

# COVENANT OF THE GODDESS NEWSLETTER



BY JESSE FOX QUINN

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





## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE AT YULE

Samhain renewals are due on **December 21, 2018**. The Drop-dead date is **January 1, 2018** after which your membership will lapse and you will need to reapply. Renewal forms are emailed to the email address on file from your last renewal. If you have NOT received this form, please contact the National Membership Officer immediately (membership@cog.org).

**CALAFIA LOCAL COUNCIL:** NONE

**CHAMISA LOCAL COUNCIL:**

- ❖ Amergini

**EVERGLADES MOON LOCAL COUNCIL:**

- ❖ Marla K Roberson
- ❖ Spelcastor

**HILLS AND RIVERS LOCAL COUNCIL:**

- ❖ Coven of the Alpha Wolf

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA LOCAL COUNCIL:** NONE

**ORANGE COUNTY LOCAL COUNCIL:** NONE

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LOCAL COUNCIL:** NONE

**TEXAS LOCAL COUNCIL:**

- ❖ Amethyst Dragon
- ❖ Circle of the Unicorn
- ❖ Coven Firemoon

**TOUCHSTONE LOCAL COUNCIL:** NONE

**NATIONAL COVENS:**

- ❖ Circle of the Solitary
- ❖ Our Lady of the Prairie
- ❖ Our Lady of the Trinity

**NATIONAL SOLITARIES:**

- ❖ Lady Pythia
- ❖ Lord GoldenOak

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATES:** NONE



## REPORTS OF OFFICERS

### FIRST OFFICER

No report given.

### SECOND OFFICER

I met with the incoming Second Office to go over next year's planning and assist as necessary. We received the hotel information and contract. The contract requires a deposit. We forwarded the request to the NPW who informs us that debit card authorization request was completed and forwarded to the hotel on 9/22/2018.

### MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

**BYLAW CHANGES are here!** Due to the numerous Bylaw amendments passed at GC 2018 **relating to or affecting the Membership process**, there will be some changes to the Bylaws starting at Samhain. I am in the process of writing an explanatory email for each of the amendments that I was involved in (of those passed at GC 2018) to post on AIR, hopefully before this report sees print. I'll hit the highlights here:

A proposal to streamline and speedup APPLICATIONS resulted in the review period for potential comments/objections on new applications (and transfers) has been reduced from 90-days, to 45-days to speed up the process.

New applicant's Letters of Recommendation and Statements of Practice will be posted to the AIR elist in addition to being published in the newsletter, however the 45-day review period begins with the newsletter publication date.

Another proposal to speedup TRANSFERS moved all existing Bylaws relating to transfers into the existing *Article 2. Membership and Affiliation, Section F. Renewal of Membership, Subsection 3. Change of Membership Status.*

Objections to applications and transfers must be in writing and submitted the applicable Membership Officer.

The form previously known as "Proxy-Attendance" form (last year known as the Quorum Form) was renamed to the "Grand Council Quorum" form.

The Associate's program has ended and has been replaced with the Friends of CoG program. Lots more info to come.

**Renewal reminders** are now coming with a pre-filled out renewal form attached as a pdf due to some disappointing results with the first two rounds. All you do is print the attachment and make



notes on the form where information has changed, sign it, and send it back via electronic means. You can continue to pay your tithe online via PayPal, or by sending a check. The Samhain reminder mailing had a glitch, so I've re-sent those and am giving people until Yule to renew to make up for the delay.

Please feel free to give me feedback, or to request/suggest changes that you would like me to make. This is only one of the ways to renew, and CoG will continue to offer options so that people can still renew the 'old school' way, i.e., print a form, fill it out, snail mail to the PO Box with a check. Membership(at)cog.org is the email address to use to reach me, but mail from me will come from Thea(dot)Bristlebroom(at)gmail.com.

**Friends of CoG** (not included with the count of current members listed below). The Associate's Program was ended by the decision of Grand Council 2018 and has been replaced at Samhain with the Friends of CoG program, which is currently in development. The Associate applicants who were recently published in this newsletter were offered the option to join the Friends of CoG program, and I'm delighted that all three accepted and donated their potential refunds to CoG's Special Donations. They will be added to the AIR elist, to receive information. The NetCo has informed us that because they will not be added to the DD elist, if they reply to an AIR email, it will NOT be posted on DD, it will bounce. Please welcome Paul Abijah Raphu, Darrell Riffe, and Nerissa Sparkman, our first Friends of CoG! More details on this program will be forthcoming, if you'd like to join the Committee to flesh out the program, please drop me an email.

**New Member Applications** (not included with the count of current members listed below) **REMINDER – The review period is now 45 days instead of 90 day, that is one Sabbat cycle instead of two:**

Rev. Dee [Denise Dumars] (Orange County Local Council), if no objections will become effective at **Yule**.

Jae Osenbach (Northern California Local Council), if no objections will become effective at **Yule**. (Jae was approved by NCLC as a Trial Member, but shortly afterwards obtained a 2<sup>nd</sup> letter of recommendation which is included with her application in this newsletter.)

**Transfers:**

Temple of the Amethyst Moon has transferred from Touchstone Local Council to National effective 10/14/2018.

DragonStone Circle Coven (Northern California Local Council) has transferred from a Coven to a Solitary Membership (Marilee Bigelow) effective at Samhain, and her renewal date will be moved to renew at Mabon with the rest of NCLC.

**Cancelled/Lapsed**

Regrettably, Katana Keller has let her National AoS Membership lapse, however, she remains a member of CoG through Greenheart Grove.

**Members:**

**Provisional Members:** In the Lughnasadh newsletter I mentioned that I thought there would be a handful of Members who would become provisional for a year, but with some last second (literally!) assistance all Quorum forms were turned in and no members became provisional at GC 2018. (Thank you lovely lady, you know who you are!)

We currently have 127 members total, consisting of 69 Covens, and 58 Solitaries. 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.

I'm OVERJOYED to state there are no OVERDUE members at this time!

In Her Service,  
Thea Bristlebroom

**PURSEWARDEN**

**CURRENT ASSETS**

Chase Main Account: \$57,807.50. Note: The reduction in the Chase Account is from the following items: (1) Travel Advances Supporting Members to PWR, (2) Travel Reimbursements to Covenant Members who attended Grand Council (those approved for travel reimbursement beforehand but chose to receive funds after travel), and (3) A \$4 charge for Stop Payment Renewal Fee.

Wells Fargo Interfaith Checking: \$5,585.62 (Note: This account went inactive and I had to resurrect it).

PayPal Account: \$16,349.70

Synchrony: \$31,518.56 (from Statement ending 9/30/2018)

**CURRENT AND PENDING ISSUES & ACTIVITY**

I will be closing the books on October 31, 2018 for FY 2017-2018.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER**

Creating marketing plan and style book for 2018-2019.

Instagram is becoming popular. I'm eager to create new campaigns encouraging fans to share our information about CoG and its benefits. The account is set up to share on FB.

Lectured at Fullerton College on September 12<sup>th</sup>. Followed up on the current issue surrounding information presented during an Anthropology class



- Magic, Witchcraft and Witches. Fifteen students confirmed the disinformation presented to the Dean of the Anthropology School.

Attended a recent OCLC meeting and as the CoG Board Liaison talked with attendees about issues they are having with membership ministerial credentials and new membership welcome packets. Shared information with the NMO and the Board.

**PUBLICATIONS OFFICER**

Fall is finally in the air... and boy is it wreaking havoc with my sinuses! In true Southern California style we have hot days and chilly nights, and then cold days with major WIND!

I am still waiting on write-ups that several of you have promised me for our Beyond the Veil section of the website. Consider yourselves nudged.

Please send any articles, poetry or minutes to [newsletter@coq.org](mailto:newsletter@coq.org). If you have an obituary for Beyond the Veil, training material, or past MerryMeet rituals for the website (or anything else really) please send it to [coqweb@coq.org](mailto:coqweb@coq.org).

**CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER**

No report given.

**NATIONAL RECORDER**

A draft of the Grand Council minutes was circulated to the National Board a week ago. Thea sent me comments and corrections a few days later and most of them were incorporated into the latest draft, which was sent to National last night. I will update the Bylaws and Policy Manual this week and expect to send them to the newsletter for posting to the website on 10/31. I won't have time to update the historical policy manual by then, but that might be better tackled by the Bylaw Review Committee. I will make Word versions of all those documents available to the incoming Recorder and she will have to continue working on them if necessary. I will also update the Recorder's Manual. Finally, I will need to use the Recorder's budget allotment for postage to send her the handheld recorder.

**WELCOME TO COG**



Please welcome:

- ❖ Paul Abijah Raphu, Friends of CoG
- ❖ Darrell Riffe, Friends of CoG
- ❖ Nerissa Sparkman, Friends of CoG
- ❖ Marilee Bigelow, Northern California AoS

**NATIONAL BOARD MINUTES**

~ October 21, 2018

Call to Order: on October 21, 2018, Azrael Arynn will join the Board as National Second Officer and Faelind will join the Board as National Recorder. Canu (NFO), Manny (Outgoing NSO, NPW), Azrael (Incoming NSO), Thea (NMO), Stachia (NPO), Janine (NPIO), Amber (NCO), Morgana (Recorder). Absent: Faelind (Incoming Recorder)

**Officer Reports:**

**First Officer (Canu):** It has been a quiet time, but there has been a minor issue regarding membership issued from OCLC which the National Membership Officer will address. Several COG members plan to attend the Parliament of the World's Religions. Several matters from Grand Council need to be addressed. We have draft minutes so that's a good start. Canu thanked the Board for their service during the past year.

**Second Officer (Manny):** (See full report on pg. 4). Azrael reported that the debit card authorization for the hotel has gone through. She will contact the hotel again around November 4<sup>th</sup>. She needs to discuss separating Grand Council from MerryMeet next year and will work on the meal plans with the hotel. Canu explained that because we just had a proposal at Grand Council from the Grand Council Finance Committee that passed these issues are already being addressed

**Membership Officer (Thea):** First 2 people she reached out to about being Friends of COG have accepted. Thea will submit a report by Wednesday.

**Publications Officer (Stachia):** (Please see full report on pg. 4).

**Pursewarden (Manny):** (Please see full report on pg. 3).

**Public Information Officer (Janine):** (Please see full report on pg. 3).

**Correspondence Officer (Amber K):** Keeping up with mail. There has been a trickle of people interested in the Over the Moon and Hart and Crescent Awards. Information on the website needs to be updated. There is an adult version of the Youth Service Award but nothing was in the box. She may need to reorder those awards.

**Recorder (Morgana):** (Please see full report on pg. 4).

**Old Business:**

**Board Changeover:** Canu introduced the incoming officers at the opening of the meeting.

**Parliament of World's Religions:** Manny reported that he knows of 6 attendees, but there may be other COG members there. Thea said that Don Frew and Anna Korn will not attend so that



means only 4 known COG members will attend though there might be others.

**Conflict of Interest Forms:** work on these is ongoing.

**Purchase of D&O Insurance:** work on this is also ongoing.

**New Business:**

**New Recorder:** Faelind of Texas LC was unable to attend the meeting.

**OCLC Board Liaison Report:** Janine reported some membership issues and will discuss with Thea.

**GC 2018: Existing Committees and elists:** Social Justice Committee – Morgana Raventree passed leadership of this committee to Rowan of Chamisa as the new Chair.

National Archives Project – Thea reported that Zenah is ready to stop working on this NCLC is waiting for the return of the materials. Stachia said people from her local council will attend Pantheon and transport the materials to NCLC.

Vision Committee – this committee completed a Mission Statement and related matters so Canu may propose to retire this committee.

ByLaw Review Committee – [continuing]

Path to Membership Committee – [continuing]

Harm None Committee – this committee was suspended at Grand Council 2018 and will be deleted.

Grand Council Finance Committee – proposal made at Grand Council 2018 by this committee passed and Canu will propose the committee for deletion.

New Committees formed at Grand Council 2018 (Canu will set up new elists):

Committee to Explore Restructuring CoG (Board comprised of Local Councils & National Member Representatives): Canu Nodiad (Chair), Don Frew, Lady Bridget, Morgana RavenTree and Stachia Ravensdottir.

Committee to Explore Biennial Grand Councils and 2-year Officer Terms: Amber K (Chair), Lord Soec, and Dee Proctor.

Tech Team Committee: Andrea Kendall (Chair), Lisa Morgenstern, Janine Nelson Hoffman, Stachia Ravensdottir, Alpania, Blaine Proctor, Canu Nodiad, Marla and Thea Bristlebrook.

Friends of CoG Committee: Rowan Fairgrove, Manny Tejada, Lord Soec, Azrael Aryn K, Amber K, Rayna Templebee.

Thea Bristlebrook added the following agenda items:

1) Review and approve Bylaw Review Committee's proposal from GC titled 'Process Errors' (See page 51 of the DRAFT GC minutes.). This was a group of 6 proposals. The first one was tabled and proposals 2 through 6 passed. Thea explained there was a block of text approved at Grand Council 2010, there was a later proposal in 2013 amending this proposal, but some related text was inadvertently deleted and the Bylaw Review Committee proposed that it be restored. After considerable discussion, the Board TABLED Proposal 1 for now. The Board PASSED Proposals 2 through 6.

2) Thea asked what kind of "shiny" swag can we give to Friends of CoG. This was also TABLED until the next meeting.

3) Morgana mentioned to Thea an experience of one of her coven members had recently when he attempted to do a handfasting in Nevada under its reciprocity agreement with California. However, COG was not on the approved organization list (but Universal Life Church is). Thea suggested the Interfaith representative could update the webpage and other material on performing marriages/handfasting to include more current information. This issue was also TABLED until the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**TRANSITIONING FROM COVEN TO SOLITARY**

*NONE*

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS**



**JAE OSENBACH**

Northern California Local Council  
Lathrop, California

**STATEMENT OF PRACTICE**

First and foremost, I am a Wiccan. I follow the Gardnerian Wiccan tradition, and have dedicated myself to Hecate. I feel affinity towards the Greek pantheon, but am flexible enough in my beliefs to see the Goddess and God in all faiths. I also believe that deity is within this world (rather than outside of the human experience), and that they reside within and around all matter.

I was previously with the Crossroads Coven, a small coven in the Seattle area and would still call myself a member emeritus (we still communicate and "celebrate" together via Facebook and Skype). I've been initiated to a second-degree priestess within our group (along with the parent coven, Chalice Heart) and can produce my initiation



certification upon request. I celebrate all of the eight Wiccan sabbats, as well as the 13 monthly esbats. I have been following a Wiccan tradition for as long as I can remember (I was raised on a pagan commune in Helena, MT), but was officially accepted as a neophyte in 1999 and received my priestess initiation to first-degree 2001 and second-degree in 2015. I follow the Wiccan rede as recommendations for my behavior, and understand that what I put out in the world will come back to me times three (I treat it as somewhat like the golden rule).

I pledge to abide by the Covenant of the Goddess' ethics, charter, bylaws, and policies.

Warmest regards,  
Jae Osenbach

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:**

It is my great pleasure to recommend Jae Osenbach for membership as a solitary member of Covenant of the Goddess. I have known Jae for 6 years and was delighted to serve as her teacher and High Priestess. During this time, I watched her grow into an outstanding student who has always excelled in her academic, personal and magical pursuits.

As Jae's teacher I witnessed her extraordinary abilities to research and communicate with others. Her background in Psychology and understanding of human behaviour makes her an asset to my coven. She is above all things fair and compassionate. In the craft she is meticulous and mindful of the energies that she is working with. Jae has been beloved by all the members of our coven (Crossroads Coven, Bremerton, Washington) and we were all particularly saddened when she told us of her moving to California.

I highly recommend you to accept Jae as a solitary member of Covenant of the Goddess. I am confident that she will make an excellent addition to your community. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding Jae's character or past education. *(email withheld)*

Sydney Bridges, HPS Crossroads Coven

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:**

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Covenant,

This letter is to sponsor Jae Osenbach for solitary membership in CoG.

She and her family recently relocated from Seattle, where she practiced in a Gardnerian coven, to the San Joaquin Valley. She now seeks colleagues in Northern California, and especially she seeks to establish relationships within the Covenant. To that end, she has driven great distances to meet with me and to attend the last two Local Council meetings, where she as volunteered to record our meetings if and when her

membership is approved and formalized. She is also a student at Cherry Hill Seminary.

Jae is dedicated, energetic, and willing to contribute her energies in service to Coventina. I know she will be an asset to the Covenant, and I urge you to welcome her.

Blesséd Be,

M. Macha NightMare, Priestess & Witch  
NCLC Assembly of Solitaries  
National Interfaith Representative



**DENISE DUMARS**

Orange County AoS  
Manhattan Beach, California

**STATEMENT OF PRACTICE**

Dear Covenant of the Goddess Orange County:

Here is my statement of practice: I was initiated into feminist Wicca when I was in my 20's, nearly 40 years ago. I uphold the Wiccan Rede and honor the Goddess and the God.

My affiliations are as follows: I am the Hierophant of the Lyceum of Auset Hauhet, a lyceum and ritual group which is part of the Fellowship of Isis. My first group, the Iseum of Isis Paedusis, was initiated after a year and a day in 2001. I became ordained by the Fellowship of Isis later that year, by Karen Tate. In 2017 we were "upgraded" to a Lyceum and I was ordained a Hierophant by Linda Iles.

In addition to practicing with the Lyceum I am also a member of the Goddess Temple of Orange County, where I act as a priestess and wedding officiant. I am a member of Pacific Unitarian Church, where we have held Wiccan seasonal holidays and I have given sermons as guest minister.

My other initiations are as follows:

- Initiate of Demeter Cthonios, Temple of Demeter
- First Communion, Temple of Mary Magdalene
- Member, The Interfaith Fellowship of the Goddess
- Santos Lavados, layperson initiation to Santeria, Mexico City, Mexico
- Member, Covenant of Universalist Unitarian Pagans
- Member, Tijuana Pagans
- Visiting clergy. La Source Ancien Ounfo, New Orleans, LA
- Member and Author's Representative, Society for Ritual Arts
- Member, Church of Alternative Medicine

I am honored to be considered for membership in your organization and will uphold the ideals and rules of your organization.



Em hotep, em Ma'at,

Rt Rev. Dee, aka Hierophant Dyana Aset,  
aka Denise Dumars, M.A.

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:**

Dear CoG Membership;

This letter is a recommendation for membership for Denise Dumars. She wishes to join as a solitary practitioner. I have known Denise as a Wiccan High Priestess for many years and have participated with her at many events down throughout the past fifteen years or so. She is an author, teacher and member of Temple of Isis. She will make a wonderful addition to Covenant of the Goddess.

Blessed Be!

May all be well!

Camille Lockyer, Second Officer OCLC

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:**

Dear Members of CoG

I have circled with Denise Dumars for over 7 years and have experienced her wonderful teaching, wisdom and workshops on New Orleans magic as well as Egyptian paganism. She honors the God and the Goddess and honors the Wiccan Creed.

Denise Dumars would be an asset to the members as she is to her community.

Blessed Be

Priestess Mata

**LOCAL COUNCILS**



**CALAFIA**

~ No report

Last published minutes in the Beltane 2018 edition.



**CHAMISA**

~ No Report

Last published minutes in the Mabon 2018 edition.



**EVERGLADES MOON**

~ No Report

Last published minutes in the Mabon 2018 edition.

**HILLS AND RIVERS**



~ July 27, 2018

**Members Attending:** Faunina del Bosco (Circle of Diana), Jamie Dana, James Fisher, Cheryl Fisher, and Jayson (Grove of the Ancient River), Lisa Roling Young, and Mary Young (AoS), Lady Lilith, Lori, Tammy, Shawnee, Gina, Sally, Mike, Shannon, and Allison (Coven of the Wolfa), Thorn Nightwind and Will (Coven of the Wolfa & Coven of the Alpha Wolf), Casey Giovinco, William, David, and Stewart (Coven of the Alpha Wolf).

**PROXIES:** Stacey S. (Moonfire Coven), Jodi A. (AoS), Lauren T. (Coven of the Wooded Vale), Lady Annabelle (Grove of Gaia), Lady Magda (Goddess Grove)

**GUESTS:** Morgana Sythove (visiting speaker Pagan Federation International).

Meeting began 6pm

**FO Faunina Del Bosco - Presentation of Annual Report:** Between the work of individual covens and the local council's group projects, Hills and Rivers continues to be a vibrant presence in the region. We continue to grow. Since our last annual report, we have been blessed with the addition of the Coven of the Alpha Wolf in Carlisle, PA, who are active in their community as they establish their new tradition, Gala Witchcraft. We are eager to see what new and exciting energy they will bring to our local council.

Our members are finding new ways to reach out to Pagans and Witches in the area and raise funds to support HRLC's continued growth. Over the past few years we have grown rapidly, adding covens from across Pennsylvania, for a total of eight covens and three solitary witches. Although this year our expansion has slowed a bit, I like to think of it as merely a slow period to allow us set good, healthy roots to support us as we grow and mature.

Part of this maturation process is assessing the present state of our local pagan community and seeing where we can best contribute, to listen to the call of the Lord and Lady. In the urban regions in the western and eastern ends of the state, there are numerous well-established Pagan events throughout the year. While members are actively supporting these established community projects, we are not seeing adding events in these already well-served areas as our calling. Instead, we have begun to reach out to areas in the rural heart of the region that have little opportunity to participate in public ritual or other social events with other Pagans and Witches.

This summer, we reached out to Raven Moon's Oracle, a metaphysical shop in DuBois, PA to hold a public full moon ritual and meet and



greet. Seeing the excitement of the community for the opportunity to share sacred space together was so inspiring. It also reminded me of how lucky we are in urban areas to have so many events from which to choose. There is an underground Pagan community in the DuBois area, but with so few ways to connect, many witches feel isolated. This rural community was so enthusiastic that it took less than a week for all the spots to be filled and others put on a waiting list. The shop owner decided to use our event as a kickoff to hosting her own new and full moon rituals at the store. We plan to reach out to similar venues and hold public rituals to not only spread the word about Hills and Rivers and Covenant of the Goddess, but to help Pagans and Witches network within their community. Hopefully after they make these connections, build relationships, and possibly hold their own circles and build community.

With Jamie serving as chaplain in the PA Correctional System, we now have contact with another population in need of spiritual support and resources. Hills and Rivers purchased sturdy journals to serve as a Book of Shadows for inmates, as they explore their spiritual path with the guidance of Chaplain Jamie Dana.

While venturing out into new territory, HRLC cannot forget our established spiritual connections and Pagan groups in our home areas. We have HRLC members working on organizational committees at various Pagan Pride Day events in our region. Hills and Rivers had an information table at the Central New York Pagan Pride Day and at Pittsburgh Pagan Pride Day in the Fall of 2017. We distributed events brochures and chatted with attendees. In the Spring, we had an information table at Grove of Gaia Fest in May 2018, a Beltane fest hosted by Lady Annabelle of Grove of Gaia. It was a lovely event, with maypole dances, vendors, readers, and workshops. We handed out business cards and brochures, and sold HRLC logo buttons. We are indebted to Lady Annabelle for her generosity and continued support. She has hosted numerous raffles and classes, to benefit Hills and Rivers throughout the years. This year's very successful raffle gave us more than \$500. Hills and Rivers was also represented at the Lehigh Valley Pagan Pride Day in June by Lauren of Coven of the Wooded Vale, who works on the organizational committee, and Jamie Dana and his Coven of the Ancient River. We plan to have representatives attend Cleveland Pagan Pride Day in August and in Pittsburgh in October.

Over the years, we have tried to make our Annual Meeting part of a larger Public Pagan event. This is a way to bring all of the HRLC family together to celebrate in circle and reach out to the larger Pagan community. Each year, the event is a little larger and has a more festival-like structure. Last year in Pittsburgh, we held a Lughnassadh

event with an open ritual, picnic pot luck lunch, and various games of skill. There were around fifty people attending. We held a bake sale and sold other items like corn dollies to cover the cost of the pavilion rental.

At this year's Annual Meeting in York, PA (July 27-29) we will host an open Lammas ritual and mini-festival with vendors, readers, healers, workshops, speakers, and a children's area. We have expanded the event further by adding a member-only social to the weekend to help us relax after our board meeting and prepare for the festival on Saturday. The public Lammas ritual will include elements from the various traditions represented within Hills and Rivers. After the festivities are over, we will again meet Sunday for breakfast before returning home. This lovely weekend would not be possible without the help of Willow Moon, Unole Raven, and the members of the Coven of the Wolfa. Their generosity, hard work, and beautiful spirit are so greatly appreciated. We are so blessed to have them as part of our spiritual family.

#### **Outreach/Fundraising Efforts of HRLC**

**Members:** Circle of Diana - Continues to hold Esbats and sabbat rites at their covenstead near Monroeville, PA. They also hold numerous public rites throughout the year. Early last December, Circle of Diana held a public rite honoring the Roman fertility deities Bona Dea (Fauna) and Faunus. In March there was another public ritual honoring the Roman deities Minerva and Mars for the Quinquatrus festival. There will be another public rite in mid- August for Nemoralia to honor their patron deity, the Roman goddess Diana. They are also planning online classes this fall to help seekers who do not have teaching covens in their area. Two priestesses will be initiated to their second degree, with another applying for her ministerial credentials.

Coven of the Wolfa - Beyond weekly meetings, healing circles, sabbats and esbats, they are currently working at planning Hills and Rivers Annual Meeting and York Pagan Pride Day. They have held a Palmistry class, a study of Theosophy and our spiritual ancestors Blavatsky, Olcott, Besant, Valiente, Leek & Fortune. They are also working on sharpening their psychic abilities. Their HPS, Willow Moon, is working on a piece to be submitted to "The Wiccan" on her mentor who recently passed away. She recently sworn her oath to NWC and updated her clergy status there. She started an annual fundraiser 7 years ago for the PA Breast Cancer Coalition called "Jeeps & Jam's 4 Jug's" which is a show and shine and Jeep Show. She attended PA Herb & Garden Festival as a vendor and distributed literature there for CoG.

Coven of the Alpha Wolf - 2018 has been a busy year for Gala Witchcraft as a tradition. Casey Giovinco, the Chief Elder of Gala Witchcraft



published a book, "Garbed in Green," in January. Since that time, the tradition has doubled, and they are getting ready to host their annual Coven Gathering in October.

Goddess Grove - Goddess Grove performed the opening ritual at Pittsburgh Pagan Pride Day 2017. They offered the Philosophy & Magick of Wicca class, helping many new students learn about the beautiful path of Wicca. HPS Lady Magda served as Membership Officer for Hills and Rivers and has done a fine job managing the inquiries and applications.

Grove of Gaia - continues to hold open ritual events. There was a Yule ritual and their 12th annual Grove of Gaia Fest at Beltane 2018. Their raffle was held to benefit HRLC, with over 25 vendors donating items. Over \$500 was raised at this wonderful Spring time event.

Grove of Gaia continues its teaching tradition with this year's Philosophy and Magick of Wicca class.

Grove of the Ancient River - continues to host open Sabbat rituals that are well attended and is proud of our thriving outer court. They hosted their annual History and Philosophy of Wicca course. Their members continue to offer mentorships to people beginning to explore the path of Wicca. Their numbers had grown so large that they outgrew their meeting space, so the coven hived, sending a new group out to teach and do the work of the Lord and Lady. Jamie, HP of the coven, began 2018 in his new role as a volunteer at a nearby State Correctional Facility, providing chaplain services for incarcerated Wiccans and Pagans. He has now been promoted to a paid chaplain post and is eager to do the work of the Goddess and God. As there is no record of any other Pagan chaplain serving in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, Jamie is unofficially the first in PA. Additionally, they have begun a co-ed secular youth scouting group, part of the Navigators USA organization, the Ancient River sponsored group is recognized as Chapter 212. We would like to thank Jamie Dana, our PIO, for keeping our Facebook page active by posting relevant articles and maintaining a fun and safe environment for members in our secret Friends of Hills and Rivers Facebook group.

Moonfire Coven – continues to celebrate the sabbats and moons over the past year. Some members volunteered at a few pagan events as done every year, as they manage the medical and security teams.

Coven of the Wooded Vale Coven of the Wooded Vale has continued to work with the local Pagan group LVNUP to organize their local Pagan Pride Day which was on June 23rd, 2018. They also provide regular sabbat rituals and bi-monthly classes at the UU Church in Bethlehem. They

represented COG and Hills and Rivers at Lehigh Valley Pagan Pride Day and promote CoG and Hills and Rivers through their shop. They have sold HRLC buttons at their shop. They have also provided donations to both LVNUP and Reading Witches and Pagans for their fundraising events. They provide information for people who are interested in different sects Paganism and help to direct them to a safe group to further their studies.

At the HRLC Annual Business Meeting in York, PA on July 27th, we will be electing new officers. I will be stepping down as First Officer to run for Pursewarden. Jamie Dana is running for First Officer and Lauren Testa is running for Membership Officer. I look forward to our new leadership and their fresh ideas about the future direction of Hills and Rivers and our implementation of the mission of CoG in our region.

Bright Blessings, Faunina Del Bosco First Officer, HRLC

**Membership Officer Report – Lady**

**Magda:** LMO did outreach at 3 events in Pittsburgh: GPPD, Grove of Gaia Fest, Pagans in the Park and 1 event in Dubois, PA. There are currently no active new membership applications.

Member Roster Assembly of Solitaries (3): Lady Aradia, Whitehall, Lehigh Valley, PA; Lady Emrys, Whitehall, Lehigh Valley, PA; Desert Rose, Pittsburgh, PA

Covens (8): Circle of Diana, Monroeville, PA; Coven of the Wooded Vale, Bethlehem, PA; Coven of the Wolfa, Columbia, PA; Goddess Grove, Pittsburgh, PA; Grove of Gaia, Pittsburgh, PA; Grove of the Ancient River, Ashley, PA; Moonfire Coven, New Hope, PA; Coven of the Alpha Wolf, Carlisle, PA

Associates: 0

**Pursewarden Report:** \$3,852.10 PNCBank checking account; \$106.36 PayPal account; \$3958.46 TOTAL in treasury as of 7/10/2018 (\$729.34 of total made in 2017-18)

**Public Information Officer:** In addition to in person outreach at various festivals, we maintain an open channel of communication via our various social media outlets.

We also began attempting to let news media sources know that we are available for reliable sources on stories concerning our Religion.

There was a knife attack in a suburb of Pittsburgh, where a man cut his girlfriend and claimed to have sold her soul to the devil and then claimed to be Wiccan.

PIO sent a letter to the news station pointed out the error in the report and explained Wiccan beliefs and practices and our rejection of violence. We sent contact info if they wanted to get



more information on Wicca, but we heard no response.

**Proposals:** Location for next year's Annual Meeting , Public Ritual and Meet & Greet Annual Meeting – New Hope, Pa – APPROVED

Approach metaphysical shops in rural areas to co-host public rituals – APPROVED

Keep one person as a permanent sub-user of the account to monitor things. Faunina set up account, has all the documents, and currently gets email notification of account activity. Thus, she would be the logical choice. - APPROVED

Search for PIO - APPROVED

Location for Annual Meeting 2019 – explore venues in New Hope, PA – APPROVED

Increase outreach to Rural Regions – APPROVED

Explore hosting “mini festivals” - (public rites in a local park with a few vendors and a pot luck picnic) in rural areas

Try to send a HRLC representative to New Mexico Grand Council with a proposal for hosting Grand Council 2020 or 2021. Will have to consider new report on Grand Council Hosting concerning in-person and virtual attendance and increased costs

Election of Officers to begin terms at Samhain for 2018-2019 Candidate statements:

**FO: Jamie Dana, Grove of the Ancient River:** I would like to be considered to take the next step in my service to Hills and Rivers in the office of First Officer.

I have had the privilege of serving as both second officer and as public information officer.

I have done my best to represent Hills and Rivers at festivals and have begun representing us as a chaplain in the Department of Corrections.

I hope to seek out new avenues of growth for HRLC to build upon the foundation laid down by my predecessors.

**MO: Lauren Testa, Coven of the Wooded Vale:** I have promoted HRLC and Cog at both our shop and our local community group LVNUP to generate interest for new members. I hope to expand our membership to individuals and local pagan groups as well as covens through additional exposure and promotion of HRLC and our mission.

**Pursewarden: Faunina Del Bosco, Circle of Diana:** I have had experience dealing with our bank regularly as I was the one to deal with both the bank and our Nat'l Pursewarden when we had to shut down our compromised account and open the new one. Since that time, I have maintained watch over the account, initiated the paperwork to get new signers on the account with each new

election, established sub-users for the account, and receive regular notifications of all transactions. I am also the person who set up the PayPal and Square accounts. I have been the main contact for these accounts for the past several years. I will continue this going forward. I have not yet, submitted financial reports, but have already contacted the National Pursewarden to learn.

PIO: None

Meeting ended at 7:00pm



**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA**

~ July 22, 2018

Notes and first draft by Felicity. Second draft including summaries of online reports by Deborah. Meeting called to order 2:10 PM

**Attendance:** Coven Trismegiston: Glenn, Anna. Dark Moon Circle: Kitty, Shirin. Owl Moon: Rowan (virtual). Dadouchos: Thea (virtual). Assembly of Solitaries: Deborah, Felicity, Joanne, Macha. Stardust Coven proxy to the Local Council.

Guests: Jae, Kismet, Rita

Minutes of May meeting approved.

**Reports Officers:**

**Pursewarden:** Starting balance at last meeting in 2018 was \$2152.51. Since then there has been one debit of \$1.56 check 1179 to Thea for printing costs at Pantheon. Current balance is \$2150.95.

Account allocations:

- General Fund: \$768.52
- Travel: \$509.98
- Interfaith: \$668.45
- Kiva: \$51.00
- NCLC Grace of the Goddess: \$153.00

Anna is working on donating the \$51 in the Kiva account directly to Kiva in the form of a check, since the bookkeeping associated with this account is time consuming for the Pursewarden.

**Membership:** Marilee is requesting to transfer from Dragonstone Circle Coven to our Assembly of Solitaries because Dragonstone has not renewed its membership in NCLC. Her request to transfer will be published in the Lughnasad Newsletter and become effective at Samhain if no objection is received. Her renewal date will be moved to Mabon with the rest of NCLC and no prorating of tithes will be necessary. All attendance/proxy forms for Grand Council have been turned in. Rita's membership in the AOS will become effective at Mabon, barring objections [none received]. Jae and Kismet, applicants to the AOS, introduced themselves. Several other applications and transitions are in the works.



**Interfaith: Felicity:** Diffusing Hatred Workshop by Will McGarvey, director of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, was well received. Thanks to Will and Felicity for organizing it and to Glenn for giving a meeting space at her store.

**Rowan Fairgrove** continues to represent NCLC on the Board of the Silicon Valley Interreligious Council (SIVIC) and on the Clergy Council and Beloved Community team of the Acting in Community Together (PACT). She lobbies in Sacramento with PICO CA and locally with PACT. She will lead an interfaith service at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Jose on July 29th.

**Other Reports:** Discussion on preparations for the RISE! Climate, Jobs and Justice rally and march on September 8.

Discussions about Path to Membership and Bylaws, two National Committees that NCLC members are involved with that will be presenting proposals at Grand Council.

**Old Business:**

**Replacement of PIO:** Felicity resigned at May meeting. Discussion of the changing nature of the job. Further discussion tabled until September meeting.

**Interfaith Organizations Dues Renewal.** NCLC is affiliated with interfaith councils in Marin County, Contra Costa County and Silicon Valley. Meeting approved a donation of \$50 apiece for the three councils, to be paid by the Pursewarden when asked for or due. Marin Interfaith Council has asked.

**Grand Council.** Deborah will write up NCLC annual report for Grand Council; Anna, Macha and Glenn will edit.

Various proposals discussed.

**New Business**

**Tree of Traditions Suite at PantheaCon:** We need to ask the groups which have sponsored the suite in the recent past (New Wiccan Church, Fellowship of the Spiral Path, NROOGD, South Bay Circles) whether they are interested in sponsoring in 2019.

Discussion of suite committee structure. Can the on site manager of the suite be rotated from day to day among the groups? There needs to be a point person for email.

**Mission Statement, Values Statement and Vision Statement for NCLC.** Revised versions of the statements were read and approved to be added to the NCLC website.

**Discussion of additional website content.** How many people are subscribed to North elist? Estimate 35 coven members, 8 AOS

members, two distance members of CoG who were formerly members of NCLC and requested to stay on the list.

**Upcoming Meetings:** September 29th at Glenn's (later changed to Deborah's)

November 11 at Deborah's (changed to Glenn's)

**Parliament of the World's Religions:** Don, Anna, Thea, Rowan and Felicity are attending. [Update: Don and Anna will not attend.] National money is available for travel assistance. If people arrive a day early, Catherine Starr will be leading a robed procession to a church with a labyrinth.

**Discussion of ways to attract to members to our LC and make CoG more visible.** Ideas include NCLC hosted sabbat, podcast series featuring local elders and experts on different topics.

September 8th Climate March and Rally. Will Pagans have a visible presence such as a walking sign?

Request that information regarding environmental stuff be sent to Macha for Marin Interfaith Climate and Felicity for Interfaith Climate Action Network —Contra Costa

Healing thoughts sent to an absent friend.

*~ September 29, 2018*

Home of Deborah Bender, San Anselmo. Quorum established. Meeting called to order 2:15 PM

**Present in person or virtually:** Glenn and Anna (Coven Trismegiston), Thea, Jim and Allyn (Daduchos Coven), Linnea (Owl Moon attending virtually), Deborah and Felicity (AoS).

**Guests:** Jae, Waxing Moon covens Valerie, Taffy, Adrian, Wynne and Liz.

Darkmoon Circle and Stardust Coven gave their proxies to the council.

**Reports:**

Deborah needs to add summaries of the reports to Felicity's draft minutes for the July meeting. She will post a revised draft to North soon. Consensus reached to do final approval of the July minutes on North after publication.

**Pursewarden:** Starting balance after Lammas 8/3/18 was \$2160.95. When the tithes are all in, 60% will be allocated to the General Fund, and 40% to the Interfaith Fund in accordance with past policy. At meeting time, all members other than Dark Moon Circle, Owl Moon and Macha have paid their local tithes. Current Balance is: \$2109.95

The Bank balance is \$1.56 more than that, accounted for by an uncashed July reimbursement check to an NCLC member.



#### Account Allocations:

- General Fund: \$770.52
- Travel: \$509.98
- Interfaith: \$668.45
- NCLC Grace of the Goddess: \$153

[Debit] \$51 (\$46 for lending funds + \$5 for Kiva operating expenses) transferred to the credit of Kiva's NCLC-COG account, part of the Pagan Giving Team via check #1180. This subaccount is now closed.

**Membership:** Renewals have been received from all members except Brigid. The Waxing Moon Coven is applying for membership. Five members were present to introduce themselves and answer questions. Valerie gave out written information about the coven.

San Francisco RISE Rally and March for the Climate, Jobs and Justice

Fellowship of the Spiral Path invited NCLC to share its booth, which was the only Pagan booth at Civic Center. The booth was colorful, good looking and stocked with literature. It attracted positive attention and visitors. There were two Pagan groups among the Interfaith marchers. Reclaiming had musicians and singers. Our contingent marched behind a beautiful Pagan banner designed by Felicity and made mainly by her, carried by a Green Man and a Green Woman. We also carried two American flags, the regular one and the thirteen star version. The event had an estimated 30,000 participants.

**Interfaith:** Rowan has been appointed as a National Interfaith Representative.

Felicity participated, planned and attended many events, led a Druid chant during the interfaith service before the RISE march, delivered a sermon at a Unitarian Universalist service, and made the Pagan marching banner.

Glenn says that the Pagan and Wiccan visibility and participation in the RISE event was a big step forward for interfaith cooperation.

Macha staffed the Marin Interfaith Climate Action table at a post Climate Summit event. She was invited to speak at the Global Wicca Summit organized by the Correlians, and mentioned CoG's interfaith work. She was at San Quentin today leading a Pagan religious service for inmates, as she does regularly.

#### **Old Business:**

Leadership Institute and Grand Council. General discussion by participants. Both events went well and a lot of constructive work was accomplished.

Lost or misplaced items: The table banner that Felicity made might be in Thea's garage. Rita says that she brought the check stamp to the July

meeting and gave it into the charge of someone; we have to figure out who that was.

Jae applied for membership in the Assembly of Solitaries at our July meeting. During the meeting, we thought that our Membership Officer had received all the paperwork except one letter of recommendation, with another expected to arrive shortly. On that basis, the meeting accepted Jae as a trial member of the AOS.

[update] After the meeting, the second letter turned up. The complete application has been sent to the Newsletter in time to meet the deadline for publication at Samhain. If no objection is received during the 45 day period after publication, conversion of Jae's membership from trial membership to an ordinary solitary membership will be taken up at the January business meeting.

#### **New Business**

##### **Officer Elections**

First Officer. Deborah Bender (first term)

Pursewarden. Linnea Dunn (first term)

Membership. Thea Bristlebroom (third term; variance approved by consensus)

Recorder. Jae (office will remain vacant until Jae becomes a member of NCLC)

Since there were no candidates for Public Information Officer, and various people are doing different tasks relating to public information, Deborah would like to create a Public Information Committee to coordinate the work. Opinions differ on whether this is a good idea.

Parliament of the World's Religions

Thea and Rowan will attend.

Pantheacon 2019 Tree of Trads Suite

Presidential Suite will probably be taken by another group. The suite we had this year is available at a similar price. NCLC, Spiral and New Wiccan Church are ready to sponsor with funds and volunteers. NROGD is willing to sponsor with funds. South Bay Circles is willing to offer some labor. We have enough sponsors to commit to hosting a suite and will request one. Discussion about who will chair the suite committee.

Request from journalist for help with a radio program on Wicca to be aired on German public radio.

Macha has already contacted him with an offer to be interviewed. Don, Anna and Glenn are willing to be interviewed. Valerie offered to share her article on talking points for interviews. The people who will be giving interviews to Mr. Peltner are experienced, but it would be good to put Valerie's advice on our website. He would like to record a ritual. This was discussed at length.



Various people objected to the recording of a live ritual for various reasons.

Future meetings

Sunday November 18 at Glenn's

Saturday January 12, location TBA

**Announcements**

Halloween Party October 20 at Deborah's place. Witch Kitsch Bazaar as a fundraiser for NCLC travel fund and Adocentyn Research Library.

Glenn is interested in donating two of her large cauldrons to a silent auction in the Tree of Trade suite.

Upcoming Public Rituals in the South Bay

Waxing Moon October 13, November 10

South Bay Circles Samhain November 3, Yule December 15

Requests were made to forward announcements of these rituals to North and NCLC's website and Facebook page. Felicity is the contact for website content and Greg is the contact for the Facebook page.

Meeting adjourned 5:26 PM.



**ORANGE COUNTY**

~ No report

Last published minutes in the Litha 2018 edition.



**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

~ September 16, 2018

The meeting was held at the home of Maureen and Barbara on September 16, 2018 and was called to order at 2:20 p.m.

**Covens Attending in Person:** Alani's Eyes (Maureen & Barbara), Moon Birch Grove (Emily & Laura), White Buffalo Clan (Leticia), Circle of the Dragon and the Phoenix (Monica & Tom)

**Covens Attending by Proxy:** Ghostwheel (via proxy holder Monica)

**Covens Not Attending:** Ashesh Hekat

We have quorum.

**OFFICERS REPORTS**

**First Officer (Maureen):** The annual report was submitted on time to COG National after review by SCLC COG membership.

**Membership/Correspondence (Tracy - not present):** No report

**PurseWarden (Monica):** No activity in the account. Signatories need to be updated.

**PIO (Barbara):** A proposal to issue a statement in support of the Ohlone tribe's efforts to protect what they believe to be a sacred burial site, the Shellmound, in Berkeley, CA, was tabled after further research indicated that there was significant ambiguity about where the actual shellmound was located.

The SoCal Local Council issued a statement in support of family reunification at the US southern border after review by the membership.

**Recorder (Didi - not present):** No report

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Grand Council:** Unfortunately, our representative to Grand Council was unable to attend the meeting and so we had no direct report. Several members have reviewed statements coming out of the council via the [air] list and the following topics were discussed:

There is an issue with privacy controls on the recently revamped COG website, requiring a redo.

The Path to Membership committee conceptually approved a "Friends of COG" status for people who want to support but don't meet or wish to pursue coven or solitary status

The objection period for new members was cut from 90 to 45 days

Next year's Grand Council will be in New Mexico

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Local Council Minutes:** Maureen recorded the minutes because the Recorder was not present (which is why they are a little thin).

It was proposed and approved that minutes of the local council meetings be submitted to the Board for review and approval before being sent to National

**Future Outreach Events:** Monica discovered a "witch-themed" restaurant, The Cauldron, in Buena Park and, after having visited it, suggested it might be a good place for future outreach events.

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

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

**Elections - 2018:** The following people were elected to the SoCal Local Council of COG for the upcoming term:

- First Officer - Maureen
- Purse Warden - Monica
- PIO - Barbara



- Membership – Tracy
- Recorder – Leticia

The incoming slate was approved by acclamation.

**Next Meeting:** We will hold our next official meeting on Sunday, January 20, 2019 at 2 p.m. at Barbara and Maureen's house.

This meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

it will impact other items in new business. First Officer added it to the end of the meeting's agenda.

**Officer Reports:**

**First Officer (Theresa):** I would like to thank all of you for this opportunity to serve the Local Council as 1st Officer. During the past 5 years, in which I have been blessed with membership in the Touchstone Local Council and in the Covenant as a whole

**Second Officer (Chad):** We will be holding our 2<sup>nd</sup> fundraiser "Bash for Cash" on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018 which will be on a Wednesday at the Sizzler in Banning. It's a fundraiser and a certain amount of the proceeds goes to the Touchstone Local Council to help it keep going financially. Everybody is more than welcome to come and it's a social gathering, I want to make that very clear. We go there to relax and enjoy everyone's company and have a good meal. Please come join us!

**PurseWarden (Jack):** There was no change since my last report. However, we did have \$17 in the raffle from our last meeting. Zenah also mentioned that we had a raffle of a painting at our last Sizzler fundraising event and is also in the bank account. But we haven't received our last Sizzler check yet.

**PIO (Val):** No report.

**Membership Officer (Theresa):** Circle of the Obsidian Oak will be effective and welcomed at Mabon of this year.

**Recorder (Val):** The minutes for the August meeting were discussed and approved and will be sent to National as soon as possible.

**Old Business:**

**TLC Calendar:** Sizzler Fundraiser is set for October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 (Wednesday).

**Fundraising:** Tabled

**Outreach Classes at Bookstores:** Information about TLC is being handed out at Lugh's classes in Palm Springs to encourage solitaries to come and attend our meetings. Also Theresa mentioned that on the Covenant of the Goddess website there is a Tri-Fold brochure that was recently corrected and updated by Stachia.

**Sign-in/Directory Information Form:** It's there and it's done. it's not a requirement to fill out the form but it's left up to the individual to provide any other pertinent information to be able to contact them and send them mail to a physical address if they so choose which includes a phone list, and a request for a physical address. This has been tabled till next meeting and will be revisited again.

**Yule Location & Date:** Will be held in Mentone on December 9 (Sunday) and the doors



**TEXAS LOCAL COUNCIL**

~ No report

Last published minutes in the Litha 2018 edition.



**TOUCHSTONE**

~ September 10, 2018

**In attendance:** Circle of the Emerald Forest (Joanne, Lugh), Circle of the Obsidian Oak (Chad, Lari), Ecclisian Fellowship (Jack, Val), Temple of the Amethyst Moon (Janeen, Theresa, Michel, Danica, Ryan), AoS (Zenah).

**Announcements:** (Temple of the Amethyst Moon): No major announcements but we have our 2 youngest dedicates here so that they can see how this whole process works and hopefully will become involved with the Touchstone Local Council; their names are Danica and Ryan.

Circle of the Obsidian Oak: We have an open Mabon Ritual coming up on September 22nd, in Palm Springs.

Community: Lugh reported Temple of the Sapphire Sky continues to teach and initiate in the desert cities. The Temple of the Sapphire Sky tradition, as was discussed earlier, is announcing that we are letting go of the Temple of the Amethyst Moon as part of our tradition so that they are able to do what they want in their tradition; but at this point it's necessary to make that separation. We are also doing initiations within the Minoan Brotherhood and the Akelarre. At this point my current students are not interested in participating in Covenant of the Goddess, however that may change next year.

Assembly of Solitaries: (Zenah) I'm headed off to the L.A. (Orange County) Pagan Pride Day event and its going to be on October 14<sup>th</sup> in Long Beach. Also, there is an open Mabon ritual in Vista, if anyone is interested please talk to me later. I put across the TLC list an item to add to the agenda, Thea's letter to the TLC list; it has not been included in the agenda and I would like it added as



will open at 5:00 pm and the ritual will start at 5:30 pm.

**Consensus Basic Training:** Will be sent out via email at a later date by Theresa.

**Raffle:** Provided by Jack & Lari. Congratulations to Michal, Danica, and Ryan for winning prizes.

**New Business:**

**Variance for Proxies:** Tabled till the next meeting.

**Variance for Membership:** Touchstone's membership variances have been passed out but this has been tabled till next meeting. They are due for publication in the Samhain newsletter.

**Circulate Inventory List for Yule:** Passed out and will also be sent out over the TLC email list.

**Touchstone Local Council Operating Procedures:** It was proposed that we make a book that will be updated by the recorder to keep track of changes we are making to how we do things in this council. After a bit of discussion, this has been tabled till next meeting.

**Exception to bylaws for Theresa to run for a 3<sup>rd</sup> Term as First Officer:** The council did not come to consensus on this exception.

**Officer Nominations:** This September meeting is volunteers and nominations. Next month's meeting will be elections.

- First Officer – Stachia
- Second Officer - Chad
- Pursewarden – Jack
- Membership Officer – Joanne was nominated but declined, Val volunteered.
- PIO –Chad
- Recorder – no volunteers

All the offices have been filled except for Recorder. Volunteers will continue to be accepted during the month and until elections at next meeting.

**Website/TLC Facebook Page Improvement:** Will be done by Zenah and Val. Some changes have already been made; others will be fixed with a little time. It was mentioned that some of the links are still broken and go to the wrong place. Jack made a recommendation that if something is wrong with our TLC Facebook or website then inform us on the TLC email list immediately that the issue can be fixed in a timely manner. Also, Michel volunteered to do a Site Survey. Zenah offered to fix the items brought up at this meeting before a site survey is done. A follow up will be done at the next meeting.

In addition, Theresa requested we add Chad to have Administrative access to the TLC Facebook and website so that he can update posts directly. A proposal was made by Val, as Chad is not an official

member till Mabon, that Chad be allowed to have Administrative access to the TLC Facebook and website now and when he becomes PIO.

**Review of Grand Council Proposals:** Was read by Jack. Zenah mentioned that next year, Grand Council will be held in New Mexico and most likely the Leadership will be held at Ardantane.

Letter of reference by the NMO to Touchstone: On August 29, 2018 the National Membership Officer had informed the local council there was an objection to the transferring membership of one of our members from a coven status to an Assembly of Solitaries status. This was the first time it was brought to the local council's attention and was discussed. It has been resolved by a) the objector would not come forward, b) the individual is now a member of another member coven, and c) the related national bylaws were updated at GC 2018.

**Closing:** Blessings for getting through the meeting by Val. Raffle: \$40. Next Raffle: Val. Next Invocation: Lugh. Next Meeting: Monday, October 1, 2018

**TRANSFORMING THE CULTURAL APPROPRIATION DEBATE [PART THE FINAL]**

By Gus diZerega

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

**VIII. The trance of belief**

This insight opens up one last point I wish to develop here.

Trance is often defined as focus or immersion in a dissociated plane where at least some normal cognitive functions, such as reason or volition, are temporarily disabled. It is usually thought of as a negative state, but that is *not* my meaning. For example, I was in a trance when I was so deeply immersed in creating art that the outside world ceases to matter. If a friend approaches me while I am in this state, it takes me a little while to return to my day to day way of being. Some normal cognitive function had been temporarily disabled- but in doing so other states were made available to me.

Whatever the trance, it separates us for a time from our immersion in normal consensus reality. In a hypnotic trance we are subject to the idea implanted in us by the hypnotist. *That idea shapes our perceptions to fit its message.* The problem is that we tend to identify with ideas all the time. When we do so we begin to perform a kind of magickal working, unintentionally and on ourselves. We are subject to the idea rather than the idea being subject to us. We are its tool, it is not ours.

When we become the tool of an idea our capacities are devoted to defending the idea *as if we were defending ourselves*. When a strongly held idea is seriously challenged, or even exposed to the possibility of a serious challenge, *the mind turns off*. Some excuse is always given. The subject is changed, the point raised is ignored, or the person making the challenging point is criticized rather than the point refuted. Whatever the excuse, it always means the idea will not be exposed to a serious challenge. The person is in a trance, *and memes are the vehicle that accomplishes this*.

Ideologues, *whatever their views*, are people in a trance. This is why evidence and rational arguments make so little headway in discussions with them. I am not saying all ideologies are the same in content or value, only that they are all the same in how they shape their adherents' stand towards them once they identify with them as integral to who they are. In all these cases the person has become the meme's tool for manifesting rather than the meme becoming the person's tool for understanding.

Like a hypnotized person we *do not see* arguments against our position and interpret our experience to fit what our ideology says is the case. Facts appear unimportant or somehow distorted. If a moral failing is pointed out the answer is either to deny it or claim the other side does it too.

### IX. Memes and cultural appropriation

I will now integrate these concerns into the debate over cultural appropriation.

I have argued a culture is not a thing. It is a living ecosystem of memes and people, and their co-evolutionary impact on one another. Consequently, memes and the cultures they help form are independent from us and develop in ways no one controls. A culture's members will see many issues differently, even issues important to their cultural identity. Cultural identities are always dynamic in their details, and those identities are shaped by memes. Let me use issues over Native Americans today to illustrate this point.

Some people have argued "Indian," is a word imposed from without upon the varied peoples who inhabited this hemisphere before Europeans invaded. This is true. But "Indian" is a meme, and so develops independently of the intentions of those who first applied the term to those who lived here. Many of these people have no problem with the term, and use it to assert their distinct identity from Euro-America. A good example is in Lawrence, Kansas, where the most important university for American indigenous peoples proudly proclaims itself as Haskell *Indian Nations* University.

This is a powerful statement affirming the worth of these peoples and their culture, one neither seeking assimilation nor demonstrating

cultural weakness. Note also the depiction of an eagle feather headdress. This is a meme that developed far beyond its role in the plains cultures that first used it. Feathered headdresses were never a feature of significance for many tribes. However, it has become iconic in the popular eye for those plains tribes that were among the last to be conquered. A meme rooted in its original cultural role among the Lakota and other peoples, now has become a universal symbol depicting Indians- *in the eyes of many Indians* as well as other Americans. In some contexts, it no longer has the narrower cultural meaning it had for plains tribes, *even for the plains tribes*. The meme has a life of its own. Like every other meme.



The headdress as symbol for Indians has broadened even farther. It includes the long-time celebrations of New Orleans' "Black Indians," rooted in their ancestors' gratitude to tribes for having sheltered and sometimes even integrated runaway slaves into their cultures. To call this centuries old practice "cultural appropriation," as I have heard some say, is absurd. On the other hand, to say it is an example of the progressive development of the meme of feathered headdresses as a symbol connected with Indians in different ways, is pretty obvious.

Much closer to home, something similar has happened to "Pagan," the term many of us use to describe our own spiritual path. "Pagan" was not a term of praise, either in pre-Christian Rome, or afterwards after the empire became Christianized. But the term has a life of its own, and now stands for what is closest to the heart of many of us: our way of relating to the sacred. A living language is composed of living memes shaping the ideational ecosystem in which it participates.

### X. Conclusion

Some of you might think my analysis obscures the horrors of Western colonialism, racism, cultural destruction, and genocide. I do not think so. I intend something quite different.

I am seeking to reawaken our awareness of the aliveness of the earth, and in some way, everything within it. Once we have, the world looks different. Most of what we can take pride in or feel shame and regret over remain the same, but the context is different.

The words we use, and how we relate to them, plays an important role here. Robin Kimmerer first made me clearly aware of how this takes place in her important study of the contrast between English and many Native American



languages.<sup>1</sup> For example, English reserves the terms 'her' and 'his' for ourselves, and applies 'it' to animals, plants, rocks, rivers, and cars. The meme 'it' denies agency and intrinsic value to whatever it is applied to. Think of how you would feel if the term 'it' was applied to you, or to a loved one or friend, or a person of another culture. "It" is often not a neutral descriptive term.

Alternatively, try calling a female bird "her" and a male one "he," and you will see what I mean. Doing so causes us to look at the bird differently, experience it differently, and we will probably find it difficult to continue doing so- we will relapse back into "it" as soon as we relax our attention. As we do we enter into the memetic trance where we are relatively blind to these other very deep characteristics of the bird. So even at the most basic levels of grammar memes not only shape our minds, they become very powerful thought forms from which it is difficult to break, particularly when we integrate them deeply into our sense of the world. The trance they create is self-validating.

The language of 'cultural appropriation' reflects a deeply Western way of thinking, one at odds with that of many other cultures, with central Pagan insights, and I have argued here, with important dimensions of reality itself. This language divides the world into things that are owned and we who are either legitimate owners or, if we 'appropriate' them without 'permission,' thieves. *This is the language of property as a thing.* It is the language of ownership, of seeing ourselves as subjects and all else as objects. The smudge stick, the *calavara*, and the eagle feather headdress are things owned and properly controlled by someone and not physical representations of living memes in a cultural ecosystem.

There is another relevant dimension here. "Its" imply passivity unless acted on. A thing is just a thing. If we were to look at many Native American languages, such as Kimmerer's Potawatomie, we find much of what we describe in terms of nouns they describe in terms of verbs. Buckminster Fuller observed back in the 60s, "I seem to be a verb."<sup>2</sup> Many of us found his observation profound when he made it, as in a Western context it was. But this is an insight many other peoples see reflected in all around them.

When you exist within a living world rather than a world of objects, the question of right relationship enters everywhere. As living processes many of whom necessarily populate our minds,

memes are organisms in which we enter into a most intimate relationship. If we see them as alive, we do not identify with them, we are in relationship with them. To that degree we are free from simply being their means of replication. We can support the ones that work for and with us, and abandon those that don't, or that would otherwise control us.

### Regarding Ritual

Think ecosystemically. We live within a natural ecosystem and we live within an ideational ecosystem. In both cases we and the contexts that shape us influence one another. Our freedom as human beings in significant degree is rooted in our ability actively and deliberately to understand and work with our natural ecosystem. Exactly the same point applies to the memetic ecosystem that provides us the means by which and through which to think. So we do not need to seek anyone's permission to use a smudge stick. But we should use it respectfully. In fact, when we think about ethics proper for relations between different societies, they are remarkably similar to those appropriate to acting within ecosystems. They recognize complexity, that no one is in charge, and that right relationships and respect are guiding principles.

I think they shake out in the following principles applicable to the Pagan community:

**Respect** – The practices and things you employ. Thought forms can be powerful. Respect when dealing with memes connected with the sacred is as appropriate, as it is appropriate to respect people. If we use someone's creation, it is respectful to give them credit. If we use a meme in our rituals, say a smudge stick, it is respectful to use it for what its purpose is as we conceive it, rather than to show off our 'exoticness' or something. We may use it in a new way, but that in itself is not a problem. The attitude with which we use it matters.

**Respect** – The traditions of practice in which they participate - *if* there is a strong and relatively exclusive connection. But remember the tradition does not own the Thought form/meme.

**Honesty** – Never claim a status or training you do not have. Smudge for cleansing, not for looking cool. Play a djembe all you want but do not say your African teacher empowered you unless it is true.

**Know something about the deities you invoke.** A genuine deity is not a thought form, but thought forms are associated with them. They come on their own agendas, which may or may not harmonize with yours, especially yours in the short run.

**Care** – You are feeding and building a stronger relationship with the thought forms you are using. Do so wisely. It is in respectful

<sup>1</sup> Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Learning The Language of Animacy, Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, (Minneapolis: Milkweed editions 2013) 48-59.

<sup>2</sup> Buckminster Fuller, Jerome Aleh and Quentin Fiore, *I Seem to be a Verb*, (NY: Bantam 1970).



relationship that we connect most valuably with people and with the memes that help give shape to who we are. Through respectful use we strengthen the most meaningful dimensions of the world around us and the memes through which it manifests. This kind of thing cannot be reduced to performance theater or psychotherapy.

**Ignore talk of cultural appropriation.** *At best,* it is well meaning confusion. It is also prone to use by those seeking power they do not deserve. Treat such talk as you would talk of committing ecosystemic appropriation when you take a seed or seedling.

## BLAST FROM THE PAST

### SAMHAIN COOKING

From Vol 23 Issue 8

Samhain 1998

By Doug and Sand Koff

#### Parkin

This is the traditional cake for 'Bonfire Night' or Guy Fawkes Night in England. In some areas it is known as 'Thor's Cake' or 'Thar's Cake' and may represent a Saxon influence on the holiday.

- 4 oz. flour
- ½ tsp. of cinnamon
- 1 heaping tsp. ground ginger
- ¾ tsp. baking soda
- 8 oz. oatmeal
- 8 oz. black treacle (dark molasses will do)
- 8 oz. dark brown sugar
- 3 oz. butter or margarine
- 1 egg
- 5-6 tbsp. milk

Sift together flour, soda and spices. Add oatmeal. Melt butter, treacle and sugar in a saucepan and add, with the beaten egg, to the dry ingredients. Stir in the milk to make a soft batter. Turn into a 9 inch cake pan, lined with wax paper or, better yet, parchment.

Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Turn down to 325 degrees and continue baking until a knife, when inserted, comes out clean. (Around 20-30 minutes - may take longer, though.) Bake this the day before. It's better the next day.

#### Barm Brack

This recipe is for a currant bread, traditionally served all over Ireland on October 31<sup>st</sup>. It is baked in the shape of a round cake.

- ½ cup lukewarm milk
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. yeast
- 2 C plain flour
- 1 tsp. mixed spice (note: Pumpkin Pie spice works!)
- pinch of salt
- 1 egg, beaten
- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 2 C dried fruit (currants, raisins, candied peel)
- 2 Tbsp. sugar

Soak the dried fruit in strong black tea before use, at least two hours. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Mix the yeast and the teaspoon of sugar and combine into the milk. Allow to rise. Sift the flour with the 2 Tbsp. sugar and the spices and rub in the butter. Make a well in the center and add the yeast and the egg. Beat with a wooden spoon for about ten minutes until a dough forms. The fruit and salt is now worked in by hand and the whole should be kneaded. Set the dough in a warm place (covered with a cloth) for about an hour until the mixture rises and doubles in size. Knead lightly and place in greased 7 cake pan. Allow to rise for another 30 minutes. Bake on the top shelf of the oven for 45 minutes.

## LAMENT OF THE WITCH

From Vol 4 Issue 12

October 1979

By Morning Glory

I may not go to the festival...  
 All this month I have sown costumes.  
 Gathered nuts and baked cakes.  
 I have strung beads and berries for the children to wear.  
 All this my people have taken from me and they have said: "It is good."  
 I have borne children, I have woven mats;  
 I have carved masks, I have washed clothing;  
 All this my tribe has taken from me and they have said: "It is good."  
 But when the sea change comes, my body begins to flow.  
 My woman spirit to gather power and force.  
     Large drops of blood  
                                     drip  
     Slowly and then gush forth.  
 My magick is strongest, my feelings are deepest;  
 my knowledge is surest...  
     Now more than ever I am a woman of power.  
 This my tribe has refused and they have said: "It is bad."  
     When I touch my genitals to give myself pleasure...

When I made images to call the spirits...  
When I refused the husband chosen for  
me...

And every, every moon when my body  
knows its bloody power...  
All this my tribe has refused me  
And they have said: "It is bad...  
bad...  
Bad!"

My shadow pollutes, the rainbow serpent is  
angered, my lover shuns me, I am cursed,  
diseased, reviled. Men retch at my scent; avoid my  
footprints.

Unclean  
un-Clean.

Banished from my home, forbidden the festivities...  
I remember the medicine man's words to me at my  
puberty ritual:

"You must be as Mother Earth...

humble and fruitful. You must not touch any holy  
thing or a man's possessions.

You are dangerous to yourself and the Tribe... to  
bleed is to be sick... you must be set apart for your  
moon and give thanks to God that He has spared  
you life when you cease to bleed.

So spoke the wise man...

Crazy old fool! I AM like the Mother Earth:  
She who bleeds and does not die.  
Only for men in blood linked with sickness  
and death. I am woman...my blood is pure.

The old women say that once we held the sacred  
tools... our foremothers made them. Once the  
houses were ours...we built them. Once the moon  
hut was for our own seclusion... we sought it for  
privacy

Now, The tools are forbidden  
the houses belong to our fathers  
the rituals are led by men  
the moon hut is our prison  
and our bodies are the source of our shame.

What has happened? Why did things  
change? How has this come to be?

-Long Ago-

The old men say: Women were punished for their  
pollution... for their bleeding. "They angered the  
Gods."

-Long Ago-

The old women say: "Men became jealous of our  
power, and they stole everything."

We shared our bread, our fires, our homes,  
our tools, our magick, our knowledge, our bodies...  
We shared.

They had only one thing we did not give them; one  
skill we did not teach them; one skill we did not  
teach them. They had the use of weapons ... and  
they did not share that. They turned it against us.

The old women say: "Let us kneel down in the mud  
and crawl along!

We leave it for them, for our Brothers, We  
leave the world for them for they want it that way,"

I will not sing this song, looking out through  
the window of the moon hut and hearing the songs  
and laughter of my people.

I will not sing this song  
I mark my cheeks with my  
Dark Blood.

I will sing a song to the Goddess... who is  
stronger than the weapons of Men.  
I will sing a song to my sisters who are wiser than  
the lies of men.  
I will sing a song to my daughter who will bear the  
future of Men.

My song is a song about power, about loving, about  
sharing, about changing.

I will sing about the future.  
I will weave a web of fate  
I will sow a seed of doubt  
I will tell a tale of tomorrow

I mark my forehead with my  
Dark Blood...

...and I wait.

## I AM CoG

### LADY MIRASELENA OF EMLC



Heather Green of EMLC at her book signing





**DON FREW OF NCLC**



Don Frew of NCLC Speaking to BayNet members at ARL.

- c) Attending three TLC meetings; and
  - d) Making an effort to engage as a member of the local community by socializing or attending local council events. When the above criteria are met, TLC will then endeavor to come to consensus concerning the applicant's request for membership within Touchstone Local Council.
3. Touchstone local council allows member covens and Assembly of Solitaires to assign their proxy verbally or by electronic means.

**CHAD SHIPLEY OF TOUCHSTONE**



Chad Shipley of Touchstone Local Council receiving his Military Service Medal recently at a gathering of Touchstone members

**EVERGLADES MOON**

All 3 variances were reaffirmed by the LC membership at the EMLC annual meeting on October 6.

1. A Coven or a Solitary that applies to Everglades Moon Local Council for membership needs two letters of recommendation, one of which must be from a member of the Local Council.
2. Any person who is a former member of an EMLC member coven, needs to have one of their letters of recommendation be from their former HP or HPS or designated CoG coven contact. This does not apply to a solitary member of a member coven who wishes to hold dual status as a solitary member also. The Local Council Board can waive this requirement on a case by case basis at the Board's discretion.
3. New applicants must attend 3 EMLC meetings or events, one of which must be in person, before membership application materials will be forwarded for National publication.

**LOCAL COUNCIL VARIANCES**

**TOUCHSTONE**

1. For All New Applicants Touchstone Local Council requires that:
  - a) One of the letters of recommendation be from a current member of Touchstone Local Council; and
  - b) Prospective applicants attend a minimum of three council meetings in a nine month period prior to the submission of their application. The purpose of this requirement is to provide the prospective applicant an opportunity to become familiar with the Council and vice versa.
2. Current members who are in good standing with CoG at either the National level or who belong to another local council within the Covenant may apply for membership in Touchstone Local Council by:
  - a) Providing a letter of recommendation from a member of TLC;
  - b) Submitting a letter of intent detailing the reasons for joining TLC;

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

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

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

