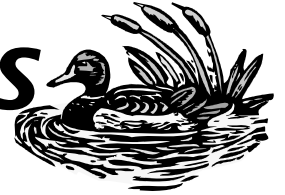




Shining Lakes News

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



Spring Equinox/Beltane 2006

Vol. 13, No. 2

The Druid Who Came In From The Code



kay, I admit it. Maybe I really was the last person in the world who got around to reading *The DaVinci Code*. I've never had a lot of interest in reading bestsellers, even the ones that have a paganish theme to them. With all the books on ancient Greek religion that I haven't read yet (and there are a few of those, really), why waste my time on one? But the buzz and furor surrounding the movie convinced me to plunge in and give it a chance. And I'm glad I did! It's not great literature, but it's a fun action novel with a few mildly amusing puzzles thrown in.

I was a bit surprised by the public reaction when it first came out. While I hadn't read it, enough of my friends had told me about the controversial concepts that had so many people angry, and so many more puzzled. But I had know for many years about the story of Mary Magdalene traveling to France to continue Jesus' ministry. It's not like that was supposed to have happened recently! Maybe I spend too much time reading books that aren't bestsellers? Well, partly that, and partly the third Gabriel Knight computer game, which covers that angle on the Grail legend in great detail. I won't say that I find it fascinating—that's not my religion any more—but certainly interesting.

And like many people, Christian or not, I was surprised by the huge negative reaction by people who felt that their faith was being "attacked" by the ideas presented in the book about the origins of their religion.

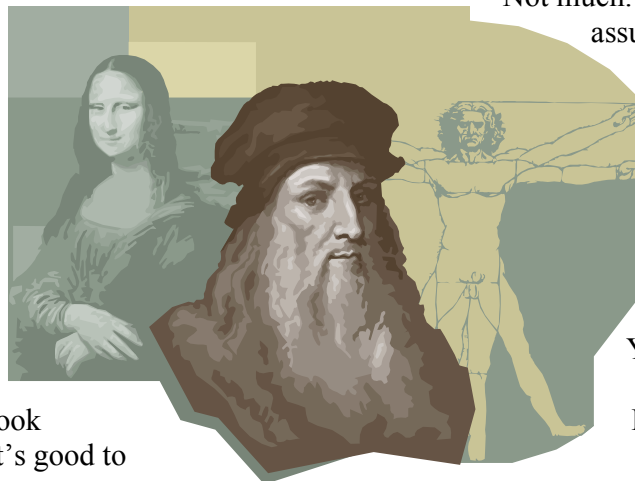
Honestly, I'm very worried for anyone so paranoid that a work of fiction makes them react so defensively. (Should I be constantly attacking the original *Star Trek* because of the episode where my Hellenic gods are shown as omnipotent aliens?) I'm glad to have seen so many people on television this past month saying that the book hasn't shaken their faith at all. It's good to

remember that most people can be reasonable when given the chance.

But the biggest surprise to me, in all of this, was the strong response by group of Opus Dei members and monks and albinos and albino monks to the character of Silas, the mad monk. (Perhaps Rasputin should have come back from the dead one last time to complain about the depiction of a mad monk?) I certainly didn't see anything in the book that implied that all albinos or all monks were like that, and even if a few odd practices are associated with Opus Dei which they probably don't do in real life, so what? It's fiction. Real people aren't going to make assumptions based on this. (And if they did, I'd really be looking forward to the assumptions about monks they'd be making after *Nacho Libre* comes out!) I'm glad that Opus Dei has taken this opportunity to tell people what they're really about, even if they seemed to be taking the whole thing personally.

So what does this have to do with us as neo-Pagan Druids? Actually, that last part can apply to us. How often have we seen members of our own community overreacting to any silly depiction of a Druid or a pagan in a movie or a book? I remember the response by some of the Wiccan groups back in 1990 when the Jim Henson movie *The Witches* came out. Because it had—wait for it—a wicked witch in it! You'd have thought the mob of torch-wielding villagers were at the front door. And what effect did the movie really have?

Not much. Again, real people don't make assumptions about real Druids based on these things. So I'll take this opportunity to remind you all that being a good person and living well is the best way to show people what real Druids—or real Christians or real monks—are like.



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

Your Title Here

By Rob Henderson (of course!)

Digging carefully through the recently-turned soil, I find artifacts from the past. This looks like an earring, and here's another. This seems to be a necklace of some sort, here's a silver coin with Mercury's head on it, and here's . . . ah yes, a Connecticut quarter, with an oak tree on it! I remember when those first came out and we were so eager to use them as Well offerings. It seems so long ago, now.

During the last few months, we SLuGs have had a few chance to play around in the muck and get our hands dirty, literally. The first was in Tecumseh, where Erica and Robb (no, not me, I mean another Robb who has an extra B in his name) have graciously offered a space on their property to grow our Grove's emmer wheat. Last year we didn't have a space for it, and the year before we couldn't get it to grow (some farmers we are), so I'm very grateful that we have a good chance to get back to the hundreds and hundreds of wheat stalks we used to get. We found a large patch that would get a lot of sunlight, and the men tore up the soil in the mild drizzle while the women stayed inside to remove the wheat seeds from the heads. (No, we didn't plan it this way; the women were just sensible.) After that was done, we all went outside and planted the seeds, along with some festive garden decorations. Now we water and we wait. In addition to thanking Erica and Robb once more for letting us continue our Grove tradition, I also want to thank Dot Quirk for loaning us the gardening tools that allowed us to actually finish in two hours, and the folks who came that day to help us still and plant.

From farming, we move on to archaeology. Back in 1998, Fox, Jim Hoyt, and I went out to our nemeton for one of our An Bruane sessions and redug the Well, sifting through the dirt and sorting out the old offerings so they could be placed back in the Well. I thought it was high time that we do it again, so for our past An Bruane, we went back out to the nemeton. We redug the well, and while Jude and I worked both a rake and our hands through the dirt to get the offerings out, Rod, Nancy, and Calley made new gateposts for the circle. We also carried new stumps for the Kindred altars down from the fire circle, picked up branches that had fallen or blown into the nemeton during the winter, and generally cleaned up the place. Maybe it's not as much fun as sitting around talking about ancient Greek temple architecture, but . . .

Actually, I don't agree with that. And those who know me know that getting dirt on my hands isn't usually my idea of a good time. But if there's one thing I've learned in my ten years with this Grove (and hopefully I've learned more that one thing in that time), I've learned that if we want to know the ways of the ancients, we need to do more than sit around and read and look things up online and talk and e-mail about it. Those things are all necessary and good, of course. But if we really want to understand what life was like in those days, and why they did those rituals, and what it means to us as moderns, we really need to put those ideas into action. From understanding the agricultural cycle and how badly they needed the earth to be kind to them and provide the food they needed, to taking care of a ritual site from year to year, actions not only speak louder than words, they can teach louder as well.

Apologies from the Chronicler

Yes, this issue of *SLN* is late. Very, very late. So late that the Senior Druid has written two whole articles just to make sure I have enough material to get this issue out. So late that the computer crash (sob!) that heralded the beginning of the delay seems but a distant memory now. I hope to catch up with another issue very, very soon. So send me some stuff to print!

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Grove Calendar: Beltaine to Summer Solstice

Rituals

An Bruane: Rituals and advanced spiritual exploration for those who wish to go beyond the standard High Day rites. Members only, please. *5/16, 6/20, 7-9 pm at Rod/Liz's*

Liturgists' Roundtable—Ritual Planning: Help us plan our Beltaine and Summer Solstice rituals. All welcome. *6/13, 7-9 pm; 6/4, 2-5 pm (different sate and time for this meeting only); all at Rod/Liz's*

Fire Watch: We follow the traditions of our ancestors and keep the hearth fire burning the night before ritual. *6/16, Dusk at Botsford*

Summer Solstice Rite: Join us as we honor Bel and Danu, our primal father and mother deities. There will be a raffle and potluck after the rite. *6/17, 2-5 pm at Botsford (rain date: 6/18)*

Festivals

Wellspring: Join ADF members from all over the continent for ritual, workshops, and the ADF annual meeting. *5/25–5/29, Brushwood Folklore Center, Sherman, New York*

Classes and Study Groups

Dedicant Program Study Group: Join us as we work toward completing the ADF Dedicant Program. *5/13, 6/10, 3-5 pm at Ypsi Library*

Social Events

Coffee Hour: Join us for our monthly discussion of interesting topics. *5/19, 6/23, 7-9 pm at Borders*

Helping the Huron

Bug ID Day: Count the insect samples we collected from streams in the rivershed. Sponsored by the Huron River Watershed Council. (You must register in advance for this! jmartin@hrwc.org or 734-769-5971) *5/7, 12-3 pm or 2-5 pm, meet at NEW Center*

Meetings

SLG Business Meeting: Discussion of general business and setting of the calendar. *5/9, 6/6, 7-9 at Borders*

Magicians' Guild: Studies of magic and its uses in Druidry. January's topic: Energy Work. *6/4, 6/25, 2-3 pm at Rod/Liz's*

Healers' Guild: Studies of natural remedies and other forms of healing. January's topic: Runic Reiki (Rod's new system). *6/4, 6/25, 3-4 pm at Rod/Liz's*

Warriors' Guild: Studies of honor, strength, and protection of boundaries. *6/4, 6/25, 4-5 pm at Rod/Liz's*

The Wellspring Gathering

Thursday, May 25th - Monday, May 29th
Brushwood Folklore Center, Sherman, New York

Sound the Horn of Gathering, and light the Fire of the Feast! The Wellspring Gathering brings together the Elders, hard-working managers and membership of A.D.F. for a long weekend of worship and magic, teaching and learning music and fellowship. This year our work will include a special conclave of our ordained clergy, workshops and rituals from many of our leaders and members, the national ADF Warrior's Guild Championship games, competitions in static arts and brewing and lots more. We are very pleased to welcome Isaac Bonewits as our special guest. We are very pleased as well to have the folk of Sassafrass Grove ADF presenting workshops and the Friday evening ritual, focused on creating Ancestor Images for our personal or group practice. We are delighted to welcome back the women of Revelry (remember 'Magical Tool'?) and those Awen folks will sing too. We especially invite any of our folk who feel ready to stand up and sing for us - bring your best!

For more info: <http://www.stonecreed.org/wellspring.html>

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7 12-3 or 2-5 ID Day <i>NEW Center</i>	8	9 7-9 Business Mtg. Borders	10	11	12	13 3-5 DP Study Group Ypsilanti Library
14	15	16 7-9 An Bruane Rod/Liz's	17	18	19 7-9 Coffee Hour Borders	20
MOTHER'S DAY						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
				<i>WELLSPRING</i>	<i>WELLSPRING</i>	<i>WELLSPRING</i>
28	29	30	31	June 1	2	3
<i>WELLSPRING</i>	WELLSPRING					
4 2-5 Guild Day/Lit RT Rod/Liz's Mage/Heal/War	5	6 7-9 Business Mtg. Borders	7	8	9	10 3-5 DP Study Group Ypsilanti Library
11	12	13 7-9 Liturgist RT Rod/Liz's	14	15	16 Fire Watch Botsford	17 2-5 Summer Solstice Rite Botsford
			FLAG DAY			
18	19	20 7-9 An Bruane Rod/Liz's	21	22	23 7-9 Coffee Hour Borders	24
<i>FATHER'S DAY</i>			SUMMER BEGINS			

Addresses:

Borders Books and Music: 3527 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor
 Botsford Recreational Preserve, 301 Miller, Ann Arbor
 NEW Center: 1100 N. Main, Ann Arbor

Rod and Liz's: 263 Larkspur, Ann Arbor, (734) 998-1029
 Ypsilanti District Library, 5577 Whitaker Rd., Ypsilanti