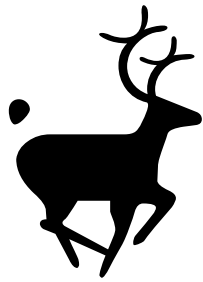


The Journey...



Official Newsletter of Church of the Spiral Tree
an Ecumenical Pagan church

Issue 22
Ostara, 2003

NEWS

Upcoming Elections Meeting: Our Annual Membership (Voting) Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 25, at 10 am, at Moondance, the festival which is run by Linda Kerr and held at Dragon Hills, near Carrollton, GA. If you live nearby, please plan to attend! (We'll have food!) If you can't make it, then please mail in your absentee ballot to vote for the officers for the next fiscal year. The ballot is included at the end of this issue of The Journey.

Want to Review Books? CST receives new books from various publishers quite often. The publishers are hoping we'll read these books, and publish a review in our newsletter. *I* don't have time to read all these, but if someone else would, that'd be great! Just let me know, and I'll mail you the book. By the way - you get to keep it if you review it! A list of books for review is inside this issue on page 6.

Pagan Prisoner Committee: The members of the Pagan Prisoner Committee are Cliff Landis, Violet Jade, Nion, and Eugene Chapman. The purpose of the committee is to help out our incarcerated members. We have a web page where we list addresses of those inmates who wish to receive letters and information (<http://geocities.com/violetjade11/>). If you'd like to be part of this committee, just email and let us know! You can contact our committee members by writing: Cliff Landis, P.O. Box 541, Lake Park, GA, 31636, or Violet Jade, P.O. Box 55, Alton, AL, 35015.

We Need Volunteers: CST needs a "PR" person, who can do things like mail out birthday cards to the Sacred Grove students, send greeting cards to potential donors, arranging fund-raisers, putting out flyers, etc. Please email if you're interested.

Disaster Relief Fund: In the past we've been able to send checks to disaster relief agencies in the wake of disasters. To help with these efforts, we need to build up our Disaster Relief Fund. Please consider donating to this fund—all donations are tax-deductible. At it's really nice to be able to mail a check from a *pagan* church!

Other Donations Needed: We are in sore need of a lawnmower at Waverly, where we hold most of the CST rituals. If you have one you don't use anymore, that is still in good shape, please consider donating it to CST! Again, all donations, both financial and material, are tax-deductible.

(NEWS continued inside)

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NEWS continued...

Shelter at Waverly: Craig has collected lots of scrap lumber from his job, and is thinking of building a pole barn at Waverly, the site where most of the CST rituals are held. The only thing he really needs is tin for a roof. If you have any tin, or any other scrap lumber or other building supplies, please contact him at <skalagrim@punkass.com>. It'd be nice if we could start building this before the weather gets too warm.

Rituals: If you would like to contribute rituals to be placed on the CST web page, you can email or mail them to us. Rituals can include spells, handfastings, wiccanings, funerals, etc.

Business Classifieds: If you run any time of business or offer any type of service, you may advertise for free in The Journey. Your ad should be in the form of a classified, and be kept brief, but descriptive. Please email or mail these in to us.

- Linda

Buffalo: Decree of Stamina

A reading by Animal Talker (David Carson Neeley)

“Sacred Animal People, brother and sisters of the animal world, I ask for your blessing today to bring to life the spirit of the Buffalo People so all may know your decree is stamina.”

On Turtle Island, life was abundant for all the creature beings who shared the gifts of Mother Earth. However, survival gradually became a struggle as living grew into a daily task.

What is happening to us? Asked the Buffalo. Food is becoming more scarce each passing day. Let's send our scouts to other clans and see if they are having the same difficulties as we are experiencing.

Two Buffalo scouts volunteered to visit the North, where the climate was cold. Two Buffalo scouts volunteered to scan the East to see if the same food shortage had spread in that direction. Two Buffalo scouts traveled to the South in search for answers to their questions. Two Buffalo scouts journeyed to the West to cast their eyes on the living conditions of their western relatives.

Suddenly through the smoky clouds, Hinoh, the Thunder Chief, spoke!

“A scourge of lust has descended upon us,
your coats of fur are needed.

Your bodies are left to rot into mush,
with future growth unheeded.

“Selfishness stops all gracious giving.
Lacks control and limits all living
Life, once abundant, has taught self-survival,
Love must seed our Earth's revival.

“Lives that have been shall be sacrificed,
As future growth is labeled and priced.
Yet fear not when, for now and then.
Earth laws shall restore what has been.”

From this message, the Buffalo knew lean times would prevail. However, their kind would survive if they practiced sacred trust as their wisdom and gratitude.

Praise and abundance, Buffalo wisdom serves wholly of itself to obtain oneness with all things. The Buffalo is the most secret of all animals, giving 100 percent of themselves not only for food, but spiritually. Dreams of the White Buffalo means the coming of abundance.

Cleansing prevails, renews and restores, challenges precede as thought implores. Life abundant awakens the hoard. Seek within, where peace is stored.



Who Are We?

Church of the Spiral Tree (CST) is a non-profit, volunteer-staffed, ecumenical pagan/wiccan church, designed to foster and celebrate a sense of community and family among pagans, both locally and in other regions of the country/world. CST celebrates the unique pagan family: parents, children, elders, and extended family. It is an ecumenical church in that it encompasses all traditions, and is non-exclusive. It welcomes all who revere the Earth Mother and adhere to the tenets of the Wiccan Rede ("An it harm none, do as you will"), regardless of which tradition one is affiliated with.

CST was incorporated in August 1997 to provide a legal, tax-exempt status to the Pagan community. This status enables us to offer to the community a variety of open rituals that anyone may attend, to ordain ministers, and to extend our tax-exempt status to sub-groups of CST. One of our projects has been the forming of a Pagan cover school program for homeschooling families in Alabama (Sacred Grove Academy). CST also has a Disaster Relief Fund, so we can collectively donate money in the name of an established Pagan church to disaster relief efforts, including the American Red Cross.

If you would like to help with any of our projects, have any further ideas for the church, or have any resources which would be of benefit, please contact us. CST is also seeking volunteers to help with various parts of the church. Call us with ideas!

Info About Our Services:

Ministers: CST, being a church, may ordain any member over the age of 18 a minister. The fee for this is \$35.00, and you must also be a paid member. This ordination is for life; you do not have to maintain your membership to continue to be a CST minister, but we would really appreciate it. Each year we have to renew our "Registered" status in various states in order for our ministers to be legal, and your continued membership fees help pay for this. Ministers are entitled to perform legal weddings, baptisms, and funerals. Ordination as a minister does not automatically confer "Elder" or "High Priest/ess" status upon anyone.

Subordinate Organizations: The main form of a local CST group is a Grove. This can be formed by at least three paid church members, who apply to CST for a charter. If you are interested in forming a Grove, simply find two other like-minded friends, and encourage them to send in their membership to CST, then apply to us for a Grove charter. The application and first year's fee is \$35.00. Note that whomever forms a Grove and runs it, including writing and performing rituals and teaching mysteries, does not automatically become a "High Priest/ess."

Note on Ministers and Groups: For those of you who wish to form a local group or become ordained as a minister, if you're somewhere besides Alabama or Georgia, you just need to let us know a bit ahead of time.

For the group and the ministership to be legal, we need to be registered in your state. This takes a little time to get the paperwork done and sent in. We will register in other states as needed, as there's a bit of expense involved. Your membership fees and the fees for ordination (\$35) and forming a group (\$35) help pay for these costs. CST is already registered in Georgia, so anyone wishing to put together a local CST group there can do so. Full info on starting a CST grove and becoming a minister is now on the web site, <<http://www.spiraltree.org>>.

Ritual Link: You have the option of participating long-distance in our rituals. All you have to do is let us know that you want to do this, and before each of our planned rituals, we will mail, email, or FAX a copy of the ritual to you, along with the "kick-off" time and date of the ritual. This way, members who wish can do the same ritual the rest of the group is doing, at the same time, on the same day.

Let us know if you're interested in participating this way. As our rituals sometimes are not completely written till the night before, we need either an email address or FAX number to quickly send you the ritual.

Natural Family Planning: Cathy, a health services professional, is offering counseling on natural methods of family planning, both fertility and contraception. For more info, email her at tabbatcat@yahoo.com.

The Enchanted Loch

(A tale from the Highlands of Olde Scotland when knights were brave and ladies were fair)

Part 3 of 3

by Frater Yod

As Arthur shuffled over with the other miners to get in line for his pay, he could not take his eyes off of.... of.... himself! But this wasn't what he normally looked like. The lavish clothes were absent and were now utilitarian, almost plain... like a mere peasant! But the regal bearing and air of preeminence were still upon his countenance. How strange... also the symbol of the trinitarian was now one red cross on a white background.

The other miners were aware of the presence of the famed Knight also. They spoke in hushed tones of how Arthur had been taken into the apprenticeship of a master magician known as Merlyn the Mage. They said that Arthur had emerged from a sabbatical at the new cathedral called "Rosslyn" as a different person. Everyone agreed that he was now better, kinder, not cruel, nor haughty but aware of his fellow men.

Stepping up to the paymaster, Arthur made his mark and was paid 32 pence for the previous two weeks work! This was an outrage! He protested to the paymaster, who gave him a scowl and ordered him to move on. Stepping into the open, Arthur began to shout loudly that 32 pence was not a fair wage for so many back-breaking days of hard work in the coal mine. As he protested the other men began to circle around and they joined in. Soon they were all complaining loudly.

Eventually the grumblings of the disgruntled miners attracted the attention of the humble Knight, who approached the miller circle of men, listening to the diatribe against the owner of the mine. Stepping into the crowd the Knight was brought face to face with... an apparently downtrodden and irate miner. The intense look between them went unnoticed by the others, but each was keenly aware of the magnitude of the confrontation. To face oneself is often the most daunting challenge a man is ever called to meet. The miners all agreed to let Arthur speak.

Speaking briefly about conditions it was quickly agreed that the Knight must descend into the mine to observe the conditions the workers must endure. So into the dark shaft they went. Climbing down seven

ladders of 32 rungs each, the mine went 500 feet or more into the earth. At the level of the current work, there were three chambers, where the coal was being brought out. It was to the third chamber where the Knight and Arthur went to meet.

Without a single person to hear, the two conversed, but not a sound was made. The exchange was between two parts of a fragmented soul. Words were not necessary. But much was revealed by sign and symbols. The higher self overcame the will of the lower, base self. By demonstration it was shown that man is made of the same material as the earth, which is the same element prevalent in all matter—carbon. Carbon is composed of six electrons, six neutrons, and six protons. Thus the material earth is the animal nature or beast that is man's lower self.

But by the exertion of the pressures of life, the "crucible," as it were, the molecules of carbon are compressed to form a more complex and valuable form. With this, the humble Knight picked up a lump of coal. Showing Arthur he then closed his fist and with intense exertion squeezed mightily. After a moment he opened his hand and there in it was a rough but beautiful diamond.

The Knight explained further: Man's life is but a school, a grand university, where he must learn to become. By avoiding the seven cardinal sins and practicing the seven virtues, man can cut away the rough edges of his carnal self. By learning all of the principals of seven, man can fill the circle of his being with the divine factor that is his higher self. The seven is the polish to perfect the rough exterior of man's soul. By the seventh letter is given the key to unlocking the highest mysteries, the letter G.

Closing his hand again, the Knight re-opened it to reveal a precisely cut round diamond of equidistant points in its facets, that number seven. Arthur was mesmerized, yet he noticed one thing: there was no brilliance in the stone; no light shone from it.

The Knight smiled and took from his vest a small wand which had two serpents entwined with a solar orb at the top and the wings of a hawk. Passing the wand

over the diamond three times and uttering in a low breath a certain word, the diamond sprang to intense brilliance—its light filling the chamber.

Arthur was awestruck at the radiance of the jewel, but he did not understand the word that was uttered. Please, Sir Knight, he mentally asked his higher self, “What is the Word?” The reply was, “My brother self, I did not so receive it, nor shall I so impart it. But you will feel it in the depths of your chest.” And with that Arthur felt a great warmth infuse his chest and a profound feeling pervade his soul. As his lips moved to form the Word he instantly turned to dust and fell to the ground.

Looking down at the pile of coal dust that was once his lower self, Arthur saw a pouch laying there. On it were the letters “MM.” That brought to his mind the one whom goes by these letters. Opening the pouch he found seven gold coins and the 32 pence. Also, a scroll, on which was a poem on one side, and a curious writing titled “The Royal Secret.” The poem was in standard script, but the other was in strange symbols that looked like figures, animals, planets, and stars. Even with his higher education he could not decipher these, and he was a learned man. But he knew who could read them...

Journeying back to the now completed temple, “Rosslyn,” Sir Arthur was looking forward to visiting his Grand Master, Merlyn the Mage. Arriving, he found the ancient one laboring on some rough ashlar that, once squared, would be placed around a bulwark to fortify the structure of the outer encampment, thus giving secure shelter to itinerant Knights who may come for instruction or enlightenment.

Looking up from his work, upon seeing Arthur, a gleam of fondness was in the eye of Merlyn. After putting away his horse the two embraced and exchanged the greetings of the Order. Then they retired to the inner sanctum where they could discuss matters in private.

Showing Merlyn the pouch and the scroll, Arthur sought from him the meaning of the strange symbols. And who was the mysterious Bard, “Frater Yod”?¹

Merlyn explained thusly: “God bless thee, my son. I will give unto thee the greatest jewel that I have. For I will impart unto thee, for the love of God and man a relation of the true wisdom of our first Grand Master, Solomon the Wise.”

The paths to wisdom number 32. It matters not where you begin or by which path you prefer, we are all ascending. The path of perfection we must traverse together. We begin with the Divine Spark, the yod, and by kindling this inner flame, we begin to glow with the fire from within. To each is given according to his state of perfection certain tasks we must perform. The Divine Wisdom has come down to us, ordained through scribe, script, and scroll, and to our brother’s needs we must attend, so that we may all rise together.

The Royal Secret is simple: The power is in the blood. The red fluid which is common to us all is the cement which binds us together. There was only one who was brought into this world with blood unique among men. He was a powerful mystic who studied in our Essenic Order and was initiated to the Higher Mysteries. He came to heal, to teach, and to guide. But ignorant and evil men misunderstood him and feared his power. So when he had achieved perfection of his mission, he was placed upon the symbol of our order—the cross.

But before he was deprived of life, this Great Master gave us his blood in salvation of our kind. Born to him with a woman, of whom he was intimate, were five children. Mary Magdalene, her sister Martha, their brother Lazarus, and their friend Mariella took the offspring of Jesus to Marseilles, France, where they were secretly raised. Their blood is now your blood.

This Order, to which you are pledged, has guarded and kept this secret since those days long ago. We were party to this knowledge because we have been the protectors and patrons of the Blood of Jesus since he left us. We have guarded the widow and cared for the widow’s sons. For this is the task of us, the Poor Soldiers of Jesus. Aided in our task by the pure ones—the Cathars, the Knights of St. John, and other secret Orders, we have protected the Blood of Jesus from those who might destroy it.

I leave you one final jewel: This life is never easy. We are here for school and to work. God has set one over against the other. Good against evil and evil against good. Good comes out of evil and evil comes out of good. Good tests evil and evil tests good. But good is stored away fore the Good. And evil is stored away for the Evil ones.

So rise now, Sir Knight, and go forth to claim your throne. For yours is the Royal blood, the blood of Jesus. And El-Shaddai shall give you grace.

The beginning.



¹ Yod is the smallest point, the least of these, and is a procession from the ain, the “infinite nothingness,” the highest hidden mystery. (Proverbs 25:2)

CST Calendar:

Church of the Spiral Tree welcomes church members, beginners, newcomers, solitaries, and anyone else interested in participating in rituals honoring the Sabbats. You need no experience or knowledge to participate, but we do request you come with an open mind and heart, and show respect for your fellow participants. Email us for directions. We share a potluck dinner after each Sabbat, so those who come are asked to bring some type of food to share.

Please wear something comfortable and appropriate for outdoors. Ritual robes are welcome but not necessary. No skyclad, please! Children of all ages are welcome. Donations to the Church are entirely optional but appreciated.

Spring Equinox: March 22, Waverly, AL. We will meet at 6:00 pm, with a pot-luck and party afterwards.

May Day: April 26, Waverly, AL, 9:00 am.

Weekend of Board of Director's meeting. CST is co-hosting with Pantheon.

Membership Meeting: Sunday, May 25, at 10:00 am, at Moondance, held at Dragon Hills, near Carrollton, GA. This is the elections meeting, where we will elect new officers for the year. Please attend!

Summer Solstice: June 21, Waverly, AL. We will meet at 6:00 pm, with a pot-luck and party afterwards.

Lammas: August 9, Waverly, AL. We will meet at 6:00 pm, with a pot-luck and party afterwards. Weekend of Board of Director's meeting.

Pagan Pride Day/Fall Equinox: September 20 OR 21, Pagan Pride Day, including the Fall Equinox ritual, at the Arboretum, on the Auburn University campus, Auburn, AL. CST is co-coordinating with Pantheon.

Samhain: November 1, Waverly, AL. We will meet at 6:00 pm, with a pot-luck and party afterwards. Weekend of Board of Director's meeting.

Yule: December 20, at Waverly, AL. We will meet at 6:00 pm, with a pot-luck and party afterwards. Also CST's bi-annual General Membership (non-voting) meeting.

Upcoming Festivals (Not CST events):

Moondance	May 22-26, 2003	Dragon Hills, Carrollton, GA
Earthdance	September, 2003	site TBA
FallFling	October 9-12, 2003	Dragon Hills, Carrollton, GA

Book Review:

Live Your Dream, by Joyce Chapman. New Page Books, Franklin Lakes, NJ, February 2002

I highly recommend the book "Live Your Dream." It contains some really insightful information that can inspire anyone to believe in one's self and creating your dreams. Joyce Chapman offers a lot of creative ideas to inspire you on your way by taking small steps to creating your dream. She suggests creating a dream board on which you paste pictures of your dream so you can see them each day, starting a dream journal to track goals and progress toward your dreams, and a lot of inspiration along the way. This book helped to get me out of my slump and back to painting. I now have my paintings in a local gallery/frame shop. I'm really glad I read this book and if you're not "living your dream" right now, Joyce Chapman's book is the book for you.

- Reviewed by Cori Tindragon

BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

CST receives new books from various publishers quite often. The publishers are hoping we'll read these books, and publish a review in our newsletter. If you would like to read one of these and write a review on it for The Journey, we'll mail you the book (you get to keep it if you review it!).

Faery Magick - by Sirona Knight

The Wiccan Wellness Book - by Laura Perry

When Someone You Love is Wiccan - by Carol McColman

Creating Home Sanctuaries with Feng Shui - by Shawne Mitchell

Exploring Native American Wisdom - by Fran Dancing Feather & Rita Robinson

Wicca for Couples - by A.J. Drew

Celebrating Wiccan Spirituality - by Lady Sabrina

Raising Witches - by Ashleen O'Gaea

Positive Magic - by Marion Weinstein

Compass of Health (Using the Art of Sasang Medicine) - by Joseph Kim

Karmic Tarot - by William C. Lammey

Tarot for Your Self - by Mary K. Greer

Balance Point (Searching for a Spiritual Missing Link) - by Joseph Jenkins

A Witch's Guide to Ghosts & the Supernatural - by Gerina Dunwich

New Age Encyclopedia (A Mind-Body-Spirit Reference Guide) - by Belinda Whitworth

The Miracle Tree (Demystifying the Qabalah) - by R.J. Stewart

The Mysteries in Old Ireland

by Frater Yod

References to mystery schools, to their teachers, teachings, and initiations, can be found in the legends and symbolic art of many ancient cultures. In Ireland, for example, the teachers were undoubtedly the godlike Tuatha dé Danann who came, it is said, from the northern islands of the world. Skilled in all the art, and also masters of esoteric wisdom, they reigned over Erin until the mortal Milesians arrived. Then they dispersed. Some voyaged to a land ‘under the waves,’ others took possession of the *sidhe*—the caves and hollow hills of Ireland—and thus were referred to as ‘men of the hills,’ *fer sidhe*, pronounced ‘far-shee’ or faery. There are those today who believe these ‘people of peace’ still exist, exerting strange influences for good, communicating with humans telepathically and in dreams, and sometimes transporting ‘favored’ men and women into their invisible realms where they receive visions, secret knowledge, and gifts like faery books, second sight, or a tongue that shall never lie.

The dispersion of the Tuatha dé Danann may possibly refer to the withdrawal of teachings at a time when there was a danger of their being misunderstood and corrupted. However, the teachers and doctrines are never really withheld, only concealed within symbol and saga, until those who are worthy, personified as ‘the handsome, fearless and nobly born’ seek them out, or until it is safe once again to ‘make known the secrets—a course of wisdom—in the world.’

One characteristic of mystery metaphor is that every reference to the mystical has a practical application, and can be interpreted both subjectively and objectively. Thus, while the elegant descriptions of faery palaces probably refer to truths and powers than can be gained by one who develops integrity and spiritual awareness, underground *sidhe* do exist. In spite of their being ransacked repeatedly by vandals, they still contain ‘treasures’ in their room arrangements and the carvings on their great stone slabs.

This is particularly true at Newgrange. Now recognized as one of the oldest and strangest megalithic monuments in Europe, this *sidhe* covers an acre of ground, rises in height 70 feet from its base, and is surrounded by 12 large freestanding stones. It is still open

to debate whether or not “the entrance in the east was originally triangular” (Squire) and the rays of the rising sun at certain times of the year penetrate the opening and rest on a remarkable triple spiral carving in the central chamber as is claimed by author Charles Squire in Celtic Myth and Legend, and supported by other writers of the past and confirmed by recent astronomical investigations. It is also still open whether or not the master magicians of the Tuatha dé Danann officiated there and peoples of Europe came to it to study the mysteries of Samothrace. But obviously (as are the Egyptian pyramids), Newgrange is much more than a mere ‘tomb.’ The elaborately carved stones at its entrance, and those that line its sixty-

two foot long passageway and its spacious central chamber; the three antechambers with their altar basis, and the conical domed roof with goddess-faced engravings on its capstone, indicate that at one time this must have been a center where the mysteries of death and the laws of early man and cosmos were taught and experienced—much as they were in Hopi kivas, Egyptian pyramids, and later represented in the rituals of the Freemasons and Rosicrucian Orders, who borrow heavily

The intricate carved passage-tomb at Newgrange is arguably the most impressive monument of its kind in Europe. Situated about 20 miles outside of Dublin, Ireland, it dates back to around 3000 BC (roughly the time of Moses) and forms a larger megalithic site called Brugh na Boinne. This includes two other large stones known as Knowth and Dowth. The intricate carvings on the stones—spirals, chevrons, and lozenges—had a profound influence on the craftsmen of the La Téne period. The architects who built Newgrange carefully aligned the chamber so that on December 21st, the day of the Winter Solstice, at sunrise, a shaft of light would enter through a small aperture and illuminate a stone basin in the interior, in a ritual to the dead.

from the ancient craft.

The repetition of concentric circles, spirals, convoluted lines and chevrons suggests familiarity with the mystery teachings of ‘invisible worlds.’ This doctrine, frequently illustrated by such symbols, is often presented as a hierarchy of worlds which emanate, or flow out from, a supreme being positioned at the center of a series of concentric circles or at the apex of a ladder or stairway of descending and ever less ethereal, or more material, states. These stages correspond to the various heavens and hells, mansions, or stations, of sacred writings. Each world, it is said, teems with life; each has its own dimensions of time and space, its own mountains and seas, temples and houses, flora and fauna. They interpenetrate, interwork with, and encompass our material realm without our knowing, as their vibrational frequencies are either too rapid or too slow for our faculties to perceive under normal states of mind and

conditions. The superior, more intelligent beings of each of these spheres are the creators, directors, and teachers of the less-evolved entities therein. The inferior serve as builders of form and bodies, and the maintainers of functions. This is elaborated on by Max Heindel in the Rosicrucian work, *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*.

Irish chevrons illustrate this teaching remarkably well. Their wings suggest the duality of each particular sphere; the apex the focal point through which flow the various forces from one level to another. They represent also, in some rites of initiation, the passageways through which the candidate's spirit enters and exits—either through the lower and dangerous or the higher and more ethereal realms. In Christian mysticism this initiatory experience is alluded to as entering one of the various heavens as written by Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:2-5.

In Celtic legend these numerous otherworlds are considered to be co-extensive with ours and fenced off from our awareness by a 'mist' or veil, which represents the limitations of our perceptive abilities. Their 'silently moving ones' or 'watchers' are here all of the time, though we, using normal mind, cannot see them. This explains to the illuminated peasants many strange appearances and disappearances, shape-shifting, miraculous cures, and even hobgoblins and other malevolent entities. Indeed, we cannot fail to recognize that the sudden elation, feeling of dread, or spontaneous sense of terror that seems to come from 'nowhere' may come from here. Once we understand what and who these different faeries are, we can learn to control and direct them toward beneficent ends, as did Shakespeare's Prospero in *The Tempest*.

As symbolic carvings of the sidhe serve both to awaken intuition and to preserve sacred teaching, so also do Ireland's legendary sagas. Their stories are full of hints that suggest mind-probes into nature's invisible regions made during different degrees of the initiatory cycle. The voyages of Bran and Maelduin, for example, relate in picturesque figures the soul's experience as it travels in full awareness through the higher and lower otherworlds, and through the mysterious regions of death.

'The Voyage of Bran' is believed to be a pre-Christian tale first written down from oral tradition in the 7th century AD. It follows the travels of Irish King Bran (Monty Python made a humorous spoof of it called "Life of Brian") from the time he first heard 'strange music' and was enticed by a maiden to a wondrous land across the sea. The land she described drew Bran irresistibly, for there was joy and life everlasting, rare treasure, sweet music, and no grief, sorrow, sickness, or death. The very next morning he set out with three companies of nine each. After two days and nights they saw, approaching over the waves in a chariot, the figure of Manannán, the over-king of the Tuatha dé

Danann, who was returning to Ireland after long ages, he told them, in order that his son should be born. Mongan, son of Fiachna, he would be called, and:

He will delight the company of every faerie knoll,
He will be the darling of every goody land
He will make known secrets—a course of wisdom—
In the world, without being feared.

Voyage of Bran, V. 52

After the great king's departure, Bran and his crew reached first the Island of Joy where a crowd of people stood gaping at them and laughing in a senseless manner. They left there one of their members who had joined in the irresponsible conduct, and proceeded to the land of the Ever-Living Women, where the queen herself came forth in welcome. She threw Bran 'a ball of thread straight over his face' which when he put up his hand 'clave to his palm' and with it she guided his coracle into port. There they remained for 'hundreds of years,' until one of the men became homesick and Bran, against the advice of the queen, prepared to depart. But when they returned to Ireland the people did not know them, and the homesick man, impatient, leapt to shore. Instantly he turned to ashes. Amazed, a crowd gathered around and Bran told them of his adventures. Then he bade them farewell and was never heard of again.

This story is so similar to those of conquest and adventure of other races, one feels certain that it too is a mystery tale designed to reveal, to him who understands, the trials and wonders of initiation. Although traditionally it was not possible to reveal what actually occurred during this sacred event, much can be surmised by comparing the metaphorical legends of the Greek writers with those of Druidic, Egyptian, and Hindu mystery tales. Thus we learn that in lower grades of the mystery schools a neophyte developed skills and gained knowledge of the sciences and arts, particularly those that dealt with the nature of, and with the influences flowing between, the terrestrial and celestial worlds. He also underwent a strict discipline training intended to purify and accelerate the development of his spiritual faculties. He was warned of dangers that confront anyone who attempts to proceed without thorough training—*madness*, the irrational hysteria and laughing, or death (ashes - dust). And he was told of the overwhelming glory of success: the breadth of understanding, and the increase of power that would be at his command.

If he dares to proceed, the candidate traditionally enters a protected and secluded enclosure, like a sidhe (underground chamber). Leaving the body, the initiate consciously enters the invisible 'world of desire and illusion'—symbolized in Bran's journey by the 'Island of Joy.' Here the spiritual consciousness divests itself of human personality or soul, which is 'sent ashore.'

Liberated from this lower 'member' the spirit proceeds to the Elysian 'Land of the Ever-Living Women.' In Bran's case they and their perpetual 'pleasures' suggest the wonderous bliss of the heavenly spheres, the glory of which, 'thrown over his face' blinds Bran, as the sight of the Lord blinded Moses. But not for long. The thread of his spiritual awareness guides him safely 'to port,' into the 'real world' where terrestrial consciousness disappears. Journeys to the 'thrice fifty distant isles in the ocean to the west of us' in the Voyage of Bran, and to the 'thirty one islands plus two wonders of the sea' in the Voyage of Maelduin, seemingly relate to other conditions of consciousness, and tell of the qualities of the still more ethereal spheres he enters.

Maelduin, in a tale arranged 'for elevation of the mind,' journeys on from the Island of Joy, and that of the Black Mourners, to islands of fierce beasts, of enormous ants, of birds who are the souls of deceased children, of the mill and giant miller, of the black and white, etc., all apparently colorful objectivizations of man's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes, and of the conditions of the various invisible regions. Then Maelduin reaches the heavenly planes, suggested by descriptions of exotic 'islands' (worlds): the island with a great fortress approached by a glass bridge where a maiden challenges the voyagers three times before welcoming each by name; the island with an arch of water, like a rainbow full of salmon (Celtic symbol of wisdom) rising on one side and falling on the other; the island with a wondrous fountain that yields water, whey, milk, ale, and wine; and many more islands.

These characterizations clearly delineate the consciousness and conditions encountered by the soul both during its post mortem travels into the invisible otherworlds, and by the candidate traversing the mysterious realms of sleep and death with full awareness. In fact, they are so similar to the descriptions of the afterlife experiences presented in the books of both Egypt and Tibet that Alwyn and Brinley Rees, co-authors of Celtic Heritage, a scholarly work, are convinced that these Irish 'voyages' are fragments of an oral 'Book of the Dead.' The purpose in each case was to dispel the fear of dying by informing the living what they may expect in the hereafter, and to emphasize the importance of right conduct in preparation for the life ahead. Reincarnation was a basic tenet among the pre-Christian Celts, as Caesar discovered, which accounted in his mind for their incredible bravery in battle.

Maelduin's Voyage describes the afterdeath stages as they are explained in many sacred scriptures. The fearful insects and beasts suggest the monsters we create during our life by our fears and desires which occupy and greet us in the astral regions after we enter death. However, these lower-thought images dissipate in time and the soul

consciousness enters the heavenly realms of 'gold, silver, brass, and crystal' where it may dream for ages beautiful dreams of fulfillment created by the earth life's nobler aspirations.

During initiation the candidate observes and participates in these varied experiences, and then, united with his unsleeping spirit, he parts from the dreaming soul and rises higher. At each stage leaving behind a part of himself, he is in this way able to ascent through the celestial mansions described so well in the Greco-Egyptian vision of Hermes Trismegistus (The Thrice-Great Hermes, father of the Hermetic teachings) until at last he approaches the island with the revolving 'Rampart of Fire,' the 'divine land where the Sun God rests.' Picking up his 'members' at the various 'islands,' he returns to earth a master of life, 'the darling of every faerie-knoll,' qualified to teach secrets we intuitively know (collective consciousness): that life does continue forever, that there is a 'course of wisdom' preserved in symbols and sagas and demonstrated to us in nature.

References:

- Chronicles of the Celts: The Classic Sagas by Iain Zaczek, Sterling Publications, May 1999.
- The Religion of the Ancient Celts by T. Clark, 1919.
- Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy by Gottfried de Purucker, Theosophical Univ Pr; December 1979.
- The Voyage of Bran: Son of Febal to the Land of the Living: The Celtic Doctrine of Re-Birth: An Old Irish Saga, by Kuno Meyer (Translator), Imran Brain, and Alfred Trubne Nutt, AMS Press; June 1996.
- The Fairy Tradition in Britain by Lewis Spence, Kessinger Publishing Company; March 1997.
- Celtic Myths and Legends, by Charles Squire, Gresham Publishing, London, 1912.
- The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries by W.Y Evans-Wentz, Citadel Press, May 1990.
- Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception by Max Heindel, Rosicrucian Fellowship, Oceanside, CA, 1996.



MINUTES

CST Board of Directors

January 19, 2003

The meeting was called to order by Linda Kerr at 12:00 pm, at Auburn, Alabama, with the following Directors and guests present:

Cathy Rankin, President/Vice-President; Linda C. Kerr, Secretary-Treasurer; Don Mikovitz (Nion), Member-at-Large, Deanna Freeman, Member-at-Large, Lee Mikovitz, Craig Kerr, Jay Schryer, and Kyrie Schryer.

Old Business

The Yule ritual was held December 21 at Waverly. It went really well. Pelayah and William stepped in at the last minute to write and run the ritual, since Craig had just come down with pneumonia and was too sick to move.

Linda still has not heard about the CST credit cards, but will call to find out what is taking so long. These will be used by CST members who spend money on items like the newsletter, etc.

The mower that we talked about earlier will be bought before spring for use at Waverly. Craig suggested maybe we could just rent one instead, or find someone to donate one.

New Business

Cathy is now President/Vice President, until our regular elections in May at Moondance. Between now and May we will take nominations for officers.

Nion has a kerosene heater that he will donate that has a cooktop on it.

Cathy and Deanna are going to check prices on coffee pots for Waverly and other gatherings. We could use one for coffee and one to make hot water.

The homeschool program, Sacred Grove, is going very well still.

The budget is doing good - we have enough money to fund things like the lawnmower and coffee pots.

Ideas & Things to Do

The library could stand to be re-organized. Linda is currently acting as librarian. A list of books is in the newsletter and online. We need to think of some ways to keep track of who checked out what books and when. Linda bought a heater for the library storage room.

We should start beefing up our Disaster Relief Fund in preparation for this upcoming year. We should put a notice in the next newsletter.

Upcoming Events

The next CST ritual will be Imbolc, February 1. It is being held in Troy at Cori's house. We will try to organize a car pool to it for folks who don't want to drive. The ritual after that will be Spring Equinox, Ostara, on March 22 at Waverly, and Beltane at the end of April.

Other Business

The next two BOD meetings were scheduled to be held April 26 and August 9 in Auburn, AL.

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.



Contacts:

Remember, you get a free listing with your paid membership. You may also submit your listing at any later time. NEW SERVICE: You can send letters to CST, and we will forward them to your intended recipient.

Carla Ann Nelson: P.O. Box 155, Cottonton, AL 36851, email: <rcarlats1@cs.com>.

Cori Tindragon: <cori_tindragon@hotmail.com>.

Densho: <densho@knology.net>, from Montgomery and all points thereof.

Frank Palmer: (a.k.a. Bridget), Druid (always in training!), seeking friends to correspond. I am incarcerated, please don't let that deter you. Frank Palmer, a.k.a. Bridget #546776, Box 9200, New Boston, TX 75570-9200.

James A. Roesch: Advanced adept in multiple disciplines and orders. Hermeticist/Qabalist, A.A.S.R. 320, Rosicrucian. Will advise, guide, or discuss the Craft as any may desire. Write to: James A. Roesch #049547, Hamilton Work Camp, 10650 SW 46th St., Jasper, FL 32052-3732.

Jimmy Pesci: Encouraging all members to contact me for intellectual and spiritual rewards. Jimmy Pesci, Box 495, F.C.C.C., 13613 S.E. Highway 70, Arcadia, FL 34266.

Lori Irely: (Magickal Name: Reverend-Priestess Aradia) Practice Avalonian and Druidic Mysteries, located in the Orlando, FL area. Contact info: <ireytribe@mindspring.com>.

Rob Von Allmen: Tired? Bored? Wanting to find true love and happiness? Well, what are you doing talking to me?! I don't have all the questions, much less the answers. But I do have a clue (I found it in a cereal box) and am licensed to share the wisdom of the ages (answered an ad in Rolling Stone). If you also ponder such mysteries as "Is there life after death?," "Was he a man dreaming he was a butterfly...?," and "Where am I parked?," then please drop me a line at: Swann's Tr. Pk. #1, Lot 130, Auburn, AL 36863, <skippy_the_witch@yahoo.com>, 334-826-3953.

Scott Moore: Looking for like-minded people to correspond with. Scott W. Moore #22154, U.S.P., P.O. Box 250, Draper, UT, 84020-0250.

Shane Smith: Looking for like-minded people to correspond with. Shane Smith #31594, OQ 1-105-B, U.S.P., P.O. Box 250, Draper, UT, 84020-0250.

Stacy Lim: <sbandura@tuckercapital.com>.

Steven D. Richert: Beginner Asatru Gothi and still new to this path, recent CST Minister and general all-around eclectic Celtic and Norse pagan. I'm looking to write with anyone who will write an inmate in prison. Steven D. Richert #17987, S-208-L, IC/USCF, 2136 N. Main St., Cedar City, UT 84720.

Timothy Hornsby: Seeking pen-pals who are Wiccan/Pagan. Interested in all subjects: divination, Pagan philosophy, ecology, self-improvement, Irish and Welsh traditions. Timothy Hornsby #166781, C-3, 565 Bibb Lane, Brent, AL, 35034.

Timothy O'Brien: Sincere, mature, responsible Irish pagan seeking correspondence - prisoners welcome. Interests: all Wiccan-Druidic-pagan related topics/studies, self-transformation, music, fantasy art, environmental issues. Working to become spiritual counselor and pagan clergy of depth and character. Mentors needed. Timothy O'Brien, #69221, P.O. Box 1010, Canon City, CO, 81215-1010.

Tony Jackson: Just an ole Pagan Seeker with a desire to know fellow members - do you have rune, herb, folk lore, or Fairie Faith knowledge you wish to share? I could be your captive audience. Tony C. Jackson EF 183981, Dodge State Prison, Q2 16T, P.O. Box 276, Chester, GA 31012.

Violet Jade: Interests are gardening, herbology, stones, reading, spirituality, drumming, wicca, shamanism and currently studying Faerie Faith. (205) 621-9938, P.O. Box 55 Alton, AL 35015-0055, <violetjade11@yahoo.com>.

Church of the Spiral Tree

an ecumenical Pagan church

Cathy Rankin, President/Vice-President
334-821-4683
cst@spiraltree.org

P.O. Box 186
Auburn, AL 36831-0186
<http://www.spiraltree.org>

Date: March 22, 2003

To: CST Members

From: Linda Kerr, Secretary/Treasurer

Subject: Annual Meeting

CST's Annual Meeting of the General Membership will be held on Sunday, May 25, 2003, at 10:00 am during Moondance, at Dragonhills, near Carrollton, Georgia.

This general meeting of CST is open to all members. At this meeting will be held the election of officers, approval of any Bylaws changes submitted by the Board of Directors, and any other business deemed necessary by the Board of Directors or General Membership.

Members of the Board of Directors shall be elected by a vote of the Active Membership. All officers must be active members in good standing and willing and qualified to perform the duties of their office. The President, Vice-President, and Secretary/Treasurer shall serve as officers both for the Board of Directors and for the Corporation.

The incumbent officers will be automatically nominated for office again each year; other nominations may be made by any active member at the Annual Meeting or any time within a month prior to the Annual Meeting, by sending notice to the current Directors, by mail or by email.

Currently, our officers are:

Cathy Rankin, President/Vice-President
Linda Kerr, Secretary/Treasurer
Don Mikovitz (Nion), Member-at-Large
Deanna Freeman (Violet Jade), Member-at-Large

If you have anyone you'd like to nominate for any of the officer's positions, please write or email us before the meeting, i.e, before Moondance starts on May 22. After that time, nominations may be made at the meeting itself.

If you are unable to attend the meeting in person, you may cast your either by proxy or by mail-in ballot.

Proxy: Any active member of the Church may give their written proxy to another member for the purpose of voting at the General Meeting. Votes cast by proxy shall be counted as if they were cast in person. Proxy-holders may be required to show proof of proxy upon request.

Mail-in Ballot: All mail-in ballots MUST be received at the CST Central office by one week prior to the General Meeting. Mail-in votes will be added to the in-session votes of the General Meeting.

Thanks!
enc: ballot

Church of the Spiral Tree

Absentee Ballot

2003 Annual Membership Meeting

May 25, 2003, 10:00 am

Election of Board of Directors/Officers:

President

- Cathy Rankin
 _____ (write-in)

Secretary/Treasurer

- Linda Kerr
 _____ (write-in)

Vice-President

- Don Mikovitz (Nion)
 _____ (write-in)

Member-at-Large

- Deanna Freeman (Violet Jade)
 _____ (write-in)

Change in Bylaws:

Proposed change #1 is replacement of the following paragraph:

PREAMBLE

Purpose: The Church of the Spiral Tree (CST) is a non-profit, volunteer-staffed, ecumenical pagan/wiccan church, designed to foster a sense of community and family among pagans, both locally and in other regions of the country/world. It is an ecumenical church in that it encompasses all traditions, and is non-exclusive. It welcomes all who revere the Earth Mother and adhere to the tenets of the Wiccan Rede ("An it harm none, do as you will"), regardless of which tradition one is affiliated with. CST is also a Faerie Faith church, in that it has a goal of spreading the teachings of the Faerie Faith to all who are interested, and giving people better access to this ancient and beautiful Irish belief system. The Faerie Faith itself is a non-exclusive faith; one who is studying the Faerie Faith is always free to study other traditions or join other organizations.

With the following paragraph (change removes any reference to Faerie Faith):

PREAMBLE

Purpose: The Church of the Spiral Tree (CST) is a non-profit, volunteer-staffed, ecumenical pagan/wiccan church, designed to foster and celebrate a sense of community and family among pagans, both locally and in other regions of the country/world. CST celebrates the unique pagan family: parents, children, elders, and extended family. It is an ecumenical church in that it encompasses all traditions, and is non-exclusive. It welcomes all who revere the Earth Mother and adhere to the tenets of the Wiccan Rede ("An it harm none, do as you will"), regardless of which tradition one is affiliated with.

Proposed change #2 is to delete the following section, #3.1.3, under Article III:

ARTICLE III

PURPOSE

3.1.3: To spread the teachings of the Faerie Faith to all who are interested, and give people better access to the Faerie Faith;

Proposed change #3 is to delete the second sentence (A CST minister shall also not be regarded as part of the Priesthood of the Faerie Faith.) in the following section, #5.1.1, under Article V:

ARTICLE V

MINISTERS

5.1.1: Ordination as a minister does not confer "Elder" or High Priest/ess" status. A CST minister shall also not be regarded as part of the Priesthood of the Faerie Faith.

Item #	ITEM	Aff.	Neg.	Abs.
1	Proposed change to Bylaws: Replacement of Preamble with: <i>“Purpose: The Church of the Spiral Tree (CST) is a non-profit, volunteer-staffed, ecumenical pagan/wiccan church, designed to foster and celebrate a sense of community and family among pagans, both locally and in other regions of the country/world. CST celebrates the unique pagan family: parents, children, elders, and extended family. It is an ecumenical church in that it encompasses all traditions, and is non-exclusive. It welcomes all who revere the Earth Mother and adhere to the tenets of the Wiccan Rede (“An it harm none, do as you will”), regardless of which tradition one is affiliated with.”</i>			
2	Proposed change to Bylaws: Deletion of section #3.1.3, under Article III: (<i>“To spread the teachings of the Faerie Faith to all who are interested, and give people better access to the Faerie Faith”</i>)			
3	Proposed change to Bylaws: Deletion of second sentence in section #5.1.1: (<i>“A CST minister shall also not be regarded as part of the Priesthood of the Faerie Faith”</i>).			

Aff. = Affirmative Neg. = Negative Abs. = Abstaining

Comments on any of the above:

NOTE: You must be a paid member at the time of the Annual Membership Meeting for your vote to count!

If you choose to vote absentee, you cannot change your vote or vote again in person at the meeting.

Your vote will remain confidential, but for our records, please provide your name and current address.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

**Please mail to:
CST
P.O. Box 186
Auburn, AL 36831-0186**

No later than May 16, 2003

Notices:

Wiccan/Pagan Fellowship Club

The Circle of the Goddess sponsors an international pen friend club for shut-ins. What we do is match up people with similar interests from the "free world," with those who find themselves shut-in.

The program has been in operation for over ten years now is ever growing. Many great friendships have developed over the eight years we have been going at this little labor of love.

We are looking for outside people to get involved via the inky trail.

If you are interested please contact the address below and information will be sent to you. Any requests for information will be just that, information only. You will be sent membership forms and full details, and then if you are still interested you can return the forms.

Douglas H. Lagossy (Aspen)

P.O. Box 760

Campbellford, Ontario

Canada K0L-1L0

The following organization puts out a newsletter for prisoners:

The Millennial Kingdom

681 North Second St.

Pottsville, PA 17901

Rev. Paul Salem or Louise Salem

Newsletter: Rays of Light Newsletter

Cost: 4 postage stamps per issue (quarterly) for prisoners

A prisoner may send 4 stamps initially, requesting the most recent issue of the newsletter, and then go from there.

(From: Timothy O'Brien)

Lock of Love web site: <<http://www.locksoflove.org/>>

Locks of Love is a non-profit organization that provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children across the U.S. under age 18 suffering from long-term medical hair loss.

We meet a unique need for children throughout the United States by using donated hair to create the highest quality hair prosthetics. Most of the children helped by Locks of Love have lost their hair due to a medical condition called alopecia areata, which has no known cause or cure. The prostheses we provide help to restore their self-esteem and their confidence, enabling them to face the world and their peers. You can help by donating your hair after a hair cut!

The Breast Cancer web site: <<http://www.thebreastcancersite.com/>>

You can click a button on this site to help fund mammograms for women in need.

Greenpeace: <<http://www.greenpeaceusa.org>>

Greenpeace began in 1971 and for 30 years, Greenpeace has tackled environmental issues. Today their work focuses on six major efforts: Saving ancient forests, stopping global warming, eliminating persistent organic pollutants (POPs), protecting the oceans, eliminating the threat of genetic engineering, and ending the nuclear age.

Contact information:

<http://www.greenpeaceusa.org>

Phone: 1-800-326-0959

9:30 am - 5:00 pm Eastern, Monday-Friday

You can join Greenpeace for as little as a \$5.00 donation.

Important Dates

Board of Directors' Meetings:

April 26, 2003, Waverly, Alabama; August 9, 2003, Waverly, AL

Annual Meetings of the General Membership:

May 25, 2003, Moondance, Dragon Hills, Carrollton, GA (includes election of officers)

December 20, 2003, Yule Ritual, Waverly, AL

CST Sabbat Dates:

Imbolc	February 1
Ostara	March 22
May Day	April 26
Summer Solstice	June 21
Lammas	August 9
PPD	September 20
Samhain	November 1
Yule	December 20

Church of the Spiral Tree
P.O. Box 186
Auburn, AL 36830

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED