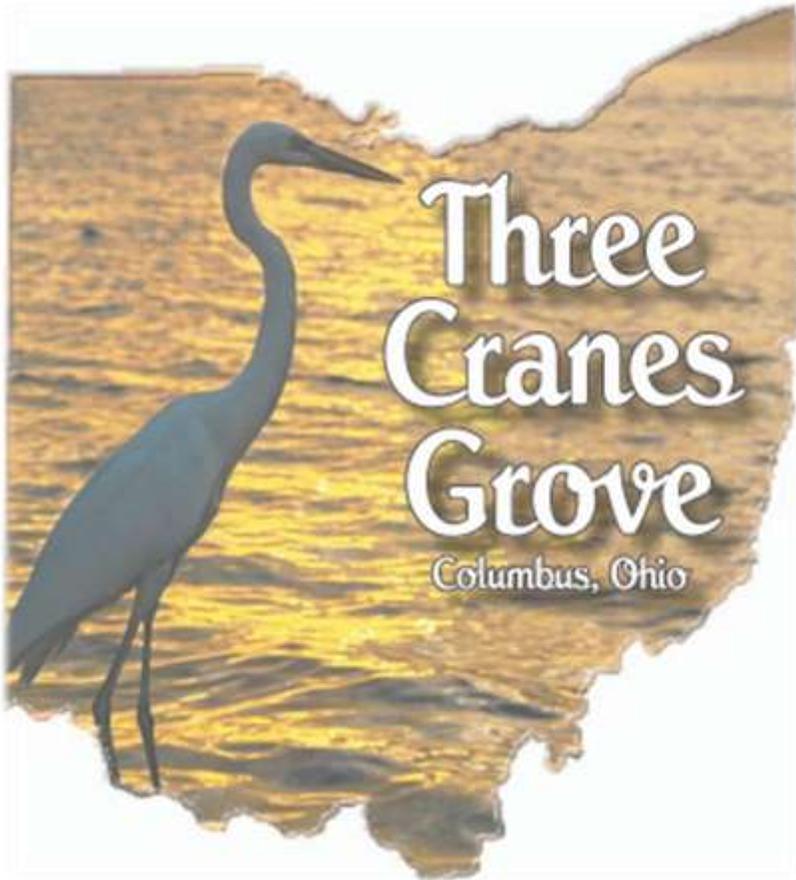


S A M H A I N 2 0 1 1

Three Cranes Grove

Crane Chatter

A collection of works put together by the members of Three Cranes Grove, ADF.



From the Editor:

Howdy Crane-kin!

I'm your new delightful editor for the always outstanding Crane Chatter. You may notice some changes in the formatting of this edition, as we make a shift in the program used to compile all the articles you've been so kind to submit.

And now that I mention it, I'd like to give a shout out to all of you who've been so kind to submit your writing to the newsletter. I understand how intimidating it can be to let others read your writing. So thank you so much for your courage!

So please, sit back and enjoy as your curl up to read the latest edition of Crane Chatter.

~Skylark

Upcoming Events

Winter Solstice
December 18, 2011
2:00 pm at
Whetstone Park of
Roses Shelterhouse

Imbolc
January 29, 2011
5:30 pm at
Blacklick Woods
Metropark – Beech
Maple Lodge.

Pagan Fire Seminars
February 11, 2012
10:00 am at
Blacklick Woods
Metropark - Beech
Maple Lodge



Around the Fire with the Senior Druid

~Tanrinia

This is the best time of year to be Pagan. Even though it's been secularized and hidden, this is the time of year that it's easiest to practice openly. Every small town has some sort of harvest festival, where they crown a 'harvest queen.' I've always thought that was a remnant of a practice of selecting a

woman to represent the local harvest goddess. And of course, there is Halloween.

I recall my first public pagan event. PCCO had an event called "Take Back the Rite" at Bicentennial Park in downtown Columbus. It was a small event, and was nearly crashed by people from the Faith Mission. They prayed to save our souls. I was terrified. But not so terrified that I gave up this new path I had found for myself. Halloween, or Samhain as I started to call it, continued to be an important part of my year. Occasionally, activities would stretch out over the entire last week of October, so I've started calling it "Holy Week." This year is no different, as the Witches' Ball is

Friday, I have a small group of friends for Samhain on Saturday, and then our grove ritual is Sunday, with Trick or Treat falling on Monday.

I've always thought of Samhain as a combination of Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, and New Year's

Eve. It's a time for reflection. Since last Samhain, our grove has gone through a lot of changes. We have new officers, new members, new friends, and all sorts of new plans and directions for the coming year. So we wish you a very happy Samhain.

Introducing our new Purse Warden: Paul Wasson

My introduction to paganism has a story behind it.

I have always been attracted to nature. As a child instead of playing with other kids, I would walk in the woods or sit on a rock by a stream, always still and quiet. I used to have deer and rabbits walk within 10 feet of me not knowing that I was there. When I was 19 I purchased a claw holding a crystal. This was before crystals became "popular." I wore it constantly and heard that crystals may make some changes in a person. I took the claw off and that day was in a car accident that I was not supposed to recover from. I had actually died twice and had to be resuscitated. After I recovered I started reading about crystals, which led me to read Scott Cunningham and I found that many things that I would do had names.

In 1995 my wife Irisa created a message board on a web site called Wiccan Ways that I helped her manage it. I created and ran a message board called Pagan Paths. Both boards were one of the most popular boards on I-Village and still exist today. Ten years ago, after visiting a friend that we met from these message boards, and were so impressed with the openness and acceptance of the Columbus area that we decided to move here from the Philly, PA area. We found several pagan groups in the area that we became part of and, even though there was nothing wrong with these groups, they were not a good fit for us. We found Three Cranes Grove more than 4 years ago and found a place that my faith and desire for education fit in.

I am Celtic with an Anglo-Saxon mix. I work with energy in various methods. I am also very nature based and enjoy meditating outside.

Call to Brighde

By Skylark

Brighde of the Sacred Flame
Hold me in your arms tonight.
Brighde with your healing words,
Fill me with your healing light.

Brighde of the heated forge
Strengthen and temper me.
Brighde with your waters pure,
Let the rain wash down on me.

Brighde you're a poet, wise.
Let you wisdom flow through me.
Brighde with you honeyed words,
Fill me with you melody.

Prayer for Inner Peace

By Traci Auerbach

Deity of my heart, I come to you in need.
My heart is troubled. I am angry, afraid and upset.
Something has gotten to me today and I need your help to
resolve it the best I can today.

First, I ask for calm, so that I can think clearly about what is
troubling me. Remind me of still waters, even and serene.

Second, I ask for strength to deal with trying times, people
and situations. Remind me of mountains, unmoved by small
circumstances.

Finally, I ask for patience in knowing I can not solve
everything immediately. Remind me of ants and worker
bees, moving around difficulties to steadily reach daily

goals.

Thank you as well, for knowing my limitations and being

The Prayer Room

A collection of prayers, songs, and poems by Three
Cranes members.

A Morning Prayer

By Traci Auerbach

Kindred who guide my steps,
join with me again for another
day.

Walk with me and lend me
protection, wisdom and grace.
I walk with your guidance,
and sing your praises.

Keep me on the path
of the old ways.
And my joy will speak
your greatness.

A Child's Bedtime Prayer

By Traci Auerbach

Kindred three
Please come to me
As I lay down to sleep.

So rested mind,
And peace I find
In guarded slumber deep.

Thanks for Simple Pleasures

By Traci Auerbach

Each day I draw strength in knowing I am part of this wondrously large world. Sometimes, I forget the little things that give me joy and a respite from daily routine.

Thank you for all of the small things each day that give me joy and hope. Thank you for the sun, rising and setting with the most wondrous colors of the rainbow.

Thank you for growing things and for living things that make me smile.

Thank you for the extra glorious minutes after I hit the snooze button.

Thank you for all the senses that I have that I

A Prayer to the Ancestors

By Rev. Michael J Dangler

When you were born,
The earth became your body,
The stone became your bone,
The sea became your blood,
The sun became your eye,
The moon became your mind,
The wind became your breath.

When you passed to the Otherworld,
Your breath became the wind,
Your mind became the moon,
Your eye became the sun,
Your blood became the sea,
Your bone became the stone,
Your body became the earth.

When we were born, you did the same for us:
You called forth the earth and rocks;
The sea arose and the sun descended;
The moon shone down and the winds sang.
For those who come after, we shall do as you did for us
When we are gone, we shall do as you did before.

Ancestors, we honour you.

sometimes forget to be thankful for.

Thank you for friends and family and the laughter and tears we share.

Thank you for silly e-mails when I'm having a bad day and needed a laugh.

Thank you for bad news, bad days, bad moods and bad times. They are challenging and make me appreciate the good times even more.

Thank you for the multitude of tiny things that make my life wonderful everyday. And thank you for the moments of reflection where I can draw back and appreciate them.

Prayer for the Empath

By Traci Auerbach

Goddesses of compassion, of inner knowledge and emotions, hear me.
Brigid, Demeter, Branwen, Isis; mothers of the empathetic soul, hear me.

I am thankful for the gifts you have given me.
Allow me to use my gifts to be a kind, gentle and caring soul.
Allow me to use my gifts to be understanding and compassionate to those in need.

Also, I ask protection from the flood waters of emotion.
Protect my heart and mind from becoming too overwhelmed by the emotions of others.
Give me the knowledge to discern the difference between the thoughts and emotions of my own heart and those of others around me.

Give me the ability to protect myself and find calm quiet center when I am not acting as counselor.

Provide me courage as I listen to the trials of others. And I ask to calm my heart when I lay down to sleep.

Calling to the Muses: A Project for Inspiring Myself to Excellence

By Joe Auerbach

THE NINE MUSES



I call now to you muse, and muses.
I call now to the Inspiration of creation and voice
I call now to the Inspiration of song and dance
I call to all powers of Inspiration to attend me
I call you by name, Muses.

Calliope
You of the fair Voice
You with the Poet's Heart
Let the truth of your tablet fall into
my hands.
Show me the words that you know
Long before I write.
And hold me to my honesty and
integrity.



I call now to Clio
You who know all of history
You who know who and what
has gone before.
Hold my words to your ears
Let no action done be undone
by my words
And keep me close
So that when history unfolds
behind me
it sees it's child with
kindness



Erato
Lovely One, I call to you
Place in me the heart of sincerity
Keep in me the fire of love
Show me the passion of love made into word and song.
Fiery One, I call to you
Let me hear with your ears, the song of love
Let me see with your eyes the words written for me.
And let me feel with your heart the meaning of those words and songs.

Euterpe
I call upon you, Giver of Pleasure.
I call on you to deliver me the joy of my work
I call on you to let me take pleasure



In all that I create
For it is in creating with joy
that we are most like the gods.

Melpomene

I call on you lady of tragedy
 I ask you to show me the
 mask in your tender hands
 Share with me the knowledge
 of fateful tragedy
 But when your act is over and
 the story complete,
 I ask that you remember to
 remove the mask from my
 fragile face.



Polyhymnia

I call on you, lady of the sacred call
 Share with me your strand of divinity
 Bring to me your connection with all things
 Sacred and divine
 Let my words flow to the outer realms
 and may those who reside there
 be pleased and find them as honey.



Terpsichore

Move within and around me,
 you who are called the Whirler
 Let my creation inspire your dance
 as your dance inspires all dance and all movement.
 You move your feet to the Lyre's tune upon the floor of holiness
 Dance with me now as my partner.



Thalia

I call upon the Flourishing one
 She who is the first lady of Comedy
 Come to my heart and shape my words
 Stir in me the fire of comedy
 And give mirth to my words and ideas.
 Your sisters inspire greatness
 but you inspire joy and levity.
 Your place here is unquestioned.



Urania

I call upon the heavenly one
 She who oversees all
 Shine down your eyes upon me from
 above
 and grant unto my work,
 the blessing of the stars and the skies.
 You who's eyes see the movements which
 guide all things
 gift me with the knowledge of right action
 and timing

Hail and thanks to the muses now gathered.
 May my words and deeds be milk and honey to your eyes and ears
 Watch over my works and take what you will,
 leaving your gifts of precision and inspiration.
 Called in name, remain in spirit and bring grace to my mortal efforts.

Hail the Muses!



Share a Beverage

By Irisa MacKenzie

A warm fire crackles in the hearth
a cup of tea warms my hands
musings roll through my tired mind
inspiration takes shape, writing begins

Why a beverage? I always have a drink in my hand
Until now the knowledge eludes me
I find comfort with a beverage in hand, but why?

Pour a drink ...
be it from a bottle, kettle or coffee pot
the coolness of an ice filled glass
the weight of lead crystal
the shape of stemware
the comforting warmth of a steaming mug

colors and smells tempt our senses
temperature coats our mouths and throats
feelings of refreshment and pleasure course

through us,
enlisting responses of pleasure and satisfaction

Infused with all of this is companionship ...
I pour my morning coffee
and the smell brings company and groggy conversation
The kettle sings, tea is readied and
I curl on the sofa to be accompanied by furry friend
a bottle is uncorked and laughter fills the room,
some of memory, some of present making

By hearth fire and cup of tea
the realization of what a beverage means comes to me
companionship ... past, present and future
memories and imagination
muse and inspiration

Won't you share a beverage with me?

Upon Waking

By James Seamus Dillard

I woke up this morning
Dragged myself out of bed
Stumbled to the coffee
To try to clear my head
I stared out the window
With my cup in my hand
The sun and fog was dancing
Creating magic across the land
A new day was dawning
Right before my eyes
I smiled and thanked the Kindred
As I stretched away the night

Around the Table...

By Irisa MacKenzie

I wake from my dreams to
Voices carrying from the rooms below
Their warmth and laughter beckoning
Rising I go and join the fellowship
Wandering through the kitchen grabbing
Coffee on my way
With a warm cup in my hands
I join the fellowship round the table
Trading stories, songs and sight
Favorite memories are made round the kitchen table
By morning with a cup of coffee and lazy smiles
By evening with a drink and laughter
Living each day from the heart
Drawing from the strength of friendship,
Shared experiences and love
Bonds made, memories shared
Carrying us when we are apart
Until we gather round the next table

What are the Cranes working on in their Study Programs?

Serenity: an additional virtue

By Tiogar aka Lisa Lea

Serenity –

1. A pornstar. “Serenity really gets my juices going.”
2. Peacefulness. “The garden feels so serene; I’m in a complete state of Serenity.”

r0x0rmyj0x0rz. “serenity.” 03 Apr. 2004. *Urban Dictionary* online, 08 Aug. 2011. <UrbanDictionary.com <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=serenity>>

serenity (suh-ren-i-tee) — *n*, *pl*-ties

1. the state or quality of being serene
2. (*often capital*) a title of honour used of certain royal personages: preceded by *his*, *her*, etc [Origin: 1400–50; late ME serenite < L serēnitās. See [serene](#), [-ity](#)]

"serenity." *Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition*. HarperCollins Publishers. 08 Aug. 2011. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/serenity>>.

If I were to add a virtue to the existing list of nine, I think it would be Serenity. It already has a relationship with Wisdom and Courage through the beginning of the Serenity Prayer: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. This has always resonated well with me, and while it points out that there are things out of our control,

it also highlights a responsibility to take action in regards to those things about which we can do something.

While the nine virtues help us choose the right course for our actions, there are times when any choice available to us is less than desirable, or when perhaps inaction is our best choice. Said another way, the other virtues may be more about determining and enacting righteous action, and serenity may be more about choosing righteous inaction – staying your hand – or at least learning to accept that occasionally we must choose the action that will do the least amount of harm or damage. At those times, the calm surrender of serenity can help us adapt to our reality through acceptance of our choice. Serenity fills the gap left when none of the other virtues, or combination thereof, can provide resolution.

Serenity also helps us address the Both/And nature of our existence, which in turn provides a richer expanse of information available to us for our decision making. There can be a great contentment in understanding and embracing the paradox of being both an infinitesimal speck and uniquely important in the grand scheme of the universe. Serenity lies in the reconciliation of these seemingly diametrically opposed points of view, or perhaps in the acceptance of their simultaneous, and equally valid, existence.

Serenity can also be about being comfortable in your own skin, as well as being content with who you are. Perhaps not so oddly, and jokes aside, the above mentioned pornstar Serenity (Wilde) is an excellent example of being comfortable with who you are – having started with ballet training, she embraced her wild side and went on to win awards as a topless dancer and later as an adult

video star. I daresay it took acceptance, courage, and wisdom to embark on such a career path. Perhaps Serenity has found her serenity – after 12 years as a pornstar (overlapping with six years as a sex toy entrepreneur), she retired from it all, quite successfully, before the age of 40!

The other side of accepting our lack of control over most things and situations in our lives is acknowledging and affirming that which, while not technically under our control, cannot be taken from us. This point is brought to life for me by song lyrics from the opening theme of a popular television series, *Firefly*: “Take me out to the black, tell ‘em I ain’t comin’ back; burn the land, and boil the sea; you can’t take the sky from me.” It, too, speaks to accepting and adapting to your reality, becoming content with who you are and the path of your life and of

Wisdom: An ADF

Virtue By Tiogar aka Lisa Lea

Wisdom – knowing when to shut the f*** up. “*Watch One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest and observe the Chief’s character. He is the epitome of wisdom.*”

Tahir Khan. “wisdom.” 29 Dec. 2009. *Urban Dictionary* online. 24 Mar. 2010.

<UrbanDictionary.com

<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=wisdom>>.

wis·dom (wīz’dəm) n.

1. The ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting; insight.
2. Common sense; good judgment: “*It is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things*” (Henry David Thoreau).
3. a. The sum of learning through the ages; knowledge: “*In those homely sayings was couched the collective wisdom of generations*” (Maya Angelou).

b. Wise teachings of the ancient sages.

4. A wise outlook, plan, or course of action.

5. **Wisdom Bible** Wisdom of Solomon.

[Middle English, from Old English wīsdōm; see weid- in Indo-European roots.]

“wisdom.” *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009. 24 Mar. 2010.

<Dictionary.com

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/wisdom>

>.

Wisdom: good judgment, the ability to perceive people and situations correctly, deliberate about and decide on the correct response

Ár nDraíocht Féin. “wisdom.” *Our Own Druidry: an introduction to Ár nDraíocht Féin and the Druid Path*. Tucson: ADF Press, 2009. 15. Print.

Wisdom is a holistic characteristic – a whole package quality – and as such, it requires that you come to it and exercise it with your whole being. It takes the sum total of one’s mental, emotional, intellectual, physical, psychic, and spiritual experiences coupled with knowledge of an issue or situation to provide understanding and empathy. Or, as has been put more simply into an equation: Experience + Knowledge + Awareness = Wisdom.

All the other virtues become contributing factors in the equation:

- Piety informs wisdom through experience gathered in right action.
- Vision informs wisdom through coming to new perceptions in our awareness.
- Courage informs wisdom through resolving fear to gain new experience and knowledge.
- Integrity informs wisdom through completeness in who you are and what you do.
- Perseverance informs wisdom through conscious effort to staying on the path to discovery.
- Hospitality informs wisdom through graciously navigating the give and take of our interactions.

- Moderation informs wisdom through understanding the impact of balancing 'do' with 'do not.'

-Fertility informs wisdom through actively living a life that takes chances to learn and grow.

I feel that wisdom has a special relationship with Courage through the beginning of the Serenity Prayer [God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.], which especially resonates with me – so much so that I will include Serenity as an additional virtue. The calm acceptance of serenity can bolster our courage in the face of the inevitable things we can do nothing about..

- Serenity informs wisdom through the contentment of accepting that it is what it is.

I have seen it written (possibly on a Dove Dark Promise wrapper...) that Wisdom comes in two parts: 1) Knowing a lot of stuff; and 2) Knowing when not to say it. It is possible that the aforementioned Chief character goes a little farther than necessary in the staying quiet category, but it does highlight the fact that one cannot be misquoted or misunderstood if one does not say much at all. And, of course, it lends an incredible impact to one's words if they are few and far between – there is a simple elegance in the wisdom of silence.

It is said that nothing in life is free, so it is with wisdom: sometimes we pay with pain, sometimes with joy, sometimes with ordinary minutiae. Gaining wisdom is an ongoing, life-long process, not a destination. If you stagnate, if you always do what you have done, you will always get what you have always got. Wisdom often involves thinking outside the box to bring forward past insights to inform good judgment in new situations. The acquisition of wisdom requires that one engage in living in the world – it's easy to be a wise man on a mountaintop – but limiting the scope of one's

Ancestors

By Tamara McKenna

Today when most of our deepest connections to our ancestors have been lost or forgotten developing a relationship with ones ancestors can be difficult especially when one knows very little about their own lineage because of adoption. Yet the other problem of knowing who and where you have come from could equally be difficult to live up to the reputation laid down by ones ancestors. To forge a path for ones self begins with building a connection with ones heart.

Second in the Three Kindred is the heart of ADF known as the Ancient Wise and these high ranking ancestors who served in their time as poets, magicians, priests, leaders, warriors and teachers, uncovering great truths in their lives. They used actions of heroics to change the shape of the world in their time lending to the credence for the legends that can turn ordinary into extraordinary with promises of fame far into the future.

The Norse lore speaks of ancestors and the honor paid them for the deeds accomplished for the survival of the community. How Loki was a foster brother to Odin and that the two of them looked to each other as more than just friends. Did Loki know his real family? He was raised into manhood with Odin and his brothers and therefore they were his family; the need to know his blood kin was irrelevant.

The knowledge of ones ancestors and all the antics or heroics they performed does not clarify ones ancestry. I have an ancestor who sailed from Europe with DeSoto to the New World. His name is Vardi and he was a scoundrel and a pirate. Anyone who knows even the slimmest hint of me would see that I am nothing like him and although we share a bloodline and a spirit for adventure our means of procuring these adventures are vastly different.

For example his means of getting to the New World was to become an indentured servant for the complete voyage (return included) with DeSoto. Upon arrival in the New World DeSoto

made several stops along the coastline to unload and reload the ship with cargo. Vardi and his friend Sam decided that on the next stop they wanted off and loaded the first row boat full of cargo, rowed the boat to shore, unloaded the cargo onto the pier and disappeared into the woods. No map, no pay and seeing the Indians about to make off with the cargo they just unloaded, they decided to help the Indians procure said cargo and went along for the adventure.

What makes an ancestor is death; what makes a hero is an act so far above the normal that the average person would not attempt. So by looking into the past and reading heroic tales of ones ancestors keeps them alive far into the future and permits legends to form that are very much beyond



This is How We Honor Them... ~ by Traci Auerbach

Every year, in mid-October, the women of my family get together and make dozens of pumpkin logs, in honor of my grandmother. She loved these rolls and they were a staple at her holiday parties.

We now get together and spend a whole day making these in an assembly line. We then freeze them and eat them the rest of the fall or bring them to functions. It is a wonderful way that I share time and remember my grandmother. So, here's a bit of my Samhain traditions, for you to share!

PUMPKIN LOG

3 eggs
2/3 c. pumpkin
1 c. sugar
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. baking soda
3/4 c. flour
1/3 c. chopped nuts

FILLING:

2 tbsp. soft butter
8 oz. cream cheese
3/4 tsp. vanilla
1 c. powdered sugar



~ love ya' grandma!



Filling: Mix until creamy 5-10 minutes before log is cool.

1. Mix all ingredients (except nuts).
2. Spread on greased 18 x 20 inch cookie sheet with sides.
3. Sprinkle with nuts and press so they stick.
4. Bake 15 minutes or less until done at 375 degrees.
5. When done turn upside down on towel sprinkled with 1/3 cup granulated sugar. Remove wax paper, roll up long ways with towel and let cool.
6. Unroll gently and spread with filling. **
7. Reroll (without towel) and wrap in plastic wrap.
8. Refrigerate. Can freeze.

** The unrolling part can be harrowing as it sometimes sticks to the towel. Just be patient and unroll it slowly and anything can be fixed with awesome cream cheese filling!

Cooking in the Kitchen With Skarlett

Busy Day Southwest Turkey Stew

2 16 oz cans pinto beans
 3 16 oz cans black beans
 3 16 oz cans red kidney beans
 3 pounds cooked turkey cubed
 3 49 1/2 oz cans chicken broth
 18 oz. frozen corn
 2 28 oz cans diced tomatoes
 1 cup onion diced
 5 celery stalks diced
 3 oz of ranch salad dressing mix
 1 1/4 oz taco seasoning
 salt and pepper to taste
 Shredded cheese and sour cream for garnish
 Tortilla chips for dipping

Drain and rinse all beans. Blend with all ingredients save for corn in a six and a half quart slow cooker and cook on low for 8 to 10 hours or on high for 4 to 5 hours. Add corn for the last half hour of cooking time. Serve hot garnished with shredded cheese and sour cream with tortilla chips on the side. Makes 10 to 12 Servings.



Crockpot Hasty Pudding (aka Indian Pudding)

3 cups milk
 1/2 cup cornmeal
 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
 3 eggs (beaten)
 1/4 cup light brown sugar
 1/3 cup molasses
 2 tablespoons butter
 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 2/3 cup chopped dried apples or dried blueberries
 Vanilla ice cream

Lightly grease crockpot. Preheat on high for 20 minutes. Meanwhile bring milk, cornmeal and salt to a boil. Boil, stirring constantly, for 5 minutes. Cover and simmer an additional 10 minutes. In a large bowl, combine eggs, vanilla, brown sugar, molasses, butter, and pumpkin pie spice. Gradually beat in hot cornmeal mixture; whisk until smooth. Stir in dried blueberries or finely chopped dried apples. Pour into crock and cook on high for 2 to 3 hours or low for 6 to 8 hours. Serve warm, garnishing each serving with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.



Whispers of Ancestors

By Traci Auerbach

I was raised Catholic. At the very least four generations of my ancestors were Catholic. When I became pagan, I was worried and ashamed that I had let them down, or worse, angered them. I did not want to pray to or for them, concerned that I would offend them in the afterlife. And because of that, I had a very bad relationship with my beloved dead, grandmothers, grandfathers and cousins that I loved greatly and until I formally declared my paganism, I felt were with me and could hear my prayers.

When I began my Dedicant Program, I was very nervous about the ancestor portion. I didn't want to include my Catholic relatives in pagan rituals. It felt foreign and uncomfortable. So, like many I had heard of, I went in search of heart ancestors. While I had a few that I included, and then reaching out to pagan ancestors, like Scott Cunningham, there was still a large part of this ancestor arena that I just felt was hollow.

With such wonderful relationships with them in their lives, it felt a crime to not include them and talk to them as I had before my formal adoption of paganism. But I left them be and assumed they didn't want to be part of this pagan faith of mine. I passed the wreath of ancestors at Samhain and felt uncomfortable to speak the names of my cherished ancestors. Something had to give.

And in the fall, of 2008, I had an unexpected breakthrough.

At my significant other's family function, I became overcome with emotion. I'm often filled with emotion, but I had no connection to his family, most of whom lived far away and I had only briefly met the night before. But, nonetheless, there I was, quietly bawling and feeling an overwhelming sense of guilt and sadness that I hadn't been around to enjoy this time with my family.

Yes, I felt sad that I was not alive...to be with *my*

family. I looked at the mother of the bride and felt that I had let my sister down. That she had worried so much about me. That she looked so beautiful and happy. I felt that I had disappointed a lot of people. I felt like that the whole wedding. I was happy and sad, guilty and yet still grateful to be there in some form.

After the ceremony, it was gone. I felt beat, but relieved to not have the emotions weighing on me. And I had time to think about it. And while I know that experiences such as these are *very* subjective, that I had shared a very important moment with an ancestor that wasn't my own. I truly feel that I had been able to share a moment with my now-husband's father who had passed away in 2001.

After that experience, things were...quiet. I didn't get regular messages or anything of the sort. But it opened my eyes to connecting with a close ancestor, even if it wasn't my own. And I began to connect with him. Calling to him in rituals, visiting his grave when I was too ashamed to visit my own relatives.

And it taught me so much about how the ancestors work, with me. Having him open the door to the ancestors allowed me to really try and think about how my own family would feel. His gentle acceptance, even though I wasn't married to his son at the time, even though I wasn't his own blood, was so overwhelmingly warm. He allowed me to feel that they are grateful for being remembered. And taught me to open myself to let go of the fear and anxiety I had about welcoming my own family to the ancestors I welcomed in ritual and prayer.

A man I had never met and was never related to by blood taught me with tenderness and a really silly sense of humor that their role in my life was not to criticize or judge in the way I had feared.

And that if all I could give them was earnest reverence and remembrance, it was appreciated. He allowed me to open my heart and faith to my own family again and closed the gap I had felt in my ritual practice and heal the wounds I had felt.

I highly encourage you at this time of year, to open your heart to the ancestors, even if they are not directly of your blood. To try to allow one relationship to foster healing, love and connection to our mighty dead.

Much love this Samhain season. And my eternal appreciation to Joseph L.Auerbach.



Cinnamon-Apple Compote

3 medium sized Pink Lady or Granny Smith apples cut into rough chunks
 3 medium sized Gala or Fuji apples sliced thinly
 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
 1 tablespoon Apple Brandy
 1/3 cup honey
 1 cup water
 Pinch of sea salt
 2 teaspoons lemon juice
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 2 teaspoons cinnamon

More Cooking in the Kitchen With Skarlett

Chop apples, keeping the tart ones in larger pieces and the sweet ones in small slices so they will dissolve into the sauce when cooked. In a large sauce pan with a lid, melt butter over medium heat until it is bubbling and beginning to turn brown. Toss in the tart apples and saute them for about 5 minutes until they begin to release their juice. Add in the sweet apples and toss well to coat with the butter and then add in the lemon juice.

Turn the heat up to high for a few minutes to bring the apples to a boil, adding in the cinnamon, salt and a small amount of water if necessary to make the liquid bubble. Add enough water to the compote to keep the apples from sticking. Turn down low and cover.

Cook for about 30 minutes, stirring often and adding in water as necessary to keep apples from sticking. When the tart apples are tender to the touch but still well formed and the sweet apples have liquefied, add in the honey, vanilla and brandy stir and then cook for one more minute. Taste the sauce and add more honey if you wish. Turn up the heat a bit and bring back to a bubble. Cook for another minute, stir, taste and adjust if necessary adding in more honey, vanilla or cinnamon to taste. Serve warm.



Starting a Serious Ancestor Worship Practice

By Thorne

Since I first engaged myself dedicated to the ADF Druid Dedicant Path, I have been intrigued and confused regarding how to properly worship the Kindred we call The Ancestors. I know how we honor and give praise to the Ancestors in ritual and I call upon them in my daily practice to aid and protect, but I have often felt that wasn't enough to satisfy my set of Ancestors.

It is good and proper to honor my immediate ancestors – my Father, my Uncle Louis, My grandmother Marie and all the other Dorn and Dobmeyer and Oestreicher family members who have gone before me from my Father's lineage; as well as those Eshelman family ancestors of my Mother's lineage – the Kenny's, the Carroll's, and the Key's. (I'm writing this on the 198th anniversary of Francis Scott Key's writing of the Star Spangled Banner – and yes, he is one of my ancestors.) So yes, I'm proud of my ancestors, both living and dead. Among the living, my uncle Bern(ard) was in the second wave of soldiers to land on Omaha Beach on D-Day. I celebrate that he is still active and alert in his late '80's and that he, too, is a United States military veteran.

But I was still unsure how to enhance with my own Ancestor worship. Then I found an online blog written by Galina Krasskova - "Gangleri's Grove" (<http://krasskova.weebly.com>) that helped clarify my focus with this Kindred. What initially drew me to her blog was her focus on the Northern Tradition, my personal hearth culture, but reading more of her postings I find her focus on the military dead to be particularly rewarding. Ms. Krasskova has taken this responsibility as a labor of love. While Ms. Krasskova does not espouse any connection with ADF, I find her take on things is very close to mine. She does firmly state her beliefs are her beliefs. I give thanks to her for her willingness to share those beliefs. In a recent blog, she suggests the following steps as a means of reaching out to your ancestors –

1. Make a donation to a charity of which

you feel your ancestors might have approved.

She states "For instance, I'm donating all proceeds from my Asphodel Press books for the months of September and October to the Wounded Warrior Project, as an offering to the military dead. (See more about this charity and the amazing work they're doing here:

<http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/> <<http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/>>)."

2. Go visit a local cemetery. Walk around and if you see flowers or flags that have fallen over on specific graves, right them. If you see a grave overgrown, pick those weeds. If you see untidiness, put it into order. Better yet, start a project and invite others to get involved.

3. Go to an estate planner or attorney and put your own will and final testament in order. You may not be planning on dying any time soon, but accidents happen and part of honoring the dead, is realizing that you have an obligation to care for the living too and that includes making sure that your family, children, friends, and other loved ones who will be left behind when you die have as easy and painless a time as possible where paperwork is concerned. Take care of those you love; take care of those for which you're responsible. Living or dead, it doesn't matter.

4. If you learned a skill from a deceased relative, woodworking, or taking care of your car, or cooking, or just a series of recipes, or knitting socks for that matter, teach it to someone else. If you have children or nieces and nephews, and they're willing, teach them. If not, just pass that knowledge on and as you do so, talk about the person who taught you and all you learned from him or her.

These are all good steps to consider taking up as part of one's worship of this Kindred as well as creating an Ancestor's altar for the home.

Step 1 is one I have been half doing. I donate to charity through work, but have chosen organizations by their focus and dedicated my donation to them for advancement of that focus. Now I plan on expanding my choice to include organizations that I feel my Ancestors would approve of as well.

Step 2 is very much like what we Cranes do on our Greenlawn Cemetary visits. Three Cranes Grove has 'adopted' the memorial for members of the Columbus Grove of Druids circa 1880. I have checked on some of the names listed on this monument as they were "movers and shakers" in the Columbus community of the 1880's. They have become included in my list of Ancestors due to my connection with their descendants in high school. I plan on being more involved with our grove project in Greenlawn Cemetery and I hope you will join us the next time we visit - or if you live too far away, find a cemetery nearby to visit. I'm sure the residents will appreciate your attention. Step 3 is the hardest one for me to approach. I have tried and failed several times over the past few decades to do this and have only made what my father would call "a half-assed" effort to complete this task.

Step 4 I had not thought much about previously, but is now being formulated in my mind on how to proceed with all the things I have been taught and have learned during my so-to-be sixty years on this plane. I think I need to pass some of this information along. I know now to include my fellow military veterans as my Ancestors, especially since I spent ten years being formed by that culture. I regret not focusing on them earlier in my life. As for my personal Ancestors, I regret not remembering everything my Grandmother Dorn told me about her parents and wish I had a "wayback" machine, so I could revisit her once again as my visits and stays with her are some of my fondest memories. I hope that these memories can be recalled in future meditations on my Ancestors and that I can help fill in some of the blanks in my family's knowledge about them.



Harvest Nights Gathering: A Festival Review

By Rev. Michael J Dangler

Over the weekend, I drove out to Otis, MA, for the [Harvest Nights Gathering](#), the inaugural festival for [Charter Oak Grove, ADF](#). They'd requested some ADF Priests via our Traveling Clergy Program ([ADF Member's only link](#)), and I was one of the lucky ones able to make it out. I have a couple of things to say about the drive:

- The first thing to say is that the drive up was spectacular: the weekend chosen was clearly peak color in the foliage department, and I spent a lot of time just enjoying the scenery.
- The second thing to say is that it's a pretty long drive: at 12 hours (not including time being lost; more on that later), I'm not sure I'll do it again without breaking it up a bit more.
- The third thing is this: I got lost, and I can sum it up in just a few short thoughts: "Lost. In the dark. In the rain. In Massachusetts. Very Lovecraftian." I had been to MA before, twice upon a time, and noticed that the Berkshires are just like the rest of MA in the dark: full of cyclopean, eldrich horrors that you're positive are waiting for you in the shadows.

But, all that said and done, I arrived, only about an hour after I was supposed to arrive, thanks to

Robin, who came out to lead me back to the place where light and warmth were.

The space they'd chosen was amazing: it was a large lodge with two fire places, plenty of sleeping space, full facilities, a gigantic kitchen, and an outdoor fire ring that was steps from the front door. The *only* thing the site lacked was WiFi, but honestly, I'm okay with that.

I spent the evening chatting with folks and Drum built a fire. We talked about hearth cultures and a few ritual points. While we probably didn't talk about everything the folk wanted to, I hope we got enough in to answer a good number of questions.

We started Saturday morning off with a dawn ritual, which just threw the schedule into chaos: things were supposed to start at 8:30, but with dawn around 7 AM, everyone was up and things started nearly an hour ahead of schedule. This gave us plenty of space to work through things, including Kirk's "Basic Ritual Skills" presentation and Rob's "Crafting Invocations" presentation. We had lunch, and then came my scheduled workshop on trance skills. Word of advice to organizers: trance and meditation workshops right after lunch are a recipe for sleepy druids to get some sleep. But the feedback was good, and I only caught one person *really* dozing off!

That evening, we did ritual to bring the folk of Charter Oak into alliance with the spirits of the land there, so that they could build a connection that would grow and blossom as time went on. We also did a small healing working for an ADF member as well. I took the omen at the rite, and it was:

Have our Sacrifices been Accepted?

Berkano - the birch - New beginnings, fertility, and strength in flexibility.

What blessings do the Ancestors bring?

Fehu - cattle - Wealth that is tempered with generosity: we will have, but we must share what we have.

What blessings do the Spirits of Nature bring?

Wunjo - joy - the outpouring of joy and togetherness.

What blessings do the Deities bring?

Pertho - the dice cup - gaming in the hall, community, and togetherness again.

In the context of the work we sought to do, I think that we received a wonderful omen, and the Spirits clearly wanted this relationship to grow and develop over time.

Following the ritual, we had a night sky workshop, where we learned about all sorts of constellations and the way the moon and sun work. It was actually terribly informative (I even got some answers to the [oddy](#) I mentioned last week here on LJ). Then, we had an evening of discussion and we all rolled into bed shortly thereafter.

On Sunday, there was a smaller crowd for a dawn ritual, which again succeeded in throwing off the rest of the day's schedule. I napped through the nature walk because I knew I had 12 hours of driving ahead of me (and I wasn't feeling so hot by that point), then packed up and faced the long drive.

All-in-all, it was a remarkably relaxing weekend, considering I spent 24 hours of it driving. I am already looking forward to next year.

A couple of things stood out from the weekend:

1. I have never been to a festival so kid-friendly.
It was great to get to see the kids so well taken care of.
2. Charter Oak will feed you until you're full, and they'll keep feeding you! Wonderful hospitality!
3. Massachusetts is just fine in the sunlight and starlight. It's just the rain that makes it feel all tentacle-y.

Seriously, if you have the chance, consider going for the weekend next year (especially if you have kids). It's an excellent little festival, and I hope I ~~get to see you~~ all there!



Crafting with the Cranes: The Altar Along Project

By Traci Auerbach – Three Cranes Grove Artisan Courtesan

First off, you might be asking yourself what a craft along is. Quite simply, it is any project where a group of people work on a similar theme project over a certain course of time. In this day and age, many can not get together for classes, so, starting a similar project and then writing and sending pictures about their progress is an alternative.

With the success of the grove quilt project, I wanted to continue working with the grove's more creative side. That being said, I realized that we had many cranes with varied transportation, work schedules and free time. So, I wanted to find a project that folk could work on in their own time. But I wanted the project to be something that would as well be functional for each person and would give them the ability to both express themselves and create a useful tool to practice our druidry.

I have done several secular craft-alongs and thought this might be a good opportunity to find a grove project that would fit all the prerequisites I had set aside. So, tins were purchased and passed out to interested participants with one requirement: Create a portable working altar with whatever you can fit inside. It can be decorated however you want and use whatever tools, stones and trinkets that suit your needs.

Some twenty tins were handed out and as the e-mails started coming about what people were using and where they were locating items for this project. It was a nice, easy project to get the folk thinking about what they feel is important to have with them and how they wanted to represent the kindred. I was really pleased with the consideration the folk paid to their own personal druidry and how they could celebrate the kindred and practice their piety with tools they created.

To see more photos:

<http://tinyurl.com/cranealtars>





Do you give good ritual?

Each of us has a fire that burns within us, one that we feed with personal ritual. As we work at our personal altars, our inner fire burns brightly, magnifying and growing in strength, warmth, and love with each offering made and prayer spoken. The fire of our piety and devotion keeps us warm and strong in turn, deepening our lives and enhancing our spirits in the process.

When we interact with others in ritual, leading, performing, or participating as groups, this fire becomes very important. Being in ritual with others is like removing the hood from a lantern: your internal flame becomes visible to others, and it magnifies and brightens the experience of ritual for all others present, performing, or leading with you.

This seminar is designed to help you build that internal fire through an understanding of ritual, a deepening of personal practice, and showing you how to show the brightness of your fire when you stand in public ritual. By living your Paganism at home and walking your virtues in everyday life, you will build the skills needed to be both a competent public ritualist, and a leader in your local community.

[Three Cranes Grove, ADF](#), is proud to present our first seminar: an all-day set of workshops, discussions, and exercises open to the entire Pagan community! The theme of this seminar is "Private

Practice to Public Ritual," focusing on those skills that you can cultivate at your own hearth shrine that will aid you as you begin to work public ritual.

The seminar is presented by Three Cranes, but the content is not only applicable to Druidry: indeed, anyone who does ritual, whether public or private, will benefit from this event! We will discuss methods of making your personal work more effective, provide instruction for beginners and old hands alike, and talk about ways to deepen your experience at ritual even if you aren't leading it.

Location, Date, and Time

Location: The Seminar will be at the Beech Maple Lodge at Blacklick Woods Metropark near Columbus, OH (seen at right). Three Cranes does our Imbolc rite here every year, and it is a fabulous space for ritual and workshops. It is heated, has a fireplace, and has plenty of parking.

Date and Time: The seminar will be held on February 11, 2012. The actual seminar will run from 9 AM until 6 PM, with a break for lunch and several additional breaks throughout.

Additionally...

For more information please visit <http://threecranes.org/pagan-fire/index.html>

To register for the event please visit: <http://threecranes.org/pagan-fire/registration.html>

Dumézil's Land of Little Ponies

By Kitsula

INTRODUCTION

Could the culture of Equestria from the animated series My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic (MLP:FiM) count as an Indo-European Culture?

Good, I have your attention. Before I begin a quick look at the mythos of MLP:FiM, I should perhaps introduce this show and its older, and often male, fans known as 'Bronies'. Don't look at this page like that! I promise by the end of this introduction you'll probably have an understanding of the phenomenon. Then if you still wish you can still smile and walk away.

The Ballard of the Bronies begins with an alarmist Cartoon Brew article by Amid Amidi entitled 'The End of the Creator-Driven Era in TV Animation' (<http://www.cartoonbrew.com/ideas-commentary/the-end-of-the-creator-driven-era.html>), this article stirred up Animation fans & boards across the web and drew attention to the new My Little Pony cartoon. Amid claimed that the death knell of originality in TV Animation had been sounded now that a great creator like Lauren Faust (who had previously worked on The Powerpuff Girls, The Maxx, and Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends) was doing a show like My Little Pony – which obviously had to be unoriginal and bad because it was a show based upon a vapid toy line. This article provoked a firestorm of discussion, was Amid right? Would one of the greatest minds in the animation world be making a show about little ponies who spent their time having tea, parties and always dressing in style?

So a lot of fans and entire boards started watching MLP:FiM and contrary to Amid's alarmist fears, Faust and her staff (who included a number of luminaries who have worked on such shows as Samurai Jack) were given huge amounts of creative control over the show and they remade it in their own image. They forged a fairly good mythos, their animation paid high attention to detail, and wrote a pretty smart show with plenty of in-jokes for the older crowd. In addition to this the show had a cast of talented voice actors such as

Tara Strong (Drawn Together, The Powerpuff Girls, Final Fantasy X, Princess Mononoke, Family Guy, Batman: Arkham City).

Faust & the production staff of MLP:FiM then engaged their now developing base of older fans and this only helped to strengthen their reputations. They even made changes to the show as a nod to fans - in the first episode one of the background ponies, a gray pegasus with a golden mane, had her eyes 'derped' (one eye pointed up, the other down) and it was noticed on 4chan's /co/ - Comics & Animation board. The production crew seeing this thread while browsing for reviews of their work decided to continue having her eyes derped as a tribute to the older fans along with references in ads and special behind the scenes & promos that they sent out to various sites and also participated in discussions on message boards (both as themselves and anonymously). They also went to Comic Con where they unveiled a poster that was filled with characters who were popular with the older fans even if they were strictly just a popular backgrounder with one appearance or even no lines (such as 'Octavia' who was only seen in S1:E:26 "The Best Night Ever" as a classical bassist for the royal orchestra at the Grand Galloping Gala).

The older fans slowly turned to a fandom now known as 'Bronies' with the rise of such fan sites such as Equestria Daily (<http://www.equestriadaily.com/>) and Ponychan (<http://www.ponychan.net/chan/>). There are two accepted origins for the term 'Bronies': The first origin traces itself to the 4chan message board where pony fans spilled over from the /co/ - Comics & Animation' board to the /b/ - Random' board. The posters talking about ponies on the /b/ board were quickly labeled /b/ronies (a combination of /b/ & ponies) and later simply 'Bronies'. The other origin for 'Bronies' comes from a label for older male fans (mostly in their 20s & 30s) of the show. They were Bros who liked Ponies or simply 'Bronies'. The term Bronies currently applies to all (older) fans of the show regardless of gender like Trekkies or Browncoats.

Now that we've gotten an introduction out of the way, let's take a look at the MLP:FiM's culture of the

Magical Land of Equestria and how it is similar to Indo-European cultures and modern day pagan practices such as those performed by ADF.

THE AGE OF THE ALICORNS

The gods kind of correspond to the Alicorns¹ who are huge winged and horned immortals of great power. Only two are known to exist in the show so far: Princesses Celestia & Luna.

Princess Celestia is the elder sister and controls the power and movement of the Sun and holds supreme power in Equestria (and for a thousand year period where Luna was sealed into the Moon, Celestia controlled the entire celestial sphere). She is also known as a bit of a trickster by doing such things as pulling pranks on overly attentive subjects (pretending to drink from a tea cup which was immediately overfilled by a fawning server) and arranging things so that the Grand Galloping Gala ended in mayhem because she found all the formality of it dull after thousands of years.

Princess Luna (alternatively called Selena in some promo materials) is the younger sister and controls the power and movement of the Moon, Stars, and the Night in general.

Current Mythology of Equestria as depicted within the show:

At first the world was in chaos – the world was ruled by a Draconequus (a dragon like chimeric creature incorporating haphazard parts from many different types of creatures) named Discord. Discord, the spirit of Discord (as he identified himself), controlled world by his whims making life difficult. It fell to the new princesses to rise up and bring order and harmony to the world. Discord was defeated by the princesses and turned into stone (until a future time when Celestia's magic was weakened and a spark of discord allowed him to free himself to seek out vengeance).

The two princesses then became the rulers of the land and ruled in harmony and justice for an unspecified amount of time then 1,000 years before MLP:FiM's primary setting Luna became jealous of her sister and believed that her beautiful night was being scorned in favor of the day by the Ponies of Equestria. Her hatred grew and she was transformed by dark magic into the demonic

Nightmare Moon and tried to bring about eternal night. Some time around here the 'Castle of the Royal Pony Sisters' became the center of the Everfree Forest - a land beyond Pony magical control and home to various monsters such as Hydras, Ursas (gigantic ethereal freaking bears made of stars), Cockatrices, Parasprites (basically flying Tribbles), Poison Joke plants (which seems to target and reverse a main characteristic), and Manticores among other highly dangerous flora and fauna.

Celestia was forced to battle her sister to return harmony to the land of Equestria. Victorious in the battle, Celestia sealed her sister Luna into the moon for a thousand years until the stars aligned correctly on a Summer Solstice allowing her escape. On that Solstice, Nightmare Moon was unleashed and Celestia was sealed into the sun. Nightmare Moon then sought to bring about eternal night to the world but she was opposed by a group of six ponies who would become the bearers of the magical Elements of Harmony lead by Celestia's personal protege and student of Celestia's magical academy Twilight Sparkle.

The Mane Six bested Nightmare Moon's tricks and blasted her with the Elements of Harmony which resulted in Luna being pacified and returned to her normal self, Celestia being freed, and harmony being restored so that the sisters began sharing control of the day & night once again. The heroes formed a strong friendship and were honored as heroes of the land with their deeds memorialized in stained glass in the palace in the royal capitol of Canterlot. They would later rise up again to save the world when Discord broke free from his stone prison and sought to plunge the world into Eternal Chaos.

The battle between the Royal Pony Sisters and discord is similar to the dragon myths found within Indo-European Mythology where a hero god defeats a serpent or dragon in a myth of order defeating chaos such as Zeus defeating Typhon. We also see parallels to myths in which the sun or dawn is imprisoned and later freed by a hero in the story of Nightmare moon.

THE AXIS MUNDI OF CANTERLOT

The capitol of Canterlot where Celestia and Luna rule from is perched near the top of a large mountain and can be seen from Ponyville. The palace also has a fabled tree of golden apples (Spike mentions the tree in S1:E26 'The Best Night Ever'). As the center of equestrian society (and possibly the physical center of Equestria) this mountain city recalls palaces of the gods atop Axis Mundi mountains seen in some Indo-European mythologies like Mount Olympus and Mount Meru. While the function of the golden apples is not explained, their very presence seems to recall golden apples which are seen in Greek and Norse myth.

THE TRIPARTITE PONY SOCIETY

Equestrian Society has three different motifs and primary roles for each of the three different main pony types. These roles for the different kinds of pony seem to follow Georges Dumézil's three functions interestingly enough.

The *Unicorn* (and alicorn) style is based upon Tolken's Elves. According to Lauren Faust the capitol city of Canterlot and home of the Unicorn Magical Academy is based upon Minas Anor/The Tower of the Sun (while the abandoned 'Castle of the Royal Pony Sisters' was based upon Minas Ithil/The Tower of the Moon). The unicorns kind of fit into the first function of authority as the powerful magic users and the higher members of the aristocracy are unicorns. The unicorns are closely tied to the alicorns by both relation (ex. The unicorn noble Prince Blueblood is the closest non-alicorn relation to Celestia) and through focus as the primary Magical Academy is 'Celestia's School for Gifted Unicorns' and Celestia has taken the unicorn Twilight Sparkle as a personal protege and personally tutored her in the ways of magic due to the extremely powerful raw talent she has displayed.

The Pegasus style is Ancient Greek as shown in their their cities, buildings, and armor. The pegasi correspond to the second function of force as the vast majority of royal guards are pegasi in Greek style armor who are known for their discipline and hard nosed demeanor which intimidates some characters (there have also been some unicorn guards shown but they have only been seen in the royal capitol of Canterlot). The other major role of

the pegasi are their control over the weather which is produced from the city of Cloudsdale and fine tuned by local weather control teams. The pegasi are somewhat set apart from the rest of Equestrian society as they are the only non-alicorn pony group which naturally has the ability to walk upon clouds and mostly seem to prefer to live in cities and villas primary composed of static clouds (some unicorns with higher magical ability however can cast spells to allow temporary cloud-walking abilities²). In their lands they associate closely with griffins and young pegasi & griffins train at the same schools & camps.

The Earth Ponies have a kind of generic Northern European-ish human fantasy style (that common one from almost every fantasy RPG setting ever made). The earth ponies fit the third function of producers and most earth pony settlements like Ponyville are primarily farming settlements. The majority of earth ponies are farmers, herders (cattle), and merchants. They have their own ethic known as the 'Earth Pony Way' where they eschew magic for physical methods and ingenuity.³

THE VIRTUES OF PONY SOCIETY

Like Iron Age Indo-European societies it seems that the ethics system of Equestria are virtue based. The virtues of Equestrian society are known as Elements of Harmony, Each member of the Mane Six characters exemplify a virtue and are the current bearers of the power of their respective element in the form of an amulet or a crown (in the case of Magic).

Honesty – Applejack – Truthfulness, honesty, & hard work

Kindness – Fluttershy – Being compassionate and seeing other sides.

Laughter – Pinky Pie⁴ – Being fun loving and not taking things too seriously.

Generosity – Rarity – Being willing to give to others who need help.

Loyalty – Rainbow Dash – Being loyal and having courage to stand up for what you believe in.

Magic – Twilight Sparkle – Being in harmony with the others / elements & forces of the world.

HIGH PONY DAYS

The two major celebrations shown thus far in Equestria have been seasonal celebrations. By far the most important celebration is the Summer Sun Celebration which celebrates the longest day of the year. On the eve of the solstice all night parties are held across the land until dawn when the sun rise is viewed with great fanfare. Another major celebration is the Winter Wrap-Up which marks the first day of spring and the end of the winter months. During Winter Wrap-Up the ponies close up the winter months and begin spring with the start of the farming season.

So in Summery...

We have a tripartite society which primarily reveres the Sun and the Moon, has some similar mythic structure to a couple of myths, and observes seasonal celebrations, and whose ethics are virtue based. While one would be hasty to call Equestria an Indo-European inspired fictional society, it seems that MLP:FiM has a few correspondences to Indo-European cultures as understood by modern day pagans groups like the ADF which could be useful for pagan parents to introduce their children to some concepts while enjoying a well rounded entertaining show intended for all ages (with a lot of jokes for the older audience).

¹ The term 'Alicorn' which traditionally was the term for the horn of a unicorn has become the term for winged unicorn used within the Brony fandom. The origin of the use of this term for a winged unicorn was originally linked to the D&D fandom and a old Dragon Magazine article, this has since been proven erroneous as the term was used for a more grizzled variant of the Sylvan Unicorn. The most probable origin for the term seems to have been with Sci-Fi and Fantasy author Piers Antony who used the term in several novels & stories to describe a winged unicorn such as in his 1985 novel Bearing an Hourglass and 1993's Demons Don't Dream.

² Twilight Sparkle was one of the few who could cast the cloud-walking spell. The only known non-mane six member seen in Cloudsdale was the background unicorn character Lyra (S1:E16 'The Sonic Rainboom') who also seems to be a talented magic user as she was first seen at Celestia's School for Gifted Unicorns in the opening episode

of the series.

³ In an official European comic a fan created splinter nation known as Gildedale was referenced and seems to have gained a semi-cannon status. Gildedale takes the Earth Pony ethic to the extreme and is openly xenophobic of non-Earth Ponies (the comic has a separate Earth Pony country beyond the Everfree Forest which seems hostile to non-Earth Ponies (the Unicorn Twilight Sparkle covers her horn with a disguise) and an Earth Pony in the settlement is surrounded barley plants which are the insignia of the country of Gildedale (see: <http://www.equestriadaily.com/2011/08/official-german-fim-comics-2.html>).

⁴ Pinkie Pie is of special note character-wise since she is the only character who performs classic 'cartoony' actions, comes up with insane devices/solutions that somehow work against all logic, acts insanely, and on occasion flat out just breaks the fourth wall. She is kind of like Deadpool in the Marvel Universe.

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Brightest Blessings!

And thus is another edition of Crane Chatter completed. To the readership, both Crane-kin and beyond, I hope you enjoyed the articles within. The next edition is slated to be published for Imbolc 2012. If you'd like to be included, please email me at skylark913@gmail.com.



And May You and Yours Receive More Treats than Tricks this Season!

~Skylark



Many Thanks To:

Melissa Burchfield – Assistant Editor
Galina Krasskova, for allowing references to her article
All the Crane-Kin who so graciously submitted pieces.