

COVENANT OF THE GODDESS NEWSLETTER



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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 OSTARA

Ostara renewals are due on **March 21, 2019**. The Drop-dead date is **March 31, 2019** after which your membership will lapse and you will need to reapply. Renewal forms are emailed to the email address on file from your last renewal. If you have NOT received this form, please contact the National Membership Officer immediately (membership@cog.org).

CALAFIA LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

CHAMISA LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

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

EVERGLADES MOON LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

- ❖ The Sylvan Forest
- ❖ Amber Moon
- ❖ Coyote Morningstar
- ❖ Qabal

HILLS AND RIVERS LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

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

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

ORANGE COUNTY LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

- ❖ White Buffalo Clan

TEXAS LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

- ❖ Anastasia Lankford

TOUCHSTONE LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

- ❖ Ecclasian Fellowship

NATIONAL COVENS: NONE

- ❖ Church of Earth
- ❖ Dragonweyr

NATIONAL SOLITARIES: NONE

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

NATIONAL ASSOCIATES: NONE



REPORTS OF OFFICERS

FIRST OFFICER

No report given.

SECOND OFFICER

No report given.

MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

Spring is here! The hills in Northern California are bright green with the new grass, and the air is clear, if cold (when it's not raining). I'm looking forward to our local Pagan festival (yeah!) at a hotel (mmmm...) PantheaCon! If any CoG members are coming, please stop in at the Tree of Trads hospitality suite (room 957) that NCLC-CoG co-sponsors and say hi. If you'd like to greet me, I'm most easily found at the Registration table in the morning. We have lots of presentations, and a ritual or two, so please check our webpage in the coming days for the schedule (in flux at the moment): <https://treeoftrads.org/blog/>

Grace of the Goddess and Tithe payment flexibility: The government shutdown has caused so much pain in our communities. If you are affected by the shutdown or by the recent fires in California or other natural disasters, and your renewal is coming up, please know that there is some money in the Grace of the Goddess fund, and the NMO is willing to work with you for deferred tithe payments. If you have benefited from this fund in the past, please do consider repaying the gift so we can continue to support our Membership in their time of need. If you are blessed to have a little extra to share, please consider donating to the fund via the Paypal button at the bottom of our webpage, or at the time of your renewal. I greatly appreciate all those people who have done so already.

Local Councils need to make a decision. I need to alert all Local Councils of new responsibilities regarding transfers into a Local Council as a result of the newly approved Bylaws regarding transfers. Each LC has to figure out **HOW THEY WILL DECIDE** to accept or decline a transfer request. **The process is up to the LC, but the results of their decision MUST be noted in the minutes of their meeting when sent to the newsletter.** I would not be surprised if many LC's will handle this as they do for applications for membership, but...it is up to the LC. This is complicated by the fact that each LC meets at a different frequency, some meet only once a year, others meet once a month, or once every two



months. So what works for one LC may not work for another. **LC Boards should put this issue on their next meeting agenda and include the final decision in their LC procedures and meeting minutes.**

Renewal reminders are now coming with a pre-filled out renewal form attached to the email reminder as a pdf. Membership(at)cog.org is the email address to use to reach me, but mail from me will come from Thea,Bristlebroom@gmail.com. However, I was very late sending these out this cycle, so I'm **extending the Imbolc renewal period to 3/10/2019.**

There are no New Member Applications at this time. REMINDER – The review period is now 45 days instead of 90 days, that is one Sabbat cycle instead of two.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

- Dragan (Texas Local Council)
- Circle of the Star (Texas Local Council)
- Waxing Moon Circle (Northern California Local Council)

TRANSFER REQUESTS

We have had a request in Texas Local Council for Amethyst Dragon to transfer to the TxLC Assembly of Solitaries. This is being considered at the time of this writing, so I'm unable to report on the outcome. In the unlikely event of TxLC declining this request, that member may request a transfer to National AoS. This request would then be published (to the AIR elist and) in the next Newsletter which begins a 45-day review period to allow for written objections from the Covenant.

TRANSFERS

- Amber (Orange County) has moved to Nevada and has transferred to National AoS.
- Goddess Grove (Hills and Rivers) has changed its name to HearthFire and is now following a progressive Wiccan tradition.

CANCELLED/LAPSED MEMBERS

Regretfully, Coven of the Alpha Wolf (Hills & Rivers) has lapsed.

MEMBERSHIP STATUS

We currently have 131 members total, consisting of 70 Covens, and 61 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.

The following members are due at **Imbolc** and have until **3/10/2019** to renew:

Roster Name	Local Council
Circle of the Cauldron	Chamisa
Our Lady of the Woods	Chamisa
The Sylvan Forest	Everglades Moon

Amber Moon	Everglades Moon
Coyote Morningstar	Everglades Moon
Qabal	Everglades Moon
Coven of the Wooded Vale	Hills and Rivers
Goddess Grove	Hills and Rivers
Grove of Gaia	Hills and Rivers
Church of the Earth	National
Dragonweyr	National
Aracos Arendel	National
Eibhlean	National
Jerrie Hildebrand	National
Kirk White	National
Raniananda	National
White Buffalo Clan	Southern California
Anastasia Lankford	Texas
Ecclasian Fellowship	Touchstone

The following members are due at **Ostara** and have until **4/10/2019** to renew:

Roster Name	Local Council
Circle Angkur	Calafia
Kari Tornow	Chamisa
Witch and Famous Coven	Everglades Moon
Jodi Affuso	Hills and Rivers
Moonfire Coven	Hills and Rivers
Wolfa Coven	Hills and Rivers
Amber	National
Dragon's Weyr Circle	National
Raven Star Coven	National
Coven of Bran-Faol Reannag	Orange County
Greenwood Glen	Orange County
Circle of the Dragon and the Phoenix	Southern California
Ghostwheel	Southern California

In Her service,
Thea Bristlebroom

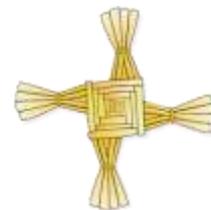
PURSEWARDEN

CURRENT ASSETS

- Chase Main Account: \$78,255.91
- Significant Deposit is MM Funds: \$3,334.90
- Wells Fargo Interfaith Checking: \$5,585.62
- PayPal Account: \$1,140.04
- Synchrony: \$31,709.60 (from Statement ending 12/31/2018)

CURRENT AND PENDING ISSUES & ACTIVITY

Thank you to all local pursewardens who have submitted their quarterly reports. If there are pending reports, please send them as soon as possible.





PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

After finally recovering from the winter crud, I am gearing up to get some stuff done. What I have been able to accomplish so far:

Heathenry for Incarcerated: Spoke with local Heathen practitioners who provided links and information to help a wife and her fiance' who is incarcerated.

New Flyers/Materials: Received email from Macha of her continued interest and if we had made any further progress in updating existing flyers.

I have provided the board with my plans for marketing & promotion. Will discuss further at the Board Meeting.

Editing flyer content to make the information current.

After I send to the board for review will discuss next steps.

After content approved, create the art and graphics to be applied along with QR codes.

Still need the logo in vector format.

Award Interest: I received 2 requests with interest in our Youth Awards. They have been forwarded to Amber K for fulfillment.

Cubmaster from Florida interested in helping one of his members complete the process for youth award.

Recent request for patch for Wolf in Cub Scouts.

Upcoming Blog Posts: How to join CoG: Covens or Solitary.

Help donate to CoG through Amazon.com. [Reoccurring throughout the year.]

Upcoming Women's March (may be seen as political).

CoG Youth Awards.

Attendance at Pantheon - videos and photos from vendor rooms, CoG suite, and friends when appropriate.

PUBLICATIONS OFFICER

Tax season is in full swing and I'm VERY thankful for my husband for putting the majority of this newsletter together!

Please send any articles, poetry or minutes to newsletter@cog.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 cogweb@cog.org.

Blessings,

~Stachia Ravensdottir

CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER

No report given.

NATIONAL RECORDER

No report given.

WELCOME TO COG



Please welcome:

- ❖ Circle of the Star, Texas
- ❖ Dragan, Texas Local Council AoS
- ❖ Waxing Moon Circle, Northern California

NATIONAL BOARD MINUTES

~ **December 2, 2018**

Meeting called to order at 6:10 PM Central time using Zoom with the following present: Canu (NFO), Azrael (NSO), Thea (NMO), Stachia (NPO), Manny (NPW), Janine (PIO), Amber K (NCO), and Faelind (Recorder).

Officer Reports:

First Officer (Canu): Canu welcomed everyone to the New Year and asked for any additional agenda items. Thea provided the agenda items noted under Agenda Items. First Officer duties have been few and Canu expects to begin actively pushing CoG forward over the next months. NetCo duties have been general about getting folks added to lists. Amber related she was having trouble getting Cog Board email and Canu will look into it and asked Amber to look into things as well.

Second Officer (Azrael): Azrael expects to have all the registration information for 2019 Grand Council/Merry Meet completed by the middle of February and will get it to the Chamisa Local Webweaver and send it to AIR by early March. Canu asked that she provide the information to Stachia when it is complete so that the National Website can be updated as well. Azrael is finishing up the details (except the food menu which won't happen until closer to the date) and stated the Hotel will only take registrations through a phone call, not via email or online. She will make sure that the Hotel information is provided. Azrael will want help with the tech and Canu said he and some folks attending can take care of that. Azrael expects folks to begin arriving on Wednesday, August 14th, with Leadership Institute on Thursday, August 15th at Ardantane, Grand Council on Friday and Saturday, August 16th and 17th, and there will be a special outing to the Rio Grande Nature Center on Sunday so she hopes folks will attend and leave late on Sunday or early Monday to accommodate the outing.



Membership Officer (Thea): *(Please see full report on pg. 2).* Thea expects to write her report by end of week but mentioned that we are growing with member covens joining from the Texas Local Council. Thea opened a discussion on how she balances deadlines with flexibility. The board appreciated her flexibility and discussion ensued on balancing member needs and renewal deadlines. The board suggested leniency if at all possible. 10 days is a very quick renewal grace period.

Thea also brought up the transition process when a Coven transitions to Solitaire member. Should this transition allow for all members of the Coven to transition to Solitaire member? Should the transition only be for the Coven Leader? The board discussed and suggests that if the Coven Leader can attest that an individual is/was a member of the Coven, then all members who meet CoG Solitaire eligibility (must be eligible for Priestess or Priest Credentials, etc.) should be able to Transition to Solitaire without reapplying and providing application documentation.

Canu added that he read some of the information from CoG's very first newsletter into the Grand Council record last year to communicate a sense of what the founders wanted and hoped this organization would be/could be. It was noted then that we should have as few Bylaws as possible with only what we needed to operate as a religious organization. Part of CoG's emphasis is to not be so rule bound that we cannot operate in good faith with each other. When we look at the bylaws that have been adopted, we see that they are built around trust and community. What do we want for our community? What do we want for our ability to have people in our community? We allow anyone who meets our eligibility requirements to be a Solitaire. And everyone in the coven has access to CoG benefits if the Coven Leader chooses.

Thea has caught up on all her mailings. She is giving all new members an official membership form and is also mailing out Credential forms.

Publications Officer (Stachia): *(Please see full report on pg. 4).* Stachia apologized for missing the last Board meeting but was dealing with the new tax laws. She listed Board Members as contacts for each Local Council in the last newsletter. Faelind is contact for Texas, Janine will be the SoCal contact, and San Diego will go to Azrael.

Pursewarden (Manny): *(Please see full report on pg. 3).* Manny's Pursewarden report lists detailed financial information. He has been able to close out the last Merry Meet funds. He is behind on the new accounting to Quick Books and will get to it as soon as possible. He is thinking that he would like all the Local Councils to start using Zelle, a system (app) that uses email to link to bank

accounts. It facilitates transfer of money between banks and is kind of like an institutional version of PayPal. Manny also learned that PayPal has changed their button and it does not present a box that allows one to enter a reason for the Donation. Manny will look into whether that can be changed.

Public Information Officer (Janine): *(Please see full report on pg. 4).* She has talked to Amber about the award programs and is very excited that we have had inquiries about them. She takes information about them when she goes to pagan events so that people know about it.

She is focusing on editing the content of the flyers before she gets to the graphics. She wants to update them soon and add QR codes to each. She is still waiting on receiving the CoG Logo as a Vector Graphic.

Janine is asking for feedback on the CoG marketing plan she submitted to the board. Suggestions were offered by the board with promises to email more.

Correspondence Officer (Amber K): Amber is keeping up with the mail and it is mostly up-to-date. She had been looking for the adult distinguished service awards and learned that we have just given them all out. They were not lost! She will find out where they were ordered from and get some more.

Recorder (Faelind): Faelind mentioned she forgot to send in a report in addition to the minutes and that the minutes were published in the Yule newsletter. She appreciated everyone's help and is very grateful that the meetings are recorded.

Agenda Items:

NCLC bank account does not have Manny added yet. Manny spoke to a representative of Chase Bank who related Chase had provided NCLC inaccurate information so they could not complete the task. Manny learned what he will need to do with a representative from NCLC and will follow up the week of January 21st.

Grand Council minutes not loaded on CoG website. Stachia checked and uploaded them while on the meeting. Canu also sent the Grand Council minutes out to AIR.

Rita R. needs to be added to NORTH. Canu as NetCo said he would take care of that. Thea will resend Rita's email address and Canu will get her added.

Appoint interfaith reps: Don Frew was inquiring. Canu stated that National Interfaith Reps were appointed/reappointed at Grand Council. Stachia noted that the newsletter, as the official voice of the Covenant, listed the National Interfaith Reps in the Samhain and Yule newsletters. All the Interfaith Reps listed in the newsletter have been approved by the Board for 2019: Don Frew, Rachael



Watcher, M. Macha NightMare, Andrea Kendall, and Rowan Fairgrove.

Admin Assistant point person: Manny agreed to become the Point Person to define and fill the admin assistant position. Amber has done some work and agreed to continue to work with Manny. Manny believes there are things that need to happen before we hire an admin. Janine agreed to work with Manny and Amber and make the calls that might be necessary to determine IRS issues in California or any other questions that might need California contacts.

Old Business:

2019 Meeting Schedule: The following dates were selected for Board Meetings for 2019:

- Saturday, March 2nd
- Saturday, April 6th
- Sunday, June 9th
- Sunday, July 21st
- Sunday, September 8th
- Sunday, October 20th

Conflict of Interest Forms: Work on these is ongoing.

Purchase of D&O Insurance: CoG needs to "decide what we need." This is usually related to employee suits and/or malfeasance. Canu and Manny will get together to complete.

Committee list creation/deletion: Project to retire email lists. Canu will work with Ken.

New Membership/Affiliation Program: Amber understands that a committee is going to be activated soon and that Thea is chairing the Committee.

New Business:

Changes in Coven tradition and/or Coven name: The board has been asked by a local council whether a Coven must reapply if they change their Tradition since it is not what they signed up to CoG with. Discussion ensued with the summary that since CoG is about trust and relationships and that the people are already known to CoG they should not have to reapply whether they change their Tradition or their Coven name. It may suffice that the CoG member send out a communication to their Local Council before their renewal date similar to a statement of practice so that people know what they plan to do.

CoG Server: Ken C. has donated servers and maintained them for many years to host the Covenant's websites but has acknowledged that a succession plan should begin. The Tech Team Committee will be looking at all the issues and will bring a proposal to Grand Council. Manny suggested that we will need to include any costs this change will incur into our annual budget. The

sooner we can take this off of Ken's plate, the better.

States where CoG Credentials are not recognized. Nevada is one such state. A friend of Janine from Nevada wants to join CoG. Janine volunteers to get CoG added to the official state list in Nevada so our Credentials are recognized.

Meeting adjourned with blessings at 8:25 PM Central time.

TRANSITIONING FROM COVEN TO SOLITARY

NONE

NOTICE TO THE MEMBERSHIP

COVEN RENAMING

The coven formerly known as Goddess Grove has changed our name to "HearthFire" Coven, and has decided to follow a progressive wiccan path rather than the hierarchical eclectic Gardnerian Tradition we had previously. This decision was due to the hierarchical format no longer meeting the needs of our coveners. Although the majority of our coven membership is composed of the former Goddess Grove's members, we have been joined by a few other experienced wiccans who also desire to be part of a progressive coven. As a progressive wiccan coven, the primary changes to our practice include having rotating ritual leadership and shared consensus decision making. We continue to meet all requirements for Membership in COG. HearthFire Coven meets at least monthly to celebrate Esbats and Sabbats. Our focus continues to be the worship of the Goddess and the Old Gods. We currently have seven committed members; six are wiccan priestesses/priest and one is an apprentice. As we did in Goddess Grove, we have adopted the COG code of ethics and all of our members agree to abide by both the code of ethics and the COG Bylaws. We value COG and would like to renew our COG membership with the changed name and tradition noted.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

NONE

TRANSITIONING FROM COVEN TO SOLITARY

NONE



LOCAL COUNCILS



CALAFIA

~ No Report

Last published minutes in the Yule 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

~ No report

Last published minutes in the Samhain 2018 edition.



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

~ No Report

Last published minutes in the Samhain 2018 edition.



ORANGE COUNTY

~ No report

Last published minutes in the Litha 2018 edition.



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

~ No Report

Last published minutes in the Samhain 2018 edition.



TEXAS LOCAL COUNCIL

~ No Report

Last published minutes in the Yule 2018 edition.



TOUCHSTONE

~ No Report

Last Published in the Yule 2018 edition.

INTERFAITH REPORTS

WHAT BEING IN COMMUNITY REALLY MEANS

By Rachael Watcher

On November 8th at around 6 AM a fire, allegedly started by a faulty Pacific Gas & Electric line, began at Pulga on Highway 70 in Butte County, northern California. It quickly spread to the neighboring towns of Paradise, Magalia, and Concow. For a day it grew 100 yards a second. It came so fast that the first warning many had was the light of the fire in their neighbors' yards or their own. People evacuated, often with nothing more than their pajamas and pets.

The fire burned so hot that appliances melted. In the home I owned in Concow, where my niece was living, the well head and pump melted so completely that it sealed my well with a puddle of steel. Even more seriously, the fire burned so hot that it burned out the roots of trees and other plant systems, destroying invaluable water shed. To add to these issues, the rains that put out the fire were torrential, the heavy runoff down rushing canyons denuded of watershed, causing floods filled with fire debris and mud.



Photo: Bureau of Land Management California, C.c. 2.0

By now the nation knows that ultimately the entire towns of Paradise and Concow were lost, as well as much of Magalia. Two hundred and fifty square miles of forest, over 18,000 homes and business structures, and, at current count, 88 human lives, along with untold domestic animals and wild life, were lost. With few exceptions, the human lives lost were 65 years of age and older. At the height of the fire more than 50,000 evacuees



flooded into Chico and Oroville, where I live, with 30,000 still displaced as of this writing. It is now the deadliest wildfire in the United States since 1918.

In comparison to other California cities, Chico and Oroville are small communities with the limited resources that being a small community implies. Before the end of that day, the Walmart parking lots in both towns were filled to capacity with tents and RVs. The “official” evacuation sites and county fairgrounds soon filled to capacity and then overflowed as the displaced continued to arrive. By the third day, the small town of Gridley was opening sites to take up the victims.

More than a month later, many are still living in RVs and tents. Fortunately, the threatened failure of the Oroville damn in February of 2017 and the subsequent evacuation of Oroville and cities down river helped in small part to prepare us. Yet our communities were in no way ready for the massive impact of this disaster. A sudden influx of this number of people with no food or shelter nor, in many cases, even jobs, could well have strained resources past the breaking point, causing the spread of health and sanitary disasters. What happened instead was a true testament to the generosity of the human spirit.

Interfaith Compassion

The Buddhist organization Tzu Chi, whose local office is in San Jose, California, had a booth at the Disaster Recovery Center in Chico giving out checks to any in need, with \$500 going to individuals and more to families depending upon their circumstances.

If everyone contributes their love, a crisis can be transformed into an opportunity and a disaster into a blessing. – Tze Chi aphorism

Tze Chi is now on Facebook asking that anyone in need fill out their form online so further funds can be distributed. This is an international organization with over 70 offices around the world, raising funds solely for the purpose of helping people during emergencies and disasters.

The Sikhs and Mennonites are also actively supporting community here. The Sikhs opened their gurdwaras (sanctuaries) for evacuees, and the Mennonites served meals at the Church of the Nazarene and provided shower trailers there for those in need. Nazarene churches located in both Oroville and Chico were designated as main evacuation sites and Red Cross shelters.

Jim Collins of Saint Thomas More Parish in Paradise, where they lost considerable church property, shared the following. The Catholic Church, which considers all people living within their parish to be parishioners, has to date raised more than half a million dollars, with early distributions going out in gift cards. A donation from individuals in

Santa Barbara of \$120,000 has provided rent for ten families, and the process for long-term assessment of need is going forward, with a storage unit set up to collect items which will be needed as folks start to rebuild.

Rabbi Sara Abrams from Chico said that support has flooded in from Jewish organizations, including IsraAid, an international Humanitarian Aid NGO based in Israel. While only ten of their members lost homes, they have reached out to the greater community as well. They’ve raised over \$22,000, most of it being distributed in gift cards. They are providing therapy workshops for people and after-school programs for children. They have sponsored dinners for social workers as well. Jewish communities in nearby Sonoma County sent gift baskets with ritual items for Jewish families who lost their homes.

I spoke with Rasha Salih from the Islamic Center of Chico who said that donations were coming in from as far away as Houston, with large donations from San Francisco and Sacramento, the two closest big cities to the devastated areas. They had received \$20,000 in gift cards to date, with 90 percent of those funds coming from individual Muslims and mosques. Trucks came down from Oregon with food, clothing, blankets, sleeping bags, and other essentials, and the Mosque’s bathing facilities were opened to evacuees. An older Muslim originally from Pakistan and now living in Sacramento ordered a truckload of sweats and socks, which he accompanied up to the Chico Islamic Center as soon as he heard about the fire. They were the first goods that the Islamic Center had to distribute.

In a county where almost 50 percent of the population identifies as non-religious, the human spirit shown brightly as restaurants and gas stations gave unstintingly of free meals and gas. Walmart was flooded with folks buying tents, blankets, and pillows along with items of personal hygiene, all to donate to those in need, cash and real goods flowing in as well.

Overflowing Generosity

Many animals were separated from their owners, and over 100 injured cats were sent to San Francisco to be treated. A hanger at the Chico airport was full of farm animals. Shelters for smaller animals were under pressure from food shortages. Tradewinds Transportation and Coastal Farm & Ranch animal feed division plus other donors of Albany, Oregon stepped up. After hearing about the shortage of food for the displaced animals, they sent a fleet of trucks over 400 miles with 90 tons of feed for everything from cows to cats.

With three dogs from a family who cannot currently keep them and my backyard camp trailer occupied by a friend, I am only one example of all those who have opened their homes, RVs



(recreational vehicles), and trailers to fire victims. One young couple found a 93-year-old man living in his car after having evacuated Paradise. They took him home, helping him contact family and giving him a room of his own for as long as he wished to stay. Others have either given away or donated, at far below cost, their own recreational vehicles to families in need. A person from San Diego donated \$1,000 to each student and teacher of Paradise High School, and the Alburn California High School basketball team surprised the Paradise basketball team with new uniforms and equipment when they showed up to play Alburn on the day of the fire.

The local Home Depot donated \$500,000 to the community. One woman came into the Home Depot from the evacuation routes after spending eight hours on a road that normally takes 20 minutes to drive. She was looking for somewhere to place an older couple that the Sheriff had put into her car on the way out of Paradise. She had no idea who they were but was more concerned about their welfare and ability to contact family than her own, even though she had no more than her car left to her name. She was the first of many that I would meet in the following days.

Though most with whom I have spoken say that donations have tapered off since Christmas, they have all emphasized that this disaster is far from over, and much support will be needed in the months ahead as people struggle to get back on their feet, find new jobs, and rebuild.

As a cashier at the Home Depot, not an evening goes by that my customers and I do not share stories of our mutual loss. People break down and cry when talking about the compassion of complete strangers in their hours of need. Many come behind the counter to hug me and share tears, not only of loss, but of renewed hope because of what these communities have been able to share with them in support and love.

IMBOLC AT WORK

By Faelind

I cry and strain
 In worry and pain
 Not clear on the path before me.

Where is my hope? What is my fear?
 That I shall succeed?
 Or find failure?

Brigid inspires me, but I must take the step.
 Sophia reveals all to me, but I must take the
 knowledge to heart.
 Where do I start?

There is nothing clear – it is murky in these waters.
 But I am flexible as a reed,

Swaying in the waves.
 I am strong as a tree,
 Buffeted in a storm.
 I am patient as a rock
 And stubborn too.

I know what I must do.



BLAST FROM THE PAST

GOLDEN RULES FOR PEACE

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This article has been summarized for space limitations. Author: Joel Beversluis

A few months ago, my grandson recited a not-so-golden rule from the playground: "Do to others as they do to you." This isn't what his parents teach him, and it's not his rule. But I do wonder what he's learning, especially from those who lead our commerce, governance, and media? Will he conclude that self-interest and retribution are the laws of this planet?

Believing otherwise, eight ambassadors from the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) carried a collection of Golden Rules from thirteen religions to the United Nations. We'd been invited to visit with the Assistant Secretary-General, Mrs. Gillian Sorensen, to present a framed Golden Rules poster to her for the UN.

Diverse versions of these spiritually-informed principles are quite appropriate in the UN, despite its secular, pragmatic, and sometimes anti-religious climate, because the variations on this principle transcend cultures, religions, and nations. No other statements so clearly summarize the simple practices of kindness and sustainable human conduct.

Together with some of her staff, we sat in a circle and briefly discussed how the Golden Rules apply to international affairs. I was honored to read our prepared Statement. One paragraph explains that in recent years, gatherings of numerous religious and spiritual leaders have agreed that "this ancient precept is found and has persisted in many religious and ethical traditions of humankind for thousands of years [and] should be the irrevocable, unconditional norm for all areas of life, for families and communities, for races, nations, and religions" (Toward a Global Ethic)

The year 2002, early in the Decade for a Culture of Peace, begins with new hope. The citizens of Earth are seeking the true meaning of peace with renewed impetus, learning that no nation will find peace until it wants for others the same peace and security it seeks for itself.



It was a small pilgrimage we took, to place another brick in the path toward peace, to send a ripple flowing across the waters. As with all pilgrimages, we went in part to express and renew our own souls. But we also went to the UN as an inter-religious witness to the nations and leaders. And we'll continue to proclaim golden precepts, especially for the children and grandchildren.

Our simple message is that we are each responsible to seek not only our own benefit, but also what is good for others, as they see it. There rests the balance, the common good. From the playground to places of power, there is no higher calling. The Golden Rules Gathered for the Golden Rule poster by Paul McKenna

- Aboriginal Spirituality - We are as much alive as we keep the Earth alive.- Chief Dan George
- Baha'i Faith - Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself. - Baha'u'llah, Gleanings
- Buddhism - Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. - The Buddha, Udana-Varga 5.18
- Christianity - In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. - Jesus, Matthew 7:12
- Confucianism - One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct... loving kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself. - Confucius, Analects 15.23
- Hinduism - This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you. - Mahabharata 5:1517
- Islam - Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself. - The Prophet Muhammad, Hadith
- Jainism - One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated.- Mahavira, Suttrakritanga
- Judaism - What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary. - Hillel, Talmud, Shabbath 31a
- Sikhism - I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all. - Guru Granth Sahib, pg. 1299
- Taoism - Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain and your neighbor's loss as your own loss. - T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218
- Unitarianism - We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part. - Unitarian principle
- Zoroastrianism Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself.- Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29

Golden Rules For A Culture Of Peace

Presented to Mrs. Gillian Sorensen, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, on January 4, 2002

Because the United Nations is a home for our highest human ideals, and because the world's religions have a duty to articulate and promote those ideals, we are honored to present you with "The Golden Rule." In this poster, thirteen religious and spiritual traditions state a universal principle in elegant and distinctive forms.

These Golden Rules are evidence of a Global Ethic that transcends nations, civilizations, and religions. Yet no other statements so clearly summarize the simple practices of kindness and sustainable human conduct. In recent years, gatherings of religious and spiritual leaders have confirmed that "this ancient precept is found and has persisted in many religious and ethical traditions of humankind for thousands of years... [and] should be the irrevocable, unconditional norm for all areas of life, for families and communities, for races, religions"

The United Nations provides a unique forum where the subtleties of this universal principle can be translated into the realm of international affairs. We are inspired by key United Nations documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its premise that those rights we wish for ourselves shall be granted to others as well. Equally challenging is the principle that no nation will find peace until it wants for others the same peace and security it seeks for itself.

We believe that these Golden Rules, also known as the "law of reciprocity," must be obeyed by all nations, and that, in the interests of global security, no nations or leaders may exempt themselves. Whatever is hateful or injurious to ourselves, we must not do to others.

Failure to adhere to these moral principles brings great hazards to all, ranging from unsustainable development practices to environmental crises and nuclear threats with their inherent potential for catastrophe. Nations must treat other nations as they wish to be treated.

Together, these precepts remind us that our diversity can flourish within a greater and simpler unity-the human family, with its common origins, needs, and aspirations. The Golden Rules teach that no one-no nation, culture, or religion- is an island unto itself. Drawing on time-tested wisdom and experience, they presume our interdependence and declare our personal responsibility for the common good.