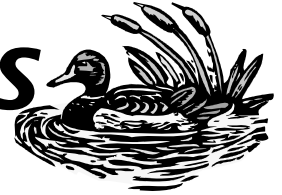




Shining Lakes News

A Newsletter for Shining Lakes Grove, A.D.F.



Yule 2007

Vol. 15, No. 1

Brid is Coming . . . Are You Ready?



One of the most eagerly anticipated High Days of our year is coming up next: Imbolc. This is the holiday when we honor Bríd, our Grove's hearth goddess.

This holiday also has many traditions associated with it, from the ancient Celts to the modern-day Irish. I thought I'd share some of those traditions with you, so you'll be ready to welcome Bríd into your home, and into our rite in February.

One of the traditional ways to honor Bríd at this time of year is to clean your home. The concept of "spring cleaning" has its origins in this practice. And really, when would you rather be doing your annual indoor cleaning? When there are several feet of snow on the ground, or when the flowers are blooming and the birds singing? You may want to use a birch branch to symbolically sweep the floors, as birch is a tree associated with new beginnings.

Another Imbolc tradition is the making of Bríd Crosses, which we use during the Brídeog (see below). Bríd Crosses are woven out of straw, in much the same way that a Native American "God's Eye" is made. The crosses are traditionally hung over the doors of the home, and protect the home from fire. We'll start making our Bríd Crosses, along with new clothing for the Bríd dolly itself, at our An Bruane session on January 29th.

One of my favorite Grove traditions for Imbolc is the Brídeog, which we've been doing since 1997. It will be held on February 2nd this year. Based on a more modern Irish tradition, it consists of traveling from home to home with our Bríd dolly, called a "brídeog" (BREEJ-oag) in Irish Gaelic. The traveling party (a.k.a the Biddies) enters the home carrying the dolly, along with several hand puppets, and singing loudly. The dolly is then carried through the house as blessings are said. The biddies then ask for an offering of food to help the needy—we accept non-perishable food for Food Gatherers. They then give

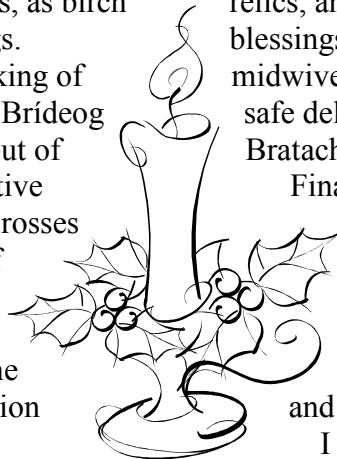
the household a Bríd Cross (see above) and depart on their merry way to the next home. (If you'd like the Biddies to visit your home this year, contact us at 734-262-1052 or kargach@netscape.com.)

The night before each of our winter High Day rites, we hold our Fire Lighting Ceremony, where we bless the ritual flame. The Imbolc Fire Lighting is particularly significant, because Bríd was believed to travel the world on the night before her holiday, accompanied by the cow that nursed her when she was an infant. During the night, we hang two cloths from a bush near the fire. This gives Bríd a chance to visit us during the night and bless them. One of the cloths is cut up into pieces, and the pieces are distributed to the women and children of the community, to bring Bríd's protection. The other cloth, called the Bratach Bríd, is one of our Grove relics, and kept from year to year to accumulate Bríd's blessings. The Bratach Bríd was a traditional tool of midwives, used during the birthing process to ensure a safe delivery for both mother and child. Our own Bratach has been present at three births so far.

Finally, the Imbolc rite itself will be held on February 9th this year. I can't give many details on the ritual, since we haven't created it yet! Our Liturgists' Roundtable will be held on January 29th and February 5th, and anyone (Grove member or not) is encouraged to attend and help us design our rite.

I hope that these ideas help you to celebrate Imbolc in your own household, and I hope you all have a chance to join us in our community celebration as well! For the dates, times, and locations of the meetings mentioned in this article, see the calendar in this newsletter, or call 734-262-1052 or e-mail kargach@netscape.com. Also, for more information on Bríd and Imbolc, Fox has written a few articles about them, which you can read at: <http://www.shininglakes.bravehost.com/deities/bridol.html>.

Yours in service to the Kindreds and the Grove,
Rev. Rob Henderson, Senior Druid



Bríd

(from SLG's Web page on Bríd at <http://www.shininglakes.bravehost.com/deities/brid.html>)

Prior to working with Manannan, An Bruane had conducted a small rite to close the nemeton for the season. During that rite we had invoked our unknown and unnamed goddess of the hearth to help the grove find a permanent home. As the following Imbolc approached, more workings were held to determine the identity of this goddess. All the signs and visions pointed to a queenly Irish goddess known as Bríd, Brigid or St. Bridget.

Bríd is associated with the hearth as the center and focus of the home and the community as a whole. She is the goddess of the social customs that bind the folk together, such as the rules of hospitality and social conduct. She also possesses the powers of the otherworldly well of regeneration and wisdom.

One of her central foci is the healing and well-being of women and children, especially during childbirth for she is the power of new beginnings. Each year we conduct specific rites that have been passed down to us from midwives of old to provide protection, healing, fertility and increased milk production in young mothers. Traditionally her healing powers were equally effective for human and non-human mothers such as livestock.

Bríd's other main power is as the provider of creative inspiration and wisdom. In this aspect she is seen as a triple fire goddess who provides wisdom and creativity to creators of art such as poetry, medical healing and crafts such as metalworking. Her roles of fire goddess and promoter of new beginnings are combined into the themes of the early spring festival of Imbolc.

Sacred to Bríd are hazel and birch trees which have the power to bestow some of her blessings. Most appropriate offerings to her are dairy products, such as milk or butter, hazelnuts, birch boughs and small bits of cloth left tied to bushes near holy wells.

Recipe Corner!

Beach Bar Tomato Soup

1/2 stick butter
1 small onion, chopped finely
1 26-oz can of tomato soup
1 qt Half and Half
1 tbsp garlic powder
1 tbsp basil
1 qt stewed tomatoes
12-oz package of cream cheese



Sautee butter and onion till light brown.

Add all ingredients to crock pot. Cook on medium until cream cheese melts, then turn to low to keep warm.

—Thanks to Kim Wehrmeister!!

SLG Leadership Council

Senior Druid

Rob Henderson robh@cyberspace.org

Assistant Senior Druid

Rodney Cox uberrod@comcast.net

Administrator

Jude Howison uputat@yahoo.com

Scribe

Jude Howison uputat@yahoo.com

Pursewarden

Rodney Cox uberrod@comcast.net

Chronicler

Genevieve Stoyak gstoyak@hotmail.com

Outreach Coordinator

Charles Howison pherrix@hotmail.com

Youth Activities Coordinator

Matt Tannehill garbh9@aol.com

SLG Guild Leaders

Magicians' Guild

Rodney Cox uberrod@comcast.net

Warriors' Guild

Rodney Cox uberrod@comcast.net

Healers' Guild

Rodney Cox uberrod@comcast.net

Producers' Guild (unofficial)

Genevieve Stoyak gstoyak@hotmail.com

No e-mail access? Contact our officers at our snail-mail address or phone number.

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Grove Calendar: Yule to Spring Equinox

Rituals

An Bruane: Rituals and advanced spiritual exploration for those who wish to go beyond the standard High Day rites. Members only, please. *1/29, 2/19, 3/25, 7-9 pm at Rod/Liz's*

Liturgists' Roundtable—Ritual Planning: Help us plan our Imbolc and Spring Equinox rituals. All welcome. *1/22, 2/5, 3/4, 3/18, 7-9 pm at Rod/Liz's*

Fire Lighting Ceremony: We gather together to kindle the hearth fire and take it to our homes, to tend through the night and bring to the ritual. *2/8, 3/21, 7-9 pm at Rod/Liz's*

Imbolc Rite: Come join us as we honor Bríd, our Grove's goddess of community and the hearth. There will be a raffle and potluck after the rite. *2/9, 2-5 pm at Friends*

Spring Equinox Rite: Come join us as we honor Ana, our Grove's river mother. There will be a raffle and potluck after the rite. (And bring any seeds or gardening tools that you would like blessed!) *3/22, 2-5 pm at Friends*

Social Events

Coffee Hour: Join us for our monthly discussion of interesting topics. *1/25, 2/29, 3/28, 7-9 pm at Borders*

Meetings

SLG Business Meeting: Discussion of general business and setting of the calendar. *1/8, 2/12, 3/11, 7-9 at Borders*

ConVocation 2008

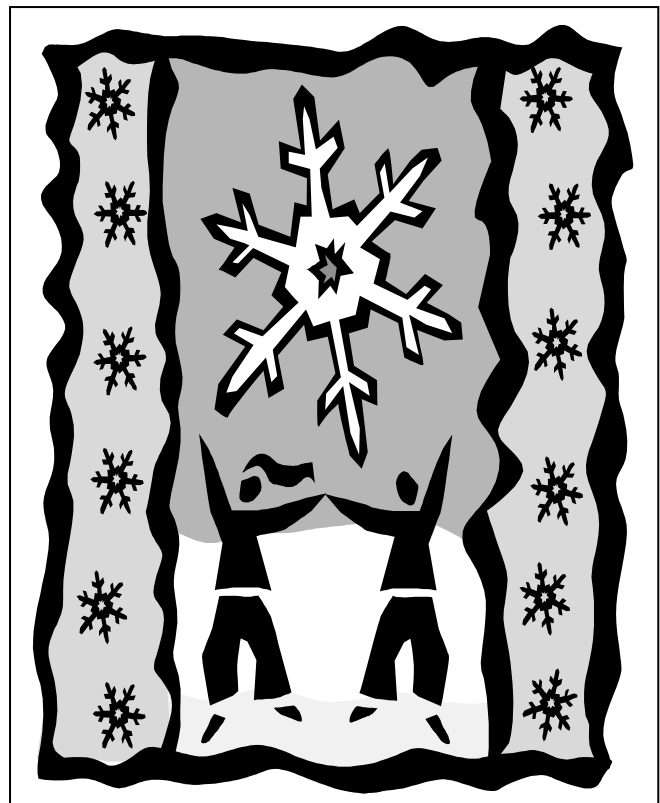
Michigan's Premier Spiritual Event, presented by the Magical Education Council. Programs include a variety of guests of honor teaching classes; an art show; a merchant's room; as well as rituals by a variety of Wiccan, Druidic, and other paths, groups, and individuals. Open drum circles will be held at least Friday and Saturday night. For more information visit <http://www.convocation.org/> *2/21-2/24, Hilton Detroit/Troy, 5500 Crooks Rd., Troy*

Helping the Huron

Stonefly Search: Join a team that searches for stoneflies in creeks to learn about stream conditions in the Huron River. (You must register in advance for this! jmartin@hrwc.org or 734-769-5971) *1/26, 1-4 pm, meet at NEW Center*

Run for your lives—the Biddies are coming!

The Brídeog is our annual Imbolc tradition, in which the rowdy (maybe not too rowdy) Biddies travel from house to house with our Bríd dolly, demanding an offering of non-perishable food items (later donated to Food Gatherers) and bringing a Bríd Cross (made from the Grove's own wheat straw) and the goddess' blessings to our homes. This year's Brídeog will be on the evening of February 2nd. If you're interested in being a Biddie, or having us visit your home, contact Rob at kargach@netscape.com or (734) 262-1052.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
January 6	7	8 7-9 Business Mtg. Borders	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 MLK DAY	22 7-9 Liturgist RT Rod/Liz's	23	24	25 7-9 Coffee Hour Borders	26 1-4 Stonefly Search NEW Center
27	28	29 7-9 An Bruane Rod/Liz's	30	31	February 1	2 Brideog
3	4	5 7-9 Liturgist RT Rod/Liz's PACZKI DAY	6	7	8 7 PM Fire Lighting Rod/Liz's	9 2-5 Imbolc Friends
10	11	12 7-9 Business Mtg. Borders	13	14 VALENTINE'S DAY	15	16
17	18	19 7-9 An Bruane Rod/Liz's	20	21 CONVOCATION	22 CONVOCATION	23 CONVOCATION
24 CONVOCATION	25	26	27	28	29 7-9 Coffee Hour Borders	March 1
2	3	4 7-9 Liturgist RT Rod/Liz's	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 7-9 Business Mtg. Borders	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 7-9 Liturgist RT Rod/Liz's	19	20 SPRING BEGINS	21 7 PM Fire Lighting Rod/Liz's	22 2-5 Spring Equinox Rite Friends
23 EASTER	24	25 7-9 An Bruane Rod/Liz's	26	27	28 7-9 Coffee Hour Borders	29

Addresses:

Borders Books and Music: 3527 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor
 Friends Meeting: 1420 Hill St., Ann Arbor

NEW Center: 1100 N. Main, Ann Arbor
 Rod and Liz's: 263 Larkspur, Ann Arbor, (734) 998-1029