



Shining Lakes News

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



Yule 2008

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Looking to the Past to Heal the Present

(This is a reconstruction of the presentation Rob gave at the Washtenaw Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network's interfaith service on December 7th, as part of their Global AIDS Week events.)

When Jen called me and asked me to speak here this evening about compassion, I admit I was a little surprised. When people here the word "Druid," they're more likely to think of the blood of human sacrifice than the milk of human kindness. But we modern neo-Pagans are a kind and caring lot—at least I'd like to think so—so I accepted the offer.

I should explain to those of you here who aren't familiar with ADF, that what we do is look to the religious practices of the ancient Indo-European peoples, and study them, and try to apply them to our modern lives. But as much as we admire them, we don't want to mimic them mindlessly. In this particular case, what inspiration can we draw upon to spread compassion to those with HIV and AIDS?

Sadly, the ancients weren't well known for their acceptance of outsiders; indeed, they tended to be more tribal in their outlook, with a corresponding fear of anyone who wasn't like them. And even within the tribe, those who posed a danger to the people could be expelled. The ancient Greeks, my own chosen culture within ADF, were the ones who invented the word "ostracism"!

So that was my challenge for this evening. Did the ancients leave us anything to work with, that would show us the value of compassion? After reading the old myths and legends, I think I found something—the story of Philoctetes.

Philoctetes was a prince who was a close friend of Herakles—or Hercules, if you learned your Greek mythology with Roman names. At Herakles' funeral, Philoctetes was entrusted with the bow and arrows of Herakles—powerful weapons indeed! When the Trojan

War began, he and his army sailed with the Greeks to attack Troy. They stopped at an island along the way, and Philoctetes was (according to one version of the story, at least) bitten in the foot by a snake. This left a festering wound that gave off a terrible smell, which drove the other Greeks to the edge of madness. They decided to leave Philoctetes on that island, and continue their voyage to Troy.

Nine years passed, and Troy still hadn't been defeated. A captured seer prophesied that the Greeks could only capture the enemy city if certain conditions were met. One of those was that the bow and arrows of Herakles must be used against the Trojan army.

Now where could they find the bow and arrows of . . . Whoops!

Even though they had once voted to throw him out of their warrior community, the Greeks understood that they needed Philoctetes back, and badly. So a delegation returned to that island, where Philoctetes had barely survived those nine years by living off the land. He wasn't all that happy with the Greeks for stranding him there for so long, but they did

manage to convince him to come with them to Troy. (Sophocles wrote a very good play about that negotiation, *Philoctetes*, if you want to read about it.) So he went to Troy, where one of the Greek doctors managed to heal his wound, and he fought bravely alongside the Greeks, and was one of the soldiers who hid inside the Trojan Horse which finally won the war for the Greeks.

It may seem odd that I'm using a war story as an example of ancient views of compassion, but I think this story clearly shows that the ancient Greeks knew that sometimes it was necessary to go to those who had been wronged and to welcome them back into their society. Even in their more tribal society, they knew the importance of compassion.

One last thought that I'd like to share: Sometimes we ADF members talk about the whole "tribal society" concept and how it applies to our modern



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lives. Personally, I think that a tribe is defined by the group of people you come into contact with on a regular basis, those you can communicate with every day, or maybe every few days. In this age of the Internet and cell phones, I think that the whole world is now one tribe, and that we neo-Pagan Druids can consider everyone in the world to be a part of our own tribe. Even if our spiritual ancestors could treat people from other tribes as

outsiders, we don't need to do it, nor should we. And I ask that everyone here keep that in mind, and keep the story of Philoctetes in mind, when we interact with those who have HIV and AIDS.

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

Danu's Shiny Blanket

(Reprinted from Shining Lakes News, Yule 2006)

Remember back when you were young, and hated going to bed?
You'd yell and kick and scream until your face would turn bright red.
For Morpheus was monstrous, trying to steal your time to play,
And not a soothing healer as those dumb adults would say.

But then your mind grew more mature (at least that's what I think)
And now you know it's pleasant when to Slumberland you sink.
A time to rest, to dream of happy thoughts and wild retreats,
At least until your bedroom partner rolls and steals the sheets.

And yet you still complain when chill November winds do blow,
A portent of the coming of the cold December snow.
Consider, when the powder piles up seven inches deep,
That this is Mother Danu's way to put the land to sleep.

For now it's just past Samhain, and the dark year half begun,
And now's the time to see much more of stars and less of sun.
Just like the child who sees the dusk and knows that bed is near,
So too must nature slumber in the nighttime of the year.

For bears, it's very easy, they just curl up in their caves,
And hibernate until the spring brings warmth in growing waves.
And plants will either die or drowse, depending on their style.
But March and melting snow will bring them back and make us smile.

But no, we human beings have a harder road to tread.
We can't just spend the winter months curled up upon a bed.
And so we rant and grumble when we have someplace to go,
Because our trip's slowed down a tad by Danu's blessed snow.

Just keep in mind while winter's here and you are stuck downtown,
That this is Danu's way to get her children to slow down,
And spend more time indoors and share your time with friends and kin,
Enjoying winter's quietude before the summer's din.

And soon enough the wheel will turn and springtime will be here!
And spring will turn to summer and the bright half of the year.
And winter's rest will make you ready for your Beltaine fun,
To frolic in the forest in the light of Bel the Sun!

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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. *1/27, 2/17, 3/31, 7-9 pm at Rod/Liz's*

Liturgists' Roundtable—Ritual Planning: Help us plan our Imbolc and Spring Equinox rituals. All welcome. *1/20, 2/3, 3/3, 3/17, 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. *2/6, 3/20, 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. *2/7, 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!) *3/21, 2-5 pm at Friends*

Social Events

Coffee Hour: Join us for our monthly discussion of interesting topics. *1/23, 2/27, 3/27, 7-9 pm at Borders*

Meetings

SLG Business Meeting: Discussion of general business and setting of the calendar. *1/13, 2/10, 3/10, 7-9 at Borders*

ConVocation 2008

ConVocation is a convention of the many mystical spiritual paths and faiths who desire to teach each other and promote fellowship among all esoteric traditions. Since 1995, this 4-day event has brought together over 100 classes and rituals presented by local instructors, internationally renowned guest speakers, and authors. Along with workshops, ConVocation offers over 40 tables of merchandise in the Merchant Room, an Art Show, and the largest indoor Drum Circle in the Midwest. In this 15th annual event, the theme, focused on the Devil Tarot card, is From the Shadow to the MountainTop: A Journey Empowered by Your Dark Side. Please join us as we explore our shadows and find in them the strength to excel. *2/19-2/22, 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) *1/31, 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 of straw, along with the goddess' blessings to our homes. This year's Brídeog will be on the evening of January 31st. If you're interested in being a Biddie, or having us visit your home, contact Rob at robh@shininglakes.org or (734) 262-1052.

Do you have an announcement you'd like to share with your Grovemates? How about a recipe, poem, blessing, or book review? Have you visited any shops or restaurants that seem particularly pagan-friendly? We're always looking for good stuff to fill these pages! SLN is put together the week before each equinox and solstice rite, and the Spring Equinox issue will be here faster than you think! Call Gen the Chronicler at (734) 262-1462 or send her an e-mail at gstoyak@hotmail.com.

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

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