

**Beginnings:** Invocation – Val, Vibes Watcher – Chad, Time Keeper – Val, Quorum/Sign-in Sheet – Yes

**Announcements:** Circle of the Emerald Forest (Joanne): We celebrated Ostara down in San Diego. Right now nothing else is going on and I imagine that everyone's going to be getting ready for Beltane and for that celebration I will also be down in San Diego.

Temple of the Amethyst Moon (Theresa): Continues to teach select students as we also celebrate the Sabbats, and Esbats.

Temple of the Diamond Sands (Theresa): Continues to teach public courses in Wicca at the Crystal Fantasy in Palm Springs, CA. at 5:30pm on Fridays.

Val: I am very proud to announce that we have a new aromatherapy shop located in Hemet called the Botanica Greencia Mystica (which is



where I procured the raffle item for tonight's meeting).

### Officer Reports:

**First Officer (Theresa):** I hope all current members will bring as many of their dedicated students and junior clergy as soon as possible to each Touchstone Local Council meeting so we are able to assist each other with our ministries and to greet pagans of other traditions for succession of the Covenant of the Goddess and to offer lively and valuable support for potential new members who may visit us as they consider membership.

**Second Officer (Chad):** I'm going to go into a bit more depth on what's happening regarding the Pagan Renaissance/Medieval Times Fair up in Idyllwild. So the concept is out there and we've already decided that we want it to be as community oriented as possible for both children, families, and everyone of like mind is included. We decided to operate the tentative group of us by vote so it is not going to operate by consensus. We are currently looking at several locations (The Boy Scout Camp, The Art College, and other possible campgrounds). One group is working with the Viking Pagans on the other side of the mountains.

I'm also reaching out to the different store owners and shops in the area and surrounding areas to see if they are interested and also to help promote this event. The next meeting for this event is going to be on next Sunday with the same group of people as we move forward with its planning. We are currently looking to put it all together for next Summer around July or August of 2019. It was also suggested to reach-out to the Buddhist group in Mountain Center.

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Officers report, Theresa also asked if there has been any further progress on setting up fundraisers at the Sizzler in Banning for TLC or any other restaurants that offer that sort of program. Chad said that he has reached-out to Sizzler a few times and has received no response yet so he is going to physically stop by there next week and talk to the manager and that he will still follow up on that as soon as possible.

National membership and local council membership transitions were discussed in greater detail along with suggested changes to increase the membership of the Covenant of The Goddess.

It was also suggested by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Officer that next year's Pagan Renaissance Fair also be a fundraiser for the council and asked, "Are we as TLC interested in having a booth there or some type of outreach program?" The issue will be discussed in further detail at a later time so it is currently tabled. However the planning of the event will continue to move forward by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Officer.

**Purse Warden (Jack):** Not present and no report was given.

**PIO (Val):** No report. However it was mentioned that there was recently a lovely concert given by Wendy Rule up in Idyllwild. Following the PIO's report Theresa asked, "Have we gotten access to the TLC Facebook page and the TLC website?" In response to her question, the PIO stated that he needs to physically go meet with the National Board Liaison as soon as possible, but that I have also received an email that says, "I have been added as an Administrator."

**Membership Officer (Theresa):** I've been advised by the National Membership Officer that Temple of the Sapphire Sky will not renew this year and has lapsed as of Ostara with a drop dead date of April 1st. According to the National Membership Officer, Lugh expressed intention to transition to a Solitary, I'm not clear on whether this will be a local council solitary or a National solitary. We are now a local council of 3 member covens. Additionally, the National Membership Officer has notified that Ain Qoff Nunn will transition into a Solitary membership for Scott Rhodes, there has been a first publication of that transition in the newsletter for Ostara. If anyone has an objection to that National membership as a Solitary you need to send written communication immediately to the National Board.

Locally on other membership news, the Ecclesian Fellowship is past due with a renewal date of Imbolc. Knowing the business of some of the leadership of Ecclesia, we will employ informal and happy patience with a request for a photo copy or a digital copy of the renewal application.

**Recorder (Val):** The minutes for the March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 TLC meeting were posted over the TLC website; they have been passed out and are awaiting approval by the council before being sent off to National to see if any changes need to be made. Some small changes were suggested and the minutes were accepted, and will be sent off to National at a later date after the changes have been made.

**Membership Applications (Theresa):** Membership applications are accepted by the local council membership officer. To join the Covenant of the Goddess requires 2 letters of recommendation, and also requires that the coven (applying for application) have 3 people admitted to study for clergy. One of whom who is able to carry on the tradition as Elder High Priest, or Priestess.

In addition to the membership officers report, I have credential applications if you are hoping to receive your first ministerial credentials. I encourage everyone to take clergy credentials from Covenant of the Goddess. It entitles you to be able to make sick calls, to visit people in prisons or other incarceration settings, and there is an Ecclesiastical endorsing agency for Chaplains who may call on



sick veterans at Veterans Administration Hospitals, and you can receive information about that by reviewing the Chaplaincy section of the National Veterans Administration Website.

**Old Business (Theresa):** The TLC calendar has again been tabled to the next meeting (proposed by Val). The next thing to be discussed is the 2018 budget by making some other changes to last month's minutes. The next thing on the list is Annual donations, the Purse Warden is absent so that also was tabled till next meeting (proposed by Chad).

We heard a report on Pagan Renaissance Fair and that no longer involves us at this moment until we receive notice that they are inviting us to apply to raise funds so until we hear back from them the issue is ongoing and will be tabled to next month's meeting. Chad also mentioned that additionally to his report we (TLC) are invited for the discovery phase of the event and everybody is included. Therefore, this issue has been tabled to next month's meeting (proposed by Lari).

Fundraising, we have heard the 2<sup>nd</sup> Officers report on this and this also was tabled until next month's meeting (proposed by Chad). Tabled with the observation that we have gone through 1/3 of the year thus far.

Outreach classes and bookstores have been tabled till next month's meeting and Val will email Chad a copy of the TLC meeting Flier so Chad can also post it.

Outreach to Sandstone CUUPS at the Universalist Unitarian Church in Riverside. Val has received no reply as of yet through the contacts that he has been reaching out to via text, phone call, and email so I will call the church itself and see if the Sandstone CUUPS still exist, and if so have they changed their name? So it will be followed up on the next meeting.

Outreach to Pronghorn is still ongoing and times are changing so Theresa will contact them through Dan & Mary's group and see if anything new has happened regarding their rejoining COG.

**New Business:** Do we want to have a directory of phone numbers and addresses for the internal use of our own members on a voluntary basis to observe confidentiality levels? This has also been tabled till next month's meeting (proposed by Chad).

**Closing:** Was done by Theresa. Treasure Chest/Raffle: \$24. Next Meeting: May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018.



## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

There has been no activity on the WordPress blog since September and I resigned as Chair in January. However, the site is still tied to one of my personal email accounts and I receive spam every month. I would like to either shut it down, or transfer it to someone else's email account.

## BLAST FROM THE PAST

### THE CUNNING WIFE

From Vol 14 Issue 5

Midsummer 1989

By Ceridwen

This is the season when, in Scandinavian lands, they raise and dance around the *majstang* – "maja" (pronounced "maya") means "to shoot out new green growth." It may surprise those of us in warmer climes that the folk of Ultima Thule do their pole dancing so late, but do recall that the seasons change rather more slowly so far north.

The tree most used for the dancing is the stately birch, which grows straight and tall, and is reckoned the World Tree by Siberian people. Birch branches, too, decorate everything at Midsommar – house-fronts, churches, even automobiles – and are themselves decorated as are Yule trees at the opposite end of the year.

Let us, therefore, consider the birch, how she may bring us health and joy in this season.

To relieve headache, drink an infusion of leaves of the black, or sweet birch (*Betula lenia*). One may also gargle with such an infusion to sweeten the breath. A hot poultice of the leaves, bark, and catkins may be applied externally to soothe the pain of rheumatism, as well as to treat skin irritations and minor wounds.

Birch may also be enjoyed in a refreshing drink, birch beer. To make it, place four dry quarts of the finely-cut twigs or inner bark into a five-gallon pot, with four gallons of water or birch sap. Bring all to a boil, stir in one gallon of honey, and let the mixture cool away from the heat. When it is cool, transfer it to another crock, straining out the bark and twigs. Spread yeast (if using envelopes thereof, soften one first in just enough water to moisten) on a piece of toast, and float the toast on the liquid. Cover the crock and let it ferment undisturbed for about one week, until the sediment begins to settle. Bottle the beer, and keep it in a cool, dry place. It may keep as long as a year, if it is not drunk first!





Along similar lines, the Cunning Wife is delighted to present this traditional herbal recipe, from a correspondent in Wales, where it has been traditional in her family: *diod dail*, or leaf-ade. Take one dozen nettle tops, one ounce of dandelion leaves, and one ounce of dried root ginger (tied in a muslin bag), and boil all together with one gallon of water for one half hour or so. Put one pound of brown sugar in another crock, and strain the herb liquid into the crock, stirring well. When the liquid is lukewarm, dissolve ½ oz dried yeast (two envelopes) in a cup of the liquid, then add it back to the crock. Let stand overnight, then bottle -- corking loosely! -- the following day. It is ready to drink in two or three days. It does not keep long, even given the chance.

Dioch yn fawr!

## TRANSCENDENCE PRAYER

By Moonwater

By love and light,  
By Old Ones' might!  
I ask for Transcendence of my (name of difficulty)  
in Your Name.  
May You take it and make it tame.  
That You turn it into love and light,  
So I will be all right!  
Let there be a shift in me, from darkness into light.  
Let transcendence lift me and take flight.  
By all the powers of the Sun, Moon and in Old Ones'  
Name,  
Keep me safe and keep me sane.  
Keep me above the dark waters that I tread within  
my mind.  
Let me leave my heartache and sorrow behind.  
Create growth for me and my life with no end.  
Through every hill and bend.  
Pain and fear from (name of difficulty) abate,  
So I have only a good fate.  
This (name of difficulty) does not define me!  
It does not hinder or take me!  
The love of the Lord and Lady ever fills me,  
As I so will, So Mote It Be!

## TRANSFORMING THE CULTURAL APPROPRIATION DEBATE: PAGAN AND MAGICKAL INSIGHTS [PART THE FIRST]

By Gus diZerega

[Presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> Conference on Current Pagan Studies, Claremont, CA, January 28, 2018]

The issue of whether or not one engages in 'cultural appropriation' has divided the Pagan community. Some people object to practices such as smudging with sage, seeking a power animal, and celebrating Day of the Dead, as somehow 'stealing' another culture's practices or other

values. I have been very explicit in my dislike of this idea, but in working out just why I dislike it, I have been led to a very different understanding of just what a culture is and what our place in it amounts to. Exploring this issue transformed my understanding of culture - and in a way deeply enriched with some common magickal and Pagan insights.

### I. The Charge of 'cultural appropriation'

I will argue the idea of 'cultural appropriation' is a confused one about culture, about appropriation, and even about what it is to be a human being. Most pushing this idea are well meaning and sensitive to how Americans have mistreated people from other cultures, but they are misdiagnosing the problem. They are like those who thought 'night air' caused malaria- there is just enough insight to hide the greater amount of error.

Cultural appropriation is said to consist of two basic traits. One adherent, Jarune Uwujaren defines cultural appropriation as "when somebody adopts aspects of a culture that's not their own."<sup>1</sup> In addition, a "power dynamic" exists because "members of a dominant culture take elements from a culture of people who have been systematically oppressed by that dominant group." Another advocate, Maisha Z. Johnson agrees, writing "Cultural appropriation is when somebody adopts aspects of a culture that's not their own." Cultural appropriation also "refers to a particular *power dynamic* in which members of a dominant culture take elements from a culture of people who have been systematically oppressed *by that dominant group*."<sup>2</sup> Cultural appropriation, then, is said to be a continuation of an exploitive and dominating relationship over a weaker culture. This sounds clear enough, but let me offer two counter examples.

The Romans conquered and sometimes enslaved Greeks, and in the process ultimately incorporated much of Greek philosophy and art into their own culture. For example, returning Roman armies would bring back stolen Greek statues, and soon these statues became very popular in Rome, and those who could not afford originals obtained copies. The Roman writer, Horace, said Rome's military dominance was ultimately second to Greece's influence: "Greece, the captive, took her

<sup>1</sup> Jarune Uwujaren, The Difference Between Cultural Exchange and Cultural Appropriation, *everyday feminism*, Sept. 30, 2013, <https://everydayfeminism.com/2013/09/cultural-exchangeand-cultural-appropriation/>

<sup>2</sup> Maisha Z. Johnson What's Wrong with Cultural Appropriation? These 9 Answers Reveal its Harm, *everyday feminism*, June 14, 2015. <https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/06/culturalappropriation-wrong/>



savage victor captive and brought the arts into rustic Latium."<sup>3</sup>

This is a textbook example of what Uwujaren and Johnson describe as "cultural appropriation." However, by adopting so much Greek culture, Rome *strengthened* Greek cultural influence in the Western world. It was not Rome's adopting elements of Greek culture within their own culture that can be reasonably criticized, it was their military conquest of Greece.

Christian Rome and the Catholic Church sought to co-opt what Pagan culture they could not destroy, 'appropriating' many Pagan sites and practices, and 'Christianizing' them. From Christ's birthday to Christmas trees, Pagan sacred practices were removed from their context and given new ones. Deities became saints. Temples became churches. Celebrations lost their original meaning, to be replaced by Christian ones.

In the process, some of Classical Paganism's greatest philosophical works survived the monotheistic holocaust that destroyed much of the older culture and knowledge. For example, the works of Plato and Aristotle were reinterpreted to fit Christian priorities. In the process, much of their work was also preserved. Now we can refer to their writings both for what leading Pagan thinkers of the time thought, and also for hints about taken-for-granted practices that Christian and secular philosophers ignore. My favorite example is Socrates going into trance with a Dryad in the *Phaedrus*, and *no one was surprised*. Afterwards Socrates and Phaedrus sat around criticizing her words.

Don Frew, who gave the keynote talk here this weekend, once wrote "*Plotinus used an interesting image to help convey this limitation of language [in describing the One]. He said that it was akin to the experience of being possessed by the gods. We can describe our experience of possession, but this does not describe the essential nature of the gods themselves. This image is interesting since it strongly suggests both that Plotinus had experienced Divine possession himself and that he expected his audience to have done so as well.*"<sup>4</sup>

Iamblichus, one of the late Classical world's most important philosophers, wrote at length of this phenomena, observing "There are many kinds of divine possession, and divine inspiration is

awakened in several ways."<sup>5</sup> The implications of spirit possession being so taken for granted among the Classical world's most important thinkers has rarely been described, but the practice was clearly preserved. Are we worse off as Pagans today because the Church and its political allies did not simply suppress all Pagan practices and symbols rather than appropriating them? I know of no Pagan who would say yes.

Given that the Christian world was to dominate the Pagan one, as it did, we Pagans are *glad* it appropriated so much *and wish it had appropriated more*. In doing so, it preserved seeds from the past we could study, water, nourish, and sometimes revive. We are glad the Celtic Bhríde was co-opted as St. Brigit, Christ's wet nurse. We would be even more pleased if the same kind of thing had happened to Cernunnos, perhaps making him a saint. Had the Christian West utterly destroyed Pagan culture we would have far less to work with.

These are not trivial examples and they suggest something is seriously amiss with framing human and cultural relations in terms of 'cultural appropriation.' The reality is far more interesting.

## II: Cultures as Networks

Uwujaren writes, ideally *cultures* should relate as equals when they take something from another, and contribute something to the other in return. Uwujaren is using an 'exchange model' between cultures, rather as economists use exchange models between people when analyzing market economies. But if we stop and think for a moment, we see that cultures do not make exchanges. People make exchanges, both within and between cultures, but the cultures themselves do not.

But a culture is quite different from a person.

A culture is a network of relationships of meaning and practice between its members, and to a significant degree these connections are the same, or nearly so, on all sides. Language is the obvious example: while each person uses language in an individual way, the language used is common to all. A common culture does not require all members to share the same features equally, but it requires enough to be shared, and with enough overlap, so it makes sense to call the resulting pattern of relationships a culture.

Cultures can overlap with other cultures (not all Pagans are Americans and not all Americans are Pagans) and a culture can also exist within

<sup>3</sup> *Greece and Rome*, Canadian Museum of History, <http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmhc/exhibitions/civil/greece/gr3010e.shtml>

<sup>4</sup> Don Frew presentation on Neoplatonism at PantheaCon 2010

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul, The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press 1995). 89.



another culture. Cultures can have subcultures within them, where members not only share much in common with the larger culture, they also share a smaller set of common practices and beliefs with one another that identify them in one another's eyes as common members. For example, perhaps all present at this gathering are part of American culture. At the same time we are part of the Pagan subculture, sharing important things in common with one another that we do not share with American culture as a whole, such as conceiving our religious practices as polytheistic.

What counts as a subculture depends on what counts as a culture. We Pagans are a subculture of American culture, but from a more inclusive perspective, American culture is a subculture of Western culture. Yet boundaries defining cultures are even more complex than this. A culture is defined by the networks of common identity shared among its members, but what counts as a common identity is contextual. Among Americans, my meeting another Pagan identifies a member of a common subculture. But were I traveling in Taiwan I might react similarly to encountering another American, be they Pagan or not.

But not always. For example, my NeoPagan subculture in some ways shares more in common with non-Western Pagan cultures than with mainstream American and European cultures, while in other ways shares more in common with mainstream American and European cultures than with any non-western culture. Years ago I invited a Naxi priest to a healing circle I conducted. He was from a tribal region in SW China. Afterwards he excitedly told his translator "There is shamanism in America!" He spoke no English and the form of the circle was different from what little I know of Naxi culture, but at the level of working with healing energy we shared more in common than I did with most Americans or he did with most Chinese.

Even if they share the same cultural commonalities, individual members of a culture often weigh these commonalities differently. There are American Christians who put being American ahead of being Christian, and American Christians who put being Christian ahead of being American, and yet all would call themselves both Americans and Christians. The same is equally true for we American Pagans.

While these networks of relationships of identity vary importantly from individual to individual, as a larger cultural pattern within which many participate, they are remarkably constant over time. Since its founding, our society has gone from a mostly rural place where no one could travel or communicate faster than a horse to an overwhelmingly urban technological one where each of us carries a device enabling us to talk

instantaneously with someone on the other side of the planet. The status of women has changed dramatically and the slavery so taken for granted no longer exists. Many of us look to nature for peace and healing rather than as a store of resources waiting to be exploited. Much is different.

However, when we read Alexis deTocqueville's *Democracy in America*, especially for Euro-Americans, many of us recognize people more like ourselves than when we read of encounters with Native Americans of the time or Mainland Chinese today. This is true even though no one then living has been alive for well over a century, and many of our ancestors had not even emigrated here back then. Some connecting threads unite a culture across many years, even centuries, despite the fact no one acted with an eye to how things might be in nearly 200 years and many contemporary members have no biological connection with that society. In short, a culture's identity is in some important ways distinct from the identity of its members. They are not individuals, they are part of the context in which individuals live.

### III. Cultures as Ecosystems

Our cultures provide us most of the concepts we use, as well as most of the ways of seeing how these concepts relate with one another. Had Albert Einstein been born and raised on the Navajo Reservation, he would never have won a single Nobel Prize. Had a traditional Navajo hand trembler been born in Germany at the time Einstein was, he would never have been a hand trembler. In this sense cultures support and shape our mental environment in ways like the physical and biological world supports and shapes our bodily environment. Absent either culture or physical nature, we would not exist. The richness and character of our cultural environment plays an important role in enabling and enriching our own identity and creativity. *A culture is an ideational ecosystem as nature is a biological ecosystem.* One exists at the level of biological reproduction, innovation, and adaptation, the other at the level of mental reproduction, innovation, and adaptation.

Cultures and ecosystems are networks. All the components of a biological ecosystem are engaged in a complex process of mutual adaptation, sometimes competitively and sometimes cooperatively. The strengths of these patterns varies from organism to organism and from context to context. The result of these connections generates a discernible pattern even though no one planned it that way and every element in it is changing, like a culture.

As with a culture, a biological ecosystem's identifying pattern emerges from the relationships among its parts, and while the parts are always changing, the pattern persists. A California oak



savanna remains an oak savanna even if every plant and animal living there at one time has passed away, to be replaced by others. Aspen on the Eastern side of the Cascades and Douglas fir in the Northwestern rain forests exist within different ecosystems than do aspen and Douglas fir in the Colorado Rockies.

The only complete ecosystem we know of is earth. But within it are rain forest ecosystems, some of which are tropical and some temperate, deserts, some of which are high, some low, some consistently hot and some consistently cold. These are but a few of many different ecosystems, defined as consistent patterns of relationships across generations and engaging in mutual adjustment. These ecosystems interpenetrate, yet depending on the questions we ask, can be considered as distinct from one another. Different questions can illuminate ecosystemic connections once regarded as impossible. Who would have imagined that dust from the Sahara plays an important role in maintaining the fertility of the Amazonian rainforest? But it does. Saharan dust supplies phosphorous, an important nutrient carried by the wind across the Atlantic to replenish what has been leached from the soil by rainfall and carried to the ocean rivers.<sup>6</sup> If the Sahara becomes wetter, the dust will diminish, and the Amazonian ecosystem will likely become more impoverished. Ecosystems overlap and interweave. The ecosystem we focus on is defined by our interests and other than the earth itself, has no truly independent existence. Again, like cultures.

Some non-native species fit easily into established ecosystems, others are very disruptive. In time, the ecosystem's patterns adapt to include newcomers, transform them, extirpate them, or perhaps change into a different ecosystem. This latter happened on some Aleutian islands when trappers introduced foxes who ate the ground nesting birds, which then ceased fertilizing the soils that then became increasingly impoverished. Rich grasslands became scrubby brush.

Cultures are no more without stresses and tensions than are biological ecosystems, and the bigger the cultural unit we are describing the more this is the case. While in some contexts it makes sense to talk of Native American cultures, in part because they all share common histories of subjugation and exploitation by European invaders, these cultures are often more distinct than Italians are from Danes, as a drive through the Navajo Reservation to the Hopi Reservation within it demonstrates. Many have long histories of mutual

animosities. At one time, conflict between the Lakota and Blackfeet was so intense many outside observers thought the smaller Crow would be annihilated.<sup>7</sup> Conflicts between Navajos and pueblo peoples pre-exist European contact, as did conflict between pueblo peoples.

Internal conflicts can take place within tribes, as well. Traditional Native American differ from those who have adapted Christianity to their needs, and sometimes they do not get along. For another example, members of the Native American Church who use peyote as a sacrament, differ from those engaged in Sun Dances. And within these groups there will be further divisions, sometimes because there is no way to determine objectively which interpretation is correct, as with Christians, and sometimes because differentiation is accepted as normal. In his history of the Crow Indians, Rodney Frey writes

*Because the Sun Dance religion recognizes, and even encourages, individual interpretation and realization within the spiritual, no dissonance generally arises when individuals hold contrasting understandings of the nature of the cosmos . . . the need for a consensus on cosmology is subordinate to the function of the religion as a means to the spiritual.<sup>8</sup>*

So far as I know, what Frey writes applies to most traditional Native American spiritual practices. Yet even within a tribe's traditional community, some believe it is fine to teach Whites, while others disagree. A Crow Sun Dance Priest who was part of the former group once told me if I learned how to conduct sweat lodges, there would come a time when I would change what I had been taught. "And that is how you make it yours," he said. Others would presumably be less open to change.

As I write this, I am reminded of a comment a FB friend recently made: "I remember many years ago talking with a Lakota friend who made a joke about how people always come up to him and ask him what 'Indians' think about this subject or that subject. He'd tell them 'I don't know, I missed the last meeting where all us Indians get together and decide what we think about stuff.'" From this perspective, asking who 'speaks for' a culture is like asking who speaks for an ecosystem. *No one does*. Each speaks from a limited perspective embedded within a whole far greater than they.

<sup>6</sup> NASA Satellite Reveals How Much Saharan Dust Feeds Amazon's Plants, Feb. 22, 2015. <https://www.nasa.gov/content/goddard/nasa-satellite-reveals-how-much-saharan-dust-feedsamazon-s-plants>

<sup>7</sup> Rodney Frey, *The World of the Crow Indians: As Driftwood Lodges*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1989) 19-20.

<sup>8</sup> Op. cit., p. 67.



If cultures are ecosystems, they will have the equivalent of organisms shaping and being shaped by them. One of these equivalents is obvious: we, ourselves. We participate in both biological ecosystems and cultural ecosystems. But just as we are not alone in biological ecosystems, neither are we alone in cultural ecosystems.

*[To be continued in the next newsletter]*

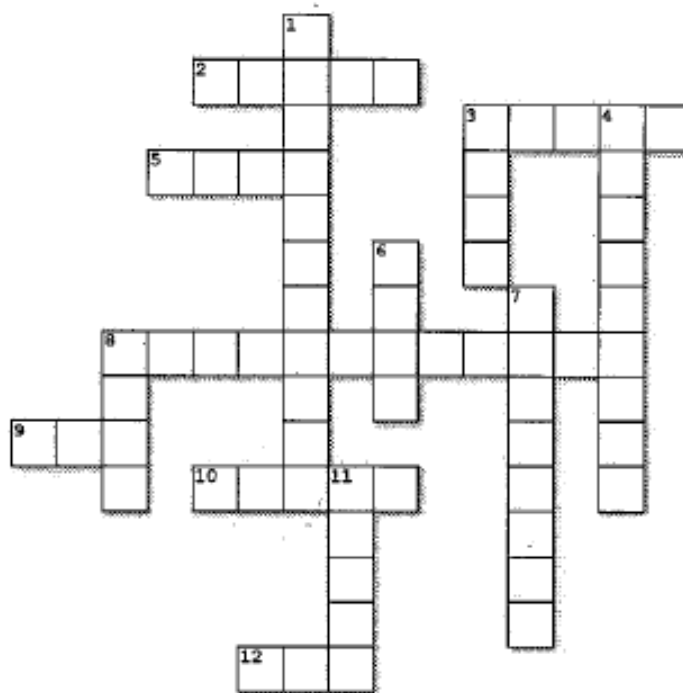
## WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND COG?

### LGBTQ PANEL: COME LEARN WITH US

Unsure about LGBTQ, what it means and who they are? Join us as we have a wonderful panel of people who share their thoughts and experiences as well as answer questions - even the ones you might be embarrassed to ask. Join us on Saturday, July 7 from 2 - 5 pm at Trinity Metropolitan Community Church in Grand Prairie, Texas!

## LADY BRIDGET'S MIDSUMMER CROSSWORD

*With apologies from the Publications Officer for a case of cranial flatulence in incorrectly attributing Bridget's Beltane Crossword to Kasha. At least I stayed within the same local council...*



Created with TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Puzzle Generator

### Across

- 2. a wet place often visited for rituals for this Sabbat
- 3. Goddess this holiday is named for in some traditions
- 5. an alcoholic drink made from honey
- 8. it's done at the end of the joining ceremony
- 9. He's at his apex at this time
- 10. this triumphs over darkness now
- 12. it's the longest of the year

### Down

- 1. a Wiccan joining of couples
- 3. Celtic God some honor at this Sabbat
- 4. a June tradition after May frolicking
- 6. Egyptian God associated with Light energy
- 7. the other name for this holiday, matches it's opposite
- 8. the month this holiday falls in
- 11. the King that wins the fight this time around

- 11. the King that wins the fight this time around (holly)
- 8. the month this holiday falls in (june)
- 7. the other name for this holiday, matches it's opposite (solstice)
- 6. Egyptian God associated with Light energy (aten)
- 4. a June tradition after May frolicking (honeymoon)
- 3. Celtic God some honor at this Sabbat (lugh)
- 1. a Wiccan joining of couples (handfasting)

### Down

- 2. a wet place often visited for rituals for this Sabbat (beach)
- 3. Goddess this holiday is named for in some traditions (litha)
- 5. an alcoholic drink made from honey (mead)
- 8. it's done at the end of the joining ceremony (jumpthebroom)
- 9. He's at his apex at this time (sun)
- 10. this triumphs over darkness now (light)
- 12. it's the longest of the year (day)

### Across