

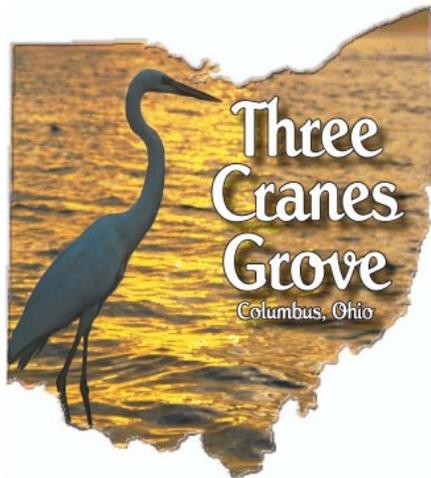
Next High Day: Midsummer (June 22nd)

Neo-Pagan name: Midsummer
Gaulish name: Equos

The sun has reached its height on this day, overpowering the darkness and the night. But on the day of the sun's greatest triumph, the sunset brings the first change in momentum in the constant battle of light and dark. After this sunset, the days will get shorter and the nights longer.

Often celebrated by bonfires and music in the ancient world, the concept of the "needfire" in Germanic tribes, which is a fire designed to ward off the plague. Bonfires are a common fixture in the ancient and modern celebrations of this holiday.

Our Grove has always focused this festival on community: there is a definite feeling of togetherness and family that permeates this festival, and we spend it picnicing in the park or at a local community festival. This is a festival of joy in each other that we will always hold dear.

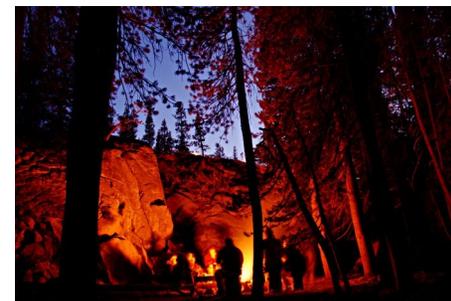


Three Cranes Grove, ADF

Three Cranes Grove, ADF

April 2008

*Beltane
Edition*



Crane Chatter

Around the Fire



Welcome to the Beltaine edition of the Crane Chatter. I spent part of today hanging out with Shawn and we discussed our plans for the new fire pit at the UUCE. I am very excited about our relationship there. The congregation is made up of wonderful people and I look forward to having a place to have Druid Moon and other rituals in a spiritual space that **we** will be building. There is a good half acre there that we can use that will include the new fire pit. We will also be fixing their pond. I also see us having a permanent altar there and maybe even down the road a nemeton.

Mike, Mariel and Stephanie are away at the first festival of year. I know Mike, Maggie and I will be heading to Desert Magic here in a few weeks and both Mike and I will be presenting workshops there. I believe Mike will be doing something with a bull, money, a child and water? Ok it's something on Vedic culture. I will be doing something from my Modern Day Warrior series (for more see my article in this newsletter). After our trip out west we return home to do laundry and head to New York for Wellspring. I also know we have Com-fest, Sirius Rising, Starwood, Summerlands, Dayton Celtic Festival, and Dublin Irish Festival lined up for the summer...so spring is in the air and festival session is here!!

I planted a maple and an oak out back about week ago so we are now at our limit. We have an apple for Idunna, a river birch for Brigit, a dogwood for my grand-fathers, the oak is because it is sacred to druids and the maple...well honestly for the shade.

In other news I bottled the mead we all made in December today. If you remember we made it on Druid Moon and named it "Good Fire Mead" It's about four months old and still very

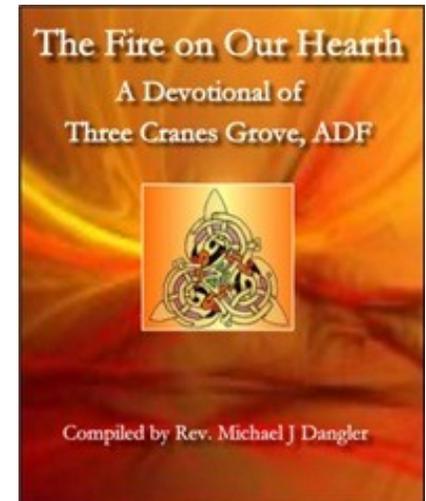
It's finally here! Available now on CafePress:

The Fire on Our Hearth - A Three Cranes Devotional

At the center of all things, a fire burns brightly. This fire is where we gather with our friends and family, where we offer hospitality to strangers, and where we make sacrifice to the Kindreds. No matter where it is kindled, the fire draws us together, as a good guest might draw together the family who hosts him at their hearth. Our ancestors kindled fires in their own homes, and when we gather for ritual, we kindle a fire as well. This hearth upon which we kindle this fire becomes the center of the cosmos, and the heart of our Grove. This book is the devotional book of Three Cranes Grove, ADF, in Columbus, Ohio. As we have walked the Elder Ways in a modern world, we have found guidance from the Kindreds and joy in each other. From this joy and guidance, our voice has grown and developed in ways we never expected. This book is the essence of our work: filled with rituals, prayers, meditations and daily devotionals that resound with the unique voice of Our Druidry. Join us at our fire as we celebrate more than five years of tradition and worship!

You can own a copy of this wonderful example of druid prayer and fellowship by going to:

<http://www.cafepress.com/3cgshop.246478012>



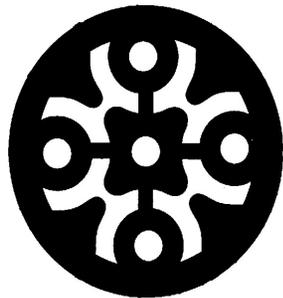
Three Cranes Grove, ADF

Or watch a football team blow a game playing prevent defense? There is a saying about a good defense is a good offence and it's true, you can't win if you don't attack. We are not talking about being rude or having an inappropriate behavior, we are talking about living life to the fullest. There is an old saying about it is better to live one day as a lion then a thousand as a lamb. Be aggressive in planning your goals and working toward achieving them. Don't be a by-stander in life. Always be working toward a goal, toward bettering yourself. Be active always, if your not moving ahead you are moving backwards. To the victor go the spoils!

See you next newsletter where I will serve up 3 more lessons. Until then may you walk in honor, balance and service!



Seamus
ADF Warriors Guild
Guild Chief /Council of Honor



**COMMUNITY
FESTIVAL**
:
JUNE 27, 28, & 29, 2008

Three Cranes Grove will have our own booth at Comfest again this year. We will have small rituals off and on each of the three days with a main Summer Solstice Ritual on June 29th for the public to attend and participate. Come by our booth and say hello to the crew. Volunteer and assign the hours to Three Cranes and we can get our booth for FREE! See you then!

young. It needs to mellow a few more months before it's really drinkable but man is it potent I had a couple of sips through out the bottling process and it's strong...if it doesn't lose any of it's strength in the mellowing stage then I would guess it is about 20 proof. Good fire indeed. I know Anna Gail is also bottling mead and I can't wait to lift a horn with her and see how hers turned out.

The spring has been good to the cranes. We published our first book. ([The Fire on Our Hearth](#)) I know Mike is working on at least three others. Shawn and I will be working on one, Awen is working on a bardic book and I have my warrior book in the works so I think the cranes may have found their calling in ADF and the pagan community. We have so many talented people in this grove that I am amazed. I still need to get with Megan and work on music as well as Awen, Shawn and Aeryn. WOW! Get ready world, Garanus Publishing is about to get busy!

Well, enough of my rambling, I hope this newsletter finds you well. Until we get a change to sit around the fire and chat again. May Garanus carry you on his wings, and may you pray with a good fire!

Seamus
Senior Druid



Bealtainne's Deities of the Occasion: Danu and Bile

When first asked to write about the Deities of the Occasion for our rite, I thought about going through my books and pulling together all the lore. But anyone can do that. So I stared at the blank page on my screen, and thought, "What do these deities mean to me?" So here is my own Unverifiable Personal Gnosis.

Bile is a mystery. There's not much known about him in the lore,

other than being Danu's consort, and possibly the embodiment of the Celtic World Tree. Bile is the mysterious force of growth that seems to pervade the entire universe. Nothing is stagnant, everything changes. Life continues to propel itself forward, or it ceases. If Bile is the world tree, then he is the source of this energy. It runs up and down the trunk spreading into the three realms.



Danu is the mother of the tribe. She is associated with the Danube River, as it winds through Europe. When I picture Danu I see a dark haired woman wearing a blue gown that extends down, out, and away, and covers the earth. The dark night sky is above her, full of stars, which are reflected in that part of her gown that turns into the sacred waters of the earth. Her eyes are kind and wise. Her serenity provides a balance, a counterpoint to the vibrant and ever-growing energy of Bile. She gives purpose and direction.

This is just how I see the two, and everyone's mileage may vary. They stand at the center of Celtic mythology, as the parents of those we now call the Tuatha de Danaan. In this way, they stand at the center of my own relationship with the Kindreds as well.

By: Tanrinia

Running With Trees Part 4

In this "chapter" of Running with Trees, we move on to the next two trees in our Ogham forest, the Alder and the Willow.



The first of these trees, the Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) is not a native to our shores. It was introduced here early on in colonial times and so has naturalized in the northeast portion of our country and the southeast portions of Canada. I find that their overall tight, symmetrical shape to be very pleasing to the eye. Local

than we think about. Who do you know that doesn't have some misfortune or difficulties in their lives? The lesson here is to acknowledge that it's not personal (although for argument's sake one could remind us of Karma), and how we choose to face these setbacks and challenges. Do we wallow in self-pity, do we give up or do we gather ourselves and find strength in our virtues and beliefs?

Lesson Two:

Live in the NOW.

Yesterday is a memory and tomorrow is just a dream. What we have is the now; learn to live in the moment. Focus on what is happening right now, feel it with all your senses. Some of us are stuck in yesterday and live with regrets and longing, others live hoping and dreaming of the future without properly preparing for the wanted outcome. (In no way am I advocating not preparing for the future, any good warrior would be planning ahead. We must all have an action plan, but that is another lesson.) How many people do you know that are reliving their high school glory, lost in that golden yesterday? How many people do you know dream away the day, dreaming of that perfect tomorrow? How many people sleepwalk through their days forgetting that they could end at any minute? We have been blessed with the now. Enjoy it! Live each day as if it is your last. Take inventory of the beauty around you, the wonder of the sunrise, the smells of nature, the caress of the wind, the arms of a loved one. Learning to live in the now means remembering that every action may be your last, walk your virtues and mind your manners...wouldn't it be a shame if your last action was one that you would not be proud of?



Lesson Three:

Good things happen when you're aggressive.

Have you every heard about a sports team playing on their heels?

I don't believe all warriors are soldiers, though many soldiers are warriors. I don't believe being a warrior is all about war, though a warrior must be prepared to stand, fight, and even die for their virtues and beliefs. I also hope many of us never have to defend ourselves in a life-threatening situation. But if one arises, we should be prepared. So being a warrior is not about the military, but we do need to learn from our history books. It is not about security, but we should know how to and be ready to protect. It's not about being an Eagle Scout, but we should be able to camp and know our way around in our environment. Being a warrior is about you being the best



you. Again it is about never settling, but always striving to improve yourself; mind, body and spirit. Change yourself and you change the world. The warrior spirit or energy is available to everyone, young or old, male or female, disabled...it's doesn't matter. Tap into that energy of change and improvement. Over the next few newsletters I would

like to share with you just a few of the lessons that everyone might find useful whether you consider yourself a warrior or not...

Lesson One: **Life is difficult.**

Dr. Peck starts his book "A Road Less Traveled" off with this theme, and it is also a variation on one of the Four Noble Truths. "The Nature of Suffering," as described on www.buddhanet.net, is "Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, sickness is suffering, dissociation from the loved is suffering, not to get what one wants is suffering." What does this mean? Don't take difficulties personally. Set-backs and disappointments visit us all. It is not the difficulties that define us as a person but how we respond to them. I guess silly old sayings like "life's a bitch," or "shit happens, get over it" really have a much deeper meaning

▶ www.threecranes.org

There is a nice specimen of an upright growing cultivar in the Chadwick arboretum and a nice example of the straight species growing in Sharon Woods Metro parks. Both can be recognized by their hazel like leaves, their gummy/sticky young twigs (the Latin specific epithet refers to this characteristic), and their miniature pinecone like seed bracts. The latter bracts I have sometimes found in potpourri mixtures, included because they look pretty cool and like really tiny pine cones, I suppose.



The Ogham for this tree "Fern" is three strokes to the right of the vertical stem line. It is often interpreted as shielding or guarding, and also as "oracular messages forthcoming". When I draw this few, I immediately look about to see if there is a further message for me in the natural environment. The inner wood of

this tree, once cut, "bleeds" a pinky/red color such that, the beginning, white twigs pretty quickly turn to a brownish red. The Alder is sometimes known as Scottish mahogany for this characteristic. On my recent pilgrimage to Ireland, we visited Tara. I was blessed in finding a windfall piece of Alder from a tree growing near two of Tara's standing stones. These stones and the Alder, are near what is now the Tara Interpretive Center (formally a church). The resulting twig carving I use both as a personal protective talisman and a focus for my rites of protection for Holy Tara. I have come to refer to it as "The Sovereign's Shield" in my workings. Those of you reading this article might wish to say a brief prayer at this moment for the embattled Holy Hill of Tara.

The next tree that we take up in this chapter of "Running With Trees" is the Willow. One of the largest plant families; the Willow

family contains hundreds of species. It is not clear which species was the original species referred to in the Ogham but I would suggest that two introduced species, the White Willow (*Salix alba*) or the Weeping Willow (*Salix babylonica*) can probably best capture what comes to most peoples minds when they "think willow".



▶ www.threecranes.org

Both of these species were introduced to this land very early on in colonial times and can be found all over the place in the East and in the Midwest. In addition to pale or yellowish new branches, willow leaves are also often pale, long and thin. To my mind, a weeping willow near waters edge is the quintessential image of willow. One of the first trees that I asked to live near me (at my current home/grove) was a weeping willow that I planted for the community out by the side of the pond. An Arctic Blue Willow lives at the foot of my garden/grove next to a (sometimes) dry creek bed that I created. We here in Columbus are fortunate in that one of the largest collections of Willow species are located at the Chadwick Arboretum on the OSU campus.



The Ogham for this tree, Saile (Sal-yuh) is formed by four strokes to the right of the center stem line. This Ogham is often interpreted as having subconscious, intuitive, lunar, feminine and watery meanings. I suspect that the tree's close association with water might play a large role for the latter. Willows are

almost invariably water loving species, preferring to grow near bodies of water. Willows have also long been associated with underworld images as well. Images of willows are often found on gravestones of the last century.

Something that I always associate with willows are baskets. The word "wicker" basically refers to willows and to bending them. The new growth of willows is very flexible and lends itself to all manner of wickerwork items. Willow groves were routinely "pollarded" or pruned severely back to create great quantities of fresh thin willow branches. I suspect that our ancestor's constant use of willow for baskets, winnowing devices, fish weirs and shelter walls led them to hold the versatile willow in high esteem.

If you wish to experience the energy of trees within the Arboretum, they are located near the 4H building just north of Lane Ave. and just east of Rt. 315.

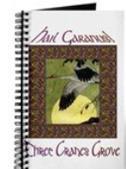
Triple Blessings,

Shawneen
Scribe



Three Cranes Grove, ADF

Crane Swag



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heirons_place](http://www.cafepress.com/heirons_place)

Lessons for the Modern Day Warrior

I have been busy reading, writing and organizing notes for what will eventually become a book on lessons for the modern day warrior. Some of you may have attended my workshops on the same subject and many of you know I spent about 4 months re-writing the ADF Warriors Guild study program, which is an extension of and basis of this ongoing journey.

I have been a member of The Warriors Guild for about four years and have been on the council of honor for about three. Last September I was voted into the office of guild chief. This led me to self-examination and evaluating what it truly means to be a "warrior" in today's world. There are many opinions and we have had healthy debate on the guild's email list. I have read book after book on all things warrior. I've reviewed all the old ADF newsletters and guild documents and I went back and re-read the Solitary Druid by Skip Ellison and all of Ian Corrigan's books and pamphlets. I've read all of the new age spiritual warrior books and fell head long down the corridor of dreams and Jung's archetypes...and the thing that resounded most in my soul was being a warrior is about never settling, but constantly striving to better yourself and the world around you.

Three Cranes Grove, ADF

as the fire can, nor can it carry our voices to the depths of the earth as the well can. Instead, the center must make use of all parts of the hallows: Well, Fire, and Tree. Beyond that, though, there is also the center of the earth, the heart of the Earth Mother, upon whose breast we build our Fire, root our Tree, and sink our Well. We establish the center above her heart, above the center of the earth.

The Grove itself has a center, the place in the middle of those Grove members gathered that the energies and the focus of the ritual are centered. Within each other, we find our own orientation, our own center: there is no stronger center, no larger axis, no more powerful hierophany than that of a Grove standing together, orienting themselves to one another, and finding their place in the centers others can offer.

Most important, though, is another center that must not only be found, but that the ritual cannot happen without: the center of ourselves. Each of us, within our own heart, must find the center of our beings, the inner center that allows us to stand in the center, to be our own *axis mundi*. From us, all things radiate, and within ourselves we can discover a rift between the sacred and the profane.

If we cannot find the center of ourselves, if the hierophany of our hearts cannot be seen, then others cannot find it within us. If the Grove cannot orient itself by combining these centers, then it cannot find the center of the earth, the heartbeat of the Earth Mother. If we cannot orient ourselves to that center, then we cannot orient our hallows, and the Well, Fire, and Tree will not stand at the center of the worlds. Centers are unlike any other thing in ritual: they are where we establish them. Yes, they can appear naturally, and there are places that a center is more likely to appear than others, but to truly do the work of magic, we need to learn to establish them, to place them atop one another, to blend them and to maintain their distinctions. We must find them in ourselves, either through meditation or ritual, and we must learn to use the point of reference created by our own center to orient ourselves to the other centers around us

~ Rev. Michael J. Dangler



Bardsong: Singing in the May

Hal & Tow,

There tends to be a lot of debate and discussion about when, originally, the song came to light, what it was about, what it was for, and who created it. The Earliest printed reference to the song is in 1846, though the custom of singing the song (approximately around "May Day", as it were, comes in reference as early as 1790

Folksongs of Britain & Ireland (1975) brings a tale from 1660, where men would, in Britain, erect a Maypole and sing to the tune of "Haile an Tow and Jolly Rumbleow"

Below is a more commonly adapted version. Enjoy the May-o!



[Chorus]

Hal an tow, jolly rumble oh
We were up long before the day oh
To welcome in the summer
To welcome in the may oh
The summer is a-comin' in
And winter's gone away oh

Take no scorn to wear the horn
It was a crest when you were born
Your father's father wore it
And your father wore it too

[chorus]

Robin hood and little john
Have both gone to the fair-o
And we will to the merry green wood
To hunt the buck and hare-o!

[chorus]

What happened to the span-iard
That made so great a boast-o
They shall eat the feathered goose
And we shall eat the roast-o!

[chorus]

May Lugh and Danu bless you
With all their power and might-o
And send their peace upon us
And bring peace by day and night-o



–Awen Callaway
Dedicant, Ar nDraiocht Fein

*(dates and references to "Haile an Taw
and Jolly Rumbelow" used with permission
from Mucat Cafe, Rockville, Kent, UK.)*

Centered Ritual

There is a Zuni legend that when the Water Skate was given magical powers by the Sun Father, he stretched his four legs out upon the waters.

His front right leg stretched first to the northeast, the place of the summer solstice sunrise; his front left leg stretched next to the northwest, the place of the summer solstice sunset; his back left leg then stretched to the southwest, the place of the winter solstice sunset; his back right leg then stretched to the southeast, the place of the winter solstice sunrise.

Where his heart then rested marked the "Center Place," the center of the land that is surrounded by the four seas and the heart of the Earth Mother. It is below this center, below the heart of the Water Skate which is the heart of the Earth Mother, that the village of Zuni was established.

At the center of the village, another center resides. This is on a permanent altar in the chief priest's house, where a heart-shaped rock (known as "the heart of the world") rests. Within this rock are arteries that reach toward the four solstice points.

These centers, it is easy to see, form a series of centers that are both atop each other in an obvious layering effect and also all the same in their overlay. None of these centers can exist without the others, and they seem to form around one another in ever

tightening rings. Each center is itself, unique; each center is also all the other centers.

Eliade indicates that religion itself is an orienting force, one that gives us a focal point from which to make sense of the world. When we are in a profane state, one that is not sacred, we have no point of reference. It is only through the breakthrough of the sacred into the profane world, the hierophany, that orientation is possible. "The hierophany reveals an absolute fixed point, a center."

It is the finding of this fixed point, this center, which allows us to make sense of the world. If religion is indeed about finding ways to orient ourselves, to place ourselves in relative location to everything else, then we must find those centers, even if we must create them. The creation of those centers is similar to founding the cosmos.



Centers themselves are different from the rest of the world. They are places that allow this orientation, an orientation that the profane world cannot provide. Many of us are familiar with the *axis mundi*, or the axis of the world from Eliade. These cosmic pillars can only exist, according to Eliade, at the center of the universe, and all things extend about it. It supports the sky and finds its roots deep within the earth, and its presence is not an ordering force, but a break, a rip in the fabric of the profane world that allows the sacred to pour into and destroy the homogeneity of space.

The destruction of the homogenous space is made possible by openings to other worlds, allowing travel and communication between them. In the case of the Zuni, there are four upper worlds and four underworlds that the *axis mundi* allows access to. Time also begins at the center, and mythical time exists at the outskirts of their cosmos.

In ADF cosmology, we find that the center of the world has three parts: Well, Fire, and Sacred Tree. Often, we think of the Tree as the *axis mundi*, but it is not the only center in ritual. Indeed, all the hallows are a center, and they combine to form the center. The center is not complete with only the tree, for while the tree grows high and is rooted deep, it cannot devour our sacrifices