

Crane Chatter Symbolic Edition

A publication by Three Cranes Grove, ADF

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Around the Fire with the Senior Druid

The Twelve Days of Yule

I can't find any lore to support that there was anything specifically done on each of the twelve days, nor any modern pagan or heathen customs that have taken that place. So, what all good neo-pagans do, I'm inventing my own! Feel free to join in, if you like.

The focus is, of course, from the Norse perspective. Due to the traveling of the date of the Winter Solstice from year to year, adjustments for activities on each day would need

to be taken into account. Note also, there are actually thirteen days. This takes into account what appears to be a customary start of the Yule on December 19.

That's also the earliest possible date for the actual solstice to occur. One could just shift the entire twelve days, to stay in order, but then you're potentially celebrating New Year's Eve a few days early, which might confuse your guests if you have them.

The inspiration for this comes mostly from John and Caitlin Matthews book *The Winter Solstice: The Sacred*

Traditions of Christmas. As suggested by the title, this book weaves together Christian and Pagan traditions, with a leaning toward Celtic rather than Norse traditions. Their twelve (really thirteen) days start on Christmas Day also. So, I took the general themes they suggest for each day, took the Christian influence out of it, and then arranged around this year's solstice date (December 21).

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POEMS TO BRIGHID

Brigando, lady of bright and radiant flame:

A good fire is kindled on my altar for you.

I call to you as lady of inspiration, Who kindles fire in my head.

I call to you as smith and craftswoman,

Who guides my hand in creativity.

I call to you as healer and midwife, Who soothes our pain and births the year.

Brigando, I call to you in all these ways:

Be known to me and a guest at my hearth!

- Rev. Michael J. Dangler

Beautiful Lady, let me love you with the pen in my hand,
Crafting for you, capturing the very power of written word
And holding it as an offering for you.
I offer these words, written with such beauty and care,
And yet these words need a voice to fill them with magic.

Inspiring Woman, let me love you with the words in my mouth,
Giving them depth and breadth, giving them energy for motion
And propelling them forth as an offering for you.

I offer these words, spoken with such eloquence and beauty,
And yet these words must be infused with love to give them flight.

Gracious Goddess, let me love you with the song in my heart.

Let my voice rise to the loftiest heights of the heavens with your name upon my lips
And resound deep within the Earth as I sing your praises.

I offer these words, filled with love and wrapped in song

That they may be worthy to be held in the palm of your hand.

~ Melissa S Burchfield, Bard, Three Cranes Grove, ADF

A Path Through Nine Sacred Woods

The Initiatory Path in ADF proudly to the forefront.

A Path Through Nine Sacred Woods is a 9-month to 1-year journey toward Initiation in ADF, covering the requirements of the ADF Initiatory Path. This is similar to a path put together for the first study program in ADF, the Dedicant Path, where we ask the student to journal as they work their way through a year of high day rituals, discipline, and study.

In July 2011, we will begin meeting with those who have submitted their Dedicant Path work and start the process that will end in Initiation into the ADF Initiatory Current. Through it, we will learn many new skills and hone old ones, all while learning about the trees that we pass on this path.

The Nine Sacred Woods are drawn from lore and history. There are several lists of 9 woods, but this set was developed for the ADF IP. These woods and their meaning are:

OAK - STUDY

The path of the oak is one of study, for the oak tree is a firm foundation, one that can be used to build other skills atop it. This path will teach you to work through a course of study regarding Indo-European culture and religion. This course is designed to teach our Initiates about the central, foundational aspects of ADF's deep roots, and to bring them

BIRCH - LITURGY

The path of the birch reminds us that even though we may know only a fraction of what the religious rituals of the ancients was, we have the roots that allow us to form a basis and understanding for our practices: as the birch tree may grow from roots even when the trunk has been cut clean, so to may our rituals grow from what remains. Thus, this path teaches us the conduct of ADF liturgy.

HAZEL - BARDRY

The path of the hazel is the path of beauty, both in word and creativity; it is thus the path of the bard, and teaches the groundwork of general bardic studies. Through this path, we can learn to create through our voices and through our hands as well.

ROWAN - MAGIC

The path of the rowan is one of magic and learning the inner skills. This tree is known for what it hides, and the trickery associated with catching the birds. This tree's red berries represent the life-blood of Druidry: the magic inherent in nature. This path will teach the groundwork for future magical work.

HAWTHORN - LITURGY PRACTICUM

The path of the hawthorn is the path of doing the work. The tree is known for use in ritual that renews the cosmos, and so too does work along this path. Here, we will work our way through a liturgical practicum, expanding our understanding of the cosmos through working

with it and re-creating it in our daily lives.

WILLOW - MYTH

The path of the willow is known for its flexibility and mutability, as well as the many complicated notions that follow it. As myth is a driving force in our work, and as we will sometimes work through the holes and loops in myth to get to our aim, this path will help us to understand the depths of Indo-European myth.

FIR - LANGUAGE

The path of the fir is one of speaking in the way you wish to be understood. The Scholar's Primer tells us that the fir is the beginning of speech, and as such this path will lead us to study of an IE Language.

APPLE - TRANCE

The path of the apple is the path of the Otherworld and contact with the spirits. This path will take us down the path of trance-work.

VINE - DIVINATION

The path of the vine is one of inspiration, joy, and abandonment; it is also the path of communication. Just as in vino veritas, so too in the vine do we find truth. Through this path we will learn the skills do deepen their work with a divination set.

(continued on page 5)

Twelve Days of Yule (continued. from page 1)

We set up an altar with twelve candles surrounding a large solar candle in the middle. On each night, a different candle is lit, and on Solstice eve, the solar candle is lit as part of the vigil. Offerings of mead work for all days, obviously, but other things are suggested below.

December 19: Odin as the winter wanderer; the Wild Hunt. I have a story/meditation about a winter wanderer from the Matthews' book. Offerings could include mead, ale, grain for Sleipnir. Placement of Odin on altar. I think the 'woodland Santa' figures work really well here.

December 20: Mother's night, Holda. Honoring the female ancestors, the disir, and Holda. Place a female figure in white on altar to represent Holda, or if you have representatives of your Disir. Since the Solstice occurs tomorrow, one could begin their Solstice Eve vigil. Vigils are popular, but since many of us have to work the next day, they are often not practical. There is also a very rare lunar eclipse beginning at 1:33am (December 21), so it's worth setting an alarm to watch it.

December 21: Solstice Day: Honoring Sunna/Sol. The actual solstice occurs on December 21, 2010 at 6:38 pm. Lighting of the solar candle, and placement of a solar figure on the altar.

December 22: Nature Spirits. Offerings of food, placements of images of the nature spirits on the altar.

December 23: Feast of Fools: Suggested by the Matthews, and it might be fun for families with children, to put them in charge of something they're normally not in charge of, including maybe dinner and then the evening's ritual and candle lighting. The tradition is definitely one of switching roles and of ritualized disrespect (meaning it isn't real).

December 24: Honoring the Alfar and the Housewights. If you have children whose friends are sitting out milk and cookies for Santa, this would fit in well with that.

December 25: The spirit of hospitality and gifting, and special blessings for children. This also fits well with the secular and mainstream day of gifting.

December 26: Celebration of winter, snow. Honoring Skadhi and Ullr is appropriate at this time. Placement of snowy like things on the altar.

December 27: Celebration of the evergreen. Honoring and meditating (or even journeying) on the world tree, placing a sprig of real evergreen on the altar.

December 28: Honoring Frigga. There's a tradition in Europe to honor St. Distaff, and I can't think of a Norse goddess other than Holda maybe, who would be better associated with this than Frigga. Placement of a distaff if you have one, or other household related things on the altar.

December 29: Bringing in the Boar. The boar's head would be used for swearing oaths, but most of us don't have access to one of those. So, a statue of a boar would be fine, and special honoring for Frey and Freya perhaps, given

their associations with the animal. Offering of an apple for the Great Boar, in case it passes by your house.

December 30: The Shining Ones. As the spirits of home and land and ancestors have received honor, a special night for the Shining Ones.

December 31: Twelfth night. New Year's Eve! Traditional parties work well here, but a more spiritual aspect can be observed either quickly at home or as part of the party (like at our house!) Activities include divination (so placement of runes on the altar). There's also a suggestion I quite like from the Matthews' book of gathering juniper and letting it dry by the fire (or wherever that is in a modern home) for use to bless the home tomorrow. In addition, the burning of the yule log, wreath, or whatever was used occurs.

Jan 1: New Year's Day: No candles are lit here, but we do have some important work to do. Getting ready for the new year. Decorations should be taken down and the house returned to order, as the 'time out of time' is over. The juniper sprigs gathered last night should be used to asperse the home with water (melted snow would be awesome here) and then smudge the home.

Enjoy!

~Tanrinia
Senior Druid
Three Cranes Grove

From the Kitchen of Scarlett

Sbiten

This is a Russian drink my grandmother brought over from Hungary...as usual she added her own twist. ;-)

Sbiten

- 3 1/2 cups water
- 2 cups honey
- 3 cinnamon sticks broken up
- 2-3 cardamom pods, seeds removed, toasted and crushed
- 1 teaspoon dried ginger pieces
- 1 tablespoon whole cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon whole rainbow peppercorns
- 4 Tablespoons Blackberry jam
- 1/2 cup Slivovitz (Plum brandy) (Optional)

Combine all ingredients (Except Slivovitz) in a medium saucepan and bring to a slow boil over medium heat. Whisk continuously to insure honey is well mixed. After boiling add slivovitz if you so choose and stir well. Strain liquid through cheesecloth twice. Serve hot.



Tangy Salmon Soup

- 1 pkg cream cheese (cubed)
- 2 1/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 can chicken broth
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 cup milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh dill
- 2 sliced green onions
- 12 oz smoked salmon flaked

Heat cream cheese Dijon milk dill green onions peas and broth in a saucepan over medium heat till cheese is melted and soup smooth, Stir in salmon, heat till hot and serve.

A Path Through Nine Sacred Woods (continued from page 2)

The Tools of the Nine Woods

Each of the woods has a tool that symbolizes the work done on the path. Taken together, these tools provide the basis for deep work and ritual that the Initiate in ADF's work must follow.

Oak - *The Cup* - Study fill us up, and the cup is symbolic of the vessel we fill within ourselves.

Birch - *The Sickle* - Liturgical knowledge brings authority in ritual, and the sickle exemplifies that authority.

Hazel - *The Voice* - Bardry brings us a voice that commands and draws attention.

Rowan - *The Wand* - Magical training leads to a need for tools of the magician.

Hawthorn - *The Bundle of Woods* - Practical experience with liturgy brings a fire of piety, to be kindled in the fuel of the nine woods.

Willow - *The Crane Bag* - Mythological understanding allows us to know what the crane bag hides beneath its flap.

Fir - *The Druid's Egg* - Language can be well-used in life, as the Druid's Egg was used in the courtroom to bring victory.

Apple - *The Apple Branch* - Trance is induced by the music of the Otherworld, replicated by this branch.

Vine - *The Divination Set* - Divination guides us through the tools at our disposal.



Artwork by Rev. James Dillard, ADF

Further Works of Bardry

Boann and the Well of Segais

By: Melissa S. Burchfield
Bard, Three Cranes Grove, ADF

Boann and Bebhionn were as opposite as day and night, one as bright and vibrant as the sun, the other as deep and sensual as the night, both visions to behold. The sisters were always very close—and sometimes prone to mischief in their curiosity, for both were amazed by all manner of wonderful things in the world. At the age of marriage, the sisters were courted by several men. Bebhionn was happily wed to Aed Alainn. The lovely Boann had caught the eye of the Keeper of the Sacred Well of Segais, Nechtain.

The Well of Segais was said to be full of the Waters of Inspiration and Knowledge, and only Nechtain and his three cupbearers were permitted to approach the Well, for one unbidden glance into the Well would, in the very least, strike the violator blind.

While taking a walk one afternoon, Nechtain's carefree path led the two within distant eyesight of the Well. As beautiful as it was ancient, the Well was surrounded by nine hazel trees, heavily laden with the largest hazelnuts Boann had ever seen! When Nechtain realized where he had taken them, he hastily turned, and they began to walk away, but Boann's thoughts remained on the Well.

For days, Boann dreamt of the Well and imagined all manner of life and gifts teeming within. She was driven to discuss her preoccupation with Bebhionn, whose eyes widened with wonder as Boann wove her imagery round her sister. Bebhionn, being happily married and uninterested in disfigurement, was easily swayed away from the curiosity that consumed her sister, and she left Boann with a warning to avert her thoughts as well.

One day while picking berries for a pie, Boann found herself once more within eyesight of the Well. She waited. She saw no one. She waited a bit more. Still, she saw none. She waited yet longer, and suddenly, her stillness was broken when a splash echoed toward her from within the Well. And then another. She took a few careful steps toward the Well, and before her eyes, she saw a great salmon jump out of the Waters, shimmering in rainbows of sunlight, to eat of the hazelnuts on the trees surrounding the Well. At the sight of the magnificent fish, Boann forgot all about the warnings and dangers of the Well. She only wanted to see, for so inspiring were the Waters within that the mere echo of their splashing enraptured the mind.

Boann approached the Well with an awe and innocence that belied her age. She cautiously placed a hand on the side of the Well and peered in. In a moment's instance, the Well began to shake and crack, and the Waters began to rise up in a great wave. Boann let out a shocked cry as the Waters whirled around and slashed her arm. Boann began to run. Behind her, the Waters continued to spiral round and round and finally slammed through the sides of the structure, shattering the walls of stone. Freed from their Ancient tomb, the Waters began to chase after Boann, erasing her footprints almost as fast as she made them.

On and on, across the breadth of the Island, the Waters pursued her until she finally leapt into the Sea, where she was caught by a surprised Manannan mac Lir. The Waters were calmly assumed into the Sea where they disappeared into the inky depths with a final, silvery flicker. Manannan, much surprised by the sudden disruption in his day looked toward the path where Boann had come, taking in the breathtaking view of a silvery river, almost laughing in its freedom and sparkling freely in the sunshine.

And so it was that Boann freed the Waters of Knowledge and Inspiration and brought them to the land.

Meditation Class with Irisa and Paul — March 22, 2011

Ostara at Highbanks Metro Park — March 20th
Deities of the Occasion are Idunna and Eostre



Highlights of the next few months

The Grove will deepen our work, as we always do, heading through the Spring Equinox and into Beltaine: this is a very active time for our Grove, with the spring coming on and the excitement of the greenery springing forth.

In February, we will have the Druid Moon *Anagantios*, the “Stay-at-Home” moon where our Grove Priests bless the houses of our members by carrying forth the light of Brigid’s flame to each dwelling.

In March, the Spring Equinox is upon us (our ritual is on March 20th), and with it, the beginnings of the festival season. We will also gather to celebrate the “End of the Cold” month, *Ogronios*, in March, where we honor the Earth Mother by bringing the dirt of our homelands

(and other exotic places) to share, and in so doing sink our roots into rich soil.

In April, we will celebrate the rains that come with a ritual at *Cutios*, the “Rain Month,” a time to remember that the Waters were once won for us by the Gods, and spread far across the land. Many of our members will be traveling to the Trillium Spring Gathering (see <http://trilliumgatheringadf.org/> for more information) before Beltaine, and this is a good time for us to gather, enjoy the new growth that is occurring, and to look toward the warmth of summer that is coming on.

On May 1, we will celebrate Beltaine, the festival of the bright fires that dot the hillsides and the turning of the wheel toward bright summer. Shortly after Beltaine, we will celebrate *Gaimos*,

the “End-of-Winter” month, and will watch as the world turns from dark to light, with the healing and vigorous warmth of the sun bringing life into its brightest joys.

Please, join us as we celebrate this portion of the year: it excites us to share it with you!