

The ADF Grove Organizers Handbook



by The Mother Grove, ADF

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Welcome from the Archdruid

Welcome to the most recent edition of the Grove Organizer's Handbook. The Council of Senior Druids (CoSD) and specifically the Grove Organizing Committee (GOC), has the responsibility of aiding new groves and their leaders. Most of the information in this edition has come from members of that council. All the information in the previous edition has been updated and we hope that this booklet will answer all of your questions and concerns.

Grove Organizers and Senior Druids are the leading face of the ADF to their members, and with this fact comes both hard work and great responsibility. For the latest information and to answer any questions that you do not find answered in here, please check the ADF website at www.adf.org. Another valuable resource for grove and protogrove leaders is the Senior Druid email list. If you do find questions that are not answered, please let the CoSD know so that those questions can be answered and included in the next edition. Please take advantage of Zoom sessions and the e-list to ask your questions, make your voices heard, and meet and interact with other Grove Organizers and Senior Druids.

You will find that Brian Larter and Rovenia Windsor are willing and able to provide insights, guidance, and whatever help you may need in the Council of Senior Druids. We understand that at times the task of running a grove or protogrove can seem daunting but there are many people here to help you. That includes members of the CoSD, the Clergy Council, and the Mother Grove. Please feel free to talk to them whenever you have questions or simply need to vent!

We thank you for your leadership and look forward to working with you in the months and years to come!

Blessings,
Rev. Jean (Drum) Pagano
Archdruid - Ár nDraíocht Féin (ADF)

1. Ár nDraíocht Féin Basics

Commonly Asked Questions

There are several things that every Grove Organizer (GO) and eventual Senior Druid (SD) needs to know before starting out. These are the common questions that show up during pre-ritual briefings when talking to people who don't know much about Druidism, and when trying to explain the ADF "Brand" of Druidism.

HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE ÁR NDRAÍOCHT FÉIN? WHAT LANGUAGE IS IT, AND WHAT THE HECK DOES IT MEAN?

The correct pronunciation is "arn ree-ocht fane", and it's a modern Irish (Gaelic) phrase meaning "Our Own Druidism". If you're really unsure of the pronunciation, call someone (your Grove Mentor is a good starting point) and ask them to repeat it for you verbally. You can also find an audio file of the pronunciation at <http://www.adf.org/about/basics/adf-spoken.wav>

WHY ARE GROVES REQUIRED TO DO PUBLIC RITUALS (AS OPPOSED TO PRIVATE)?

There have been several good reasons given for this in many essays written by our membership. Ian Corrigan wrote: "In the Druidic tradition, the obligation to perform public ritual has always been strong. The ancient druids were the administrators of ceremony and acted as sacrificers, diviners and counsellors for their folk. We hope to follow their example and our work centers around modern public Paganism."

- Magical Skills in Druidic Ritual

We're looking to show people that we are an active, spiritual tradition. We also want to bring consistent, accessible rituals to areas that lack it. Quite often, ADF Groves will be the only Pagan group in town that provides open, public worship, and many people need that. Finally, we really need to look no further than the ADF Constitution for the reason: Article 1:2:

2) Since one of the primary duties of the ancient Druids was to lead their tribes in magical and religious activities, ADF advocates and practices, as an integral part of our faith, open, inclusionary, and public ceremonies to worship the Earth Mother and the Old Gods and Goddesses, rites of passage to mark the cycles of our lives, and magical rituals to accomplish our other goals in an honest and ethical manner.

HOW DO I BUILD A CULTURE OF CONSENT IN MY GROVE OR PG?

In ADF, we are always seeking to build a culture of consent. What this means is that we want to normalize asking for consent for basic things, understanding what that means, and also ensuring that the denial of consent isn't seen as a personal slight. We work hard to empower each person to feel secure in their participation, and a lot of that revolves around open dialogue and a commitment to working toward mutual understanding.

Here are some very basic "first step" rules for building this sort of culture:

1. Always ask others before hugging or touching.
2. Don't make assumptions about needs, wants, or desires.
3. Ask what name and pronouns a person uses when you meet them (and remember them).

4. Enforce correct names, pronouns, and dignity, both in public and in private, with reminders as appropriate.

It's highly recommended that you do some research on building a consent culture and that you're an active participant in it. We're looking to create a space that is safe, secure, and fertile for both individual and group growth.

WHY IS ADF INDO-EUROPEAN (IE) IN FOCUS?

Very simply put, that's who we are. There are many similarities between IE cultures, and ADF was not founded as a purely Celtic organization. If ADF were a Neo-Pagan church, open to all versions of Paganism, we would have no real identity. Our focus on IE cultures gives helps us move from having an incomprehensibly huge focus to having a somewhat smaller focus.

For the best reason why, see this in the preamble the ADF Constitution: Ár nDraíocht Féin . . . is the legal structure for a Neo-Pagan Druidic religion based on the beliefs and practices of the ancient Indo-Europeans, adapted to the needs and sensibilities of modern people.

This does mean that our rituals all fall into a general IE focus, too. An ADF Grove cannot do (for example) an Egyptian ritual or a Nepalese yak herding ritual for a High Day, or even an official ADF rite. This also allows Groves to draw on other Pagan mini-communities for members, though, opening the organization up to Asatru, Hellenes, and many other types of Pagans. ADF has a unique identity that is partially caused by its diversity.

DO WE HAVE TO WEAR THE FUNNY WHITE ROBES?

No, you don't. White robes are hard to find (even at Renaissance Faires) and they're usually expensive when you do find them. If

you attend an ADF festival, you're likely to see several people dressed in white robes, but you'll also see a plethora of other colours and clothes. Rituals have been led in sarongs, cut-off jeans, and (occasionally) in the nude. Wear whatever you want.

Several ADF members have patterns you might also be able to borrow if you wish to sew your own. Just ask around. One caveat, though: certain things are explicitly defined as inappropriate for wearing. From the ADF Membership Guide:

"Swastikas or other symbols now associated with racist movements and organizations, regardless of their historical origins, may not be used in ADF activities, whether public or private. Members of ADF may not wear white robes with pointed hoods that completely hide their faces. Membership in any racial supremacist organization or movement will be grounds for expulsion."

It's really important that we discuss symbols in the current context; specifically, racist and white nationalist movements dig deeper and appropriately and twist more symbols every year. Be careful how you present symbols in our public (and private) work: it represents us all, and because ADF Druidry is public-facing and inclusive, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that our ritual work is open, welcoming, and intentionally diverse. Sometimes, this means we can't use the odd magical symbol ancient pagans might have used. That's okay. There are plenty of symbols, including ones we've made up, that hold just as much magic, power, and mystery as those ancient ones. Err on the side of inclusivity wherever possible.

WHERE DO GROVES AND PROTOGROVES FIT IN THE ORGANIZATION?

Groves are local congregations of ADF, or "branches of the tree" if you will. They have a good amount of autonomy, and they provide support for the people who belong to the Grove, and also as a resource for the

community around them. As Senior Druid of a Grove, you serve to notify the rest of your Grove about the goings-on at the international level, and also act to give the leadership of ADF (through your position on the Council of Senior Druids) a view of the concerns of the members and the Grove and to vote on policy. Protogroves are also basically autonomous, and they are generally seen as evolving toward Grove status.

Protogroves have the help of the Council of Senior Druids (if they ask for it), and also have a mentor available to them if they need direct help. As a Grove Organizer, you would have input into the policies presented on the Council of Senior Druids (even if you can't vote as a GO), and can raise questions and provide solutions to the same.

Both Groves and Protogroves serve as the front line of our image in the Pagan community, and it is from contact with our Groves and PGs that most people decide they're interested in joining ADF. The Groves and Protogrove are our faces to the world

HOW DO I INCLUDE EVERYONE IN THE GROVE'S HEARTH CULTURE?

I founded Three Cranes as a Continental Celtic Grove. I've been very, very careful to say, "Okay, I want this to be about everyone's cultural focus. This isn't the Mike Show, it's the Three Cranes show." Only one person has. The first time someone requested that we do a different style of High Day, and I said "sure". So we're doing Saturnalia now. Now, Celtic Groves has a very nice option. The Celts never celebrated the solstices and equinoxes, at least as far as we can tell. So, if you want, you can do what Three Cranes did: We wrote into the By-Laws that the four cross-quarter holidays would be in our Grove's cultural focus: Continental Celtic. The other four High Days are were open to any other IE culture that the Grove may want to do.

Over the years, we've scaled this back dramatically; now, only one High Day is

required to be Continental Celtic, and it's our anniversary rite. The rest are free to fit the needs of the membership.

Being open and responsive to change and member requests has been key to keeping our Grove together and functioning. I knew when I started that we were going to have Asatru, Roman, Greek, etc. members. I wanted to include them all, because I really felt (and still feel) that a Grove can have much strength in diversity of culture. Plus, it opens up the Grove to accepting members from all sorts of nifty cultures, not just a single culture that may or may not be commonly worshipped. I actually asked a Grove Member in our first meeting what Hearth Culture he wanted to work in. I kind of tentatively stated that I wanted Gaulish, and he said that was cool with him. He was of a Welsh bent but it didn't matter to him what we chose. Of course, this worked out well for me, because I knew why I had formed the Grove in the first place: I was doing this under the guidance of a personal Gaulish patron, and it was Him that I wanted to worship. There is a lot left for me to do before I can comfortably say that He is the Patron of the Grove, but I'm working on it.

Also, add in other High Days as you see fit. Nothing in the ADF Bylaws limits any Grove to only 8 High Days, so be creative and open up your calendar. Make sure that if a person wants a ritual that's, say, Asatru, that they're willing to do some work, though. You may still end up leading it, but you need to impress upon them that you won't do the work for them.

On some levels, you will probably have to compromise a bit. Grove Spiritual Practice isn't the same as a personal religion, and no matter what you do, you'll have to keep the people with other Hearth Cultures in mind. Not only must the GO be flexible in deviating from their personal practice, but it is important to explain to all new members that the goal is to build a shared practice, which is very likely to be different from what they may do in private.

Then again, you can take the autocratic approach and just tell people that, "It's the Irish way or the highway," if you want. Some Groves have found it successful, but many Groves like to include the full spectrum of their members' beliefs in their rituals.

If you take this road, though, it would be helpful to remind your Grove members that you have a "pantheon-of-agreement" just for your work as a Grove, and that each person is encouraged to work in their own personal practice.

WHY SHOULD I CREATE BYLAWS FOR MY GROVE OR PROTOGROVE?

We certainly hope you will create a set of bylaws for a Protogrove, even though it is not required. For Groves, we provide a basic bylaw template, and PGs can also benefit from that template. Bylaws are there for your protection: if something happens and a person complains about how you're running your Grove, the first place ADF is going to look is your bylaws, to see if you are following the processes you outlined.

Bylaws can be remarkably simple but think about them as an agreement between both leadership and membership, and your Grove or PG and the public. Put a link to them on your website so folks can find them if they're curious. A set of structured rules that everyone agrees to is the first and best sign that a religious group isn't a cult, after all.

Spend time writing them as a group; if you're a PG of one, always ask yourself, "Is this a rule I'd be okay with if I was joining this organization?" You'd be surprised how many bad bylaws can be avoided by asking that simple question.

HOW DOES MY PROTOGROVE OR GROVE REMAIN IN COMPLIANCE WITH REPORTS AND OFFICER MEMBERSHIP?

There are some simple ways to ensure that your Grove stays in compliance with both Quarterly Reports and Officer Membership requirements. When elections occur, look at your Bylaws. How long is the term? Ask the new officer to pay his/her ADF membership all the way through the duration of the term.

Set office terms to start on a High Day (most Groves make this Samhain). That way, the outgoing officer can make a final report, and there's no danger of lapsing between reports. Senior Druids should require officer reports due the day (or even the week) before the Grove's Quarterly Report is due. This serves to remind the SD of the report and also helps to keep them up to date.

The Grove Bylaws should describe exactly whose job it is to submit Quarterly Reports. This reduces finger-pointing and keeps every officer aware of whose job it is. Read your e-mail. Occasionally reminders are sent to ADF-SD and ADF-Leadership, and often Quarterly Reports from several Mother Grove members are included on those lists.

Those are some simple ways of keeping your Grove in compliance. Please don't stress about the reports, but just get them done: while every report is read, they are not "judged" or "picked apart." The most likely response you'll get from a report that has deficiencies is an offer to help, so please submit them so we know how to help! Remember that two missed reports will put you on probation, and a lapsed membership can cause a Grove to be downgraded to Protogrove or a Protogrove to cease to exist! We don't want Groves disappearing!

ADF Druidism and Wicca

The Wiccan ("Neo-Pagan Witchcraft") movement includes the vast majority of the 100,000 to 250,000 people involved in Neo-Paganism in North America. About three-quarters of Our Fellowship are or have been followers of Wicca, and ADF is inclusive of their beliefs as well.

The two religions have far more in common than they have to separate them. Wiccan covens can (and do) function as special interest groups within larger ADF groves, along with bardic, healing, ecological, divinatory, and other groups.

Because it's important that everyone know where the author comes from, I'd like to take a moment and tell everyone who I am, where I got my information, and to affirm that I'm not an "expert" on Wicca at all, though my research has led me to a pretty good understanding.

I'm currently the Senior Druid for Three Cranes Grove, ADF, and I have never been Wiccan. I have been involved in Paganism for 8 years (as of this writing), all of them as a Druid. These last four years, I've been involved in ADF, and when I talk about Druidry (especially in this essay), I'm referring explicitly to ADF Druidry, which is vastly different than the various British Traditions (such as OBOD and the AOD), and is even different than the American Druid groups, like the Henge of Keltria. Expanding on those groups is another essay entirely.

Because I have never been Wiccan, I have enlisted some help for this essay. A close friend of mine, SilverPeace (a Dianic Wiccan), sat down with me and we hammered out the basics of this essay. We used Silver's experience and Scott Cunningham's [The Truth About Witchcraft Today](#) as our primary source. I also had Karen Dollinger, an Irish Wiccan, proof the essay and make suggestions before making this public.

Again, I'm no expert in Wicca, and there is no way I could possibly cover all the various schools or traditions of Wicca. I'm hoping that with the use of Cunningham and two Wiccans of vastly different experiences, I can prevent factual errors, but they sometimes slip through. [Constructive criticism](#) is very welcome. I want this essay to be the best it can be.

Finally, there will be a bit of an "Us-Them" tone to this article that I can't really avoid. When in doubt, go right back to the first two paragraphs of this essay. I don't want to pretend that there's some mythical, magical separation between the two religions, because there just isn't.

That said, let's dive into the differences (and similarities!) that Wiccans and Druids have! According to Cunningham, all Wiccans hold the following beliefs:

- Reincarnation
- Reverence for a Goddess and God
- No Proselytization
- Belief in Magic
- Reverence for the Earth

I think we should modify some of these things since the movement has grown to a huge extent since Cunningham published this book, and then compare them to ADF Druidism.

Wiccans have many different ideas on reincarnation. Sometimes it's karmic, other times it's about learning lessons, and sometimes this life has no effect at all on the next. Some believe that they will rest for a time in the Summerlands and then come back, while others take a more Neo-Platonic view of it, but there is always some form of recycling.

People in ADF have a broad range of afterlife theories. Some believe in reincarnation, some in an afterlife where they don't come back at all, and some believe that nothing happens after death.

"Reverence for a Goddess and God" is also somewhat problematic. There are three big possibilities for what the nature of deity might be for Wiccans: all deities are one deity (usually a single Goddess); all deities can be

seen as facets of a single Goddess and God pair; and a form of polytheism, where each deity is his/her own self, not part of a larger whole, but are perhaps aspects of a God/Goddess pair, or perhaps the Goddess and God are archetypes. Because of this, we're going to go with the "reverence for a Goddess and God archetype".

ADF ritual sees each deity as an individual entity. The ritual assumes polytheism and deals with each deity in its own right, assuming that each one has her or his own personality. There is no single Goddess or God called in any ADF rite. Of course, most ADF rites have a section for praise offerings, and I have heard individual members call on the "Great Goddess", and this is acceptable, as well. The main difference is that ADF's liturgical structure is built around polytheism, where most Wiccan rituals are built around either a singular deity or a male-female pair.

When it comes to proselytization, belief in magic and reverence for the earth, Druids and Wiccans generally agree. Individual politics might not make them agree all the time on the question of reverence for the earth, but a general reverence for nature is inherent in each religion.

Some other common ideas about the differences:

ADF has a [Standard Liturgy](#) that all Groves follow to some extent. Nothing like this exists for Wicca, though certain traditions may have either a basic outline or rituals that are done exactly the same each time. Those rituals are not cross-traditional, though.

There is a very different view of source material, as well. ADF Groves all work with a strictly Indo-European focus, while Wiccan Covens often draw from various cultures and groups. Of course, just because one belongs to ADF does not mean that they can't worship whom they wish, but the Grove rites must work in an IE cultural focus.

Some Wiccans cast circles or spheres, or create cones of power at their rites; ADF rituals do not use these things. Circles, spheres, and cones of power are sometimes used to contain energy in order to focus and fire that energy at a specific target, and ADF ritual builds energy in other ways, from opening Gates to creating a sacred center to attunements designed to pull on the powers of Earth and Sky, and this energy isn't contained in an impermeable barrier (people are free to come and go in rites quite often).

I've heard it described that Wiccans build a temple between the worlds, and that Druids do no such thing. A temple between the worlds is a place where the celebrant meets the deities "half-way", outside time and on a separate plane. The ADF liturgy consecrates the space and forms a focus for worship, but keeps the celebrants firmly in this world. This is possibly the prime difference between the ritual structures.

ADF is a church, built on local Groves (congregations). Each of these Groves has a multitude of things in common, including an Indo-European focus and a devotion to public, accessible ritual at least 8 times a year. Wicca does not imply an organization, and Wiccan Covens belonging to organizations (such as Covenant of the Goddess) do not necessarily build on similar beliefs or cultures. Some Covens do hold public worship, but the vast majority do not.

ADF does not profess any manner of dogma, aside from the "Doctrine of Archdruidic Fallibility," in which the Archdruid is allowed (if not expected) to make a few mistakes. ADF's structure isn't one of the power hierarchies, but rather one of the democratically elected leaders to help run the group and keep things running smoothly. It could be compared a bit to the Coven structure, just "bigger."

Really, it's that simple. ADF and Wicca are not mutually exclusive groups, and we don't want

to be throwing our weight around. Membership in ADF does not mean that a Wiccan has "converted" to Druidism, just as membership in a Coven won't mean an ADF member has "converted" to Wicca.

Groves, Protogroves, and Charters: Basic Definitions

ADF is both an international fellowship and a church recognized by the United States government. Like all national church organizations, ADF has local congregations to serve its members. As stated in the [Subgroup Charter Manual](#), these local congregations of ADF are known as "Groves," and function legally as "subgroups" of the central organization. For their protection, and that of ADF as a whole, certain minimal rules (outlined in the ADF Subgroup Charter Manual and the [bylaws of the Council of Senior Druids](#)) need to be followed.

An ADF Grove may be formed by any group of three or more current voting members of ADF who (1) live in the same geographic area, (2) gather at least once a month for activities that promote the practice of Neopagan Druidism within the context of ADF, (3) hold no fewer than eight public rituals a year, and (4) are chartered by ADF Grove Organizing Committee on behalf of the Mother Grove as a local congregation.

A Protogrove should be thought of as a probationary congregation of ADF. A Protogrove may be formed by one or two voting members in a given location who are attempting to build a Grove. Protogrove status is given to most who request it, provided one member has belonged to ADF for at least six months and there is a publishable (secular or religious) name and a box number (either post office or mailing service) to use as their official mailing address. Currently, a group may remain a Protogrove for up to three years before being required to apply for status as a

Provisionally Chartered Grove. As a probationary group, Protogroves have fewer required activities than Groves, but also slightly less autonomy to designate officers or approve and amend bylaws.

Two types of charters may be issued to Groves. Provisional Charters are issued to those Groves whose organizers have given satisfactory answers on the Senior Druids' Questionnaire and for which three current ADF members are prepared to serve as officers and have properly filled out and notarized the Provisional Charter Request. Full Charters may be issued to Groves that (1) have been in existence at least two years after receiving their Provisional Charter, (2) have at least 9 current voting members of ADF in the congregation, and (3) have at least one member holding [valid clergy credentials](#) from ADF.

All local groves of ADF are entitled to the maximum amount of autonomy consistent with the survival, identity, and well-being of ADF as a whole. (ADF By-Laws 13:2:1)

ADF was conceived as a "Third Wave" (see Alvin Toffler's [book of that title](#)) or "postmodern/post-industrial" religion. This means, among many other things, that the intention is to allow each Grove to make their own mistakes and innovations, with the expectation that the fellowship as a whole will learn and grow as a result.

(Adapted from material in the Grove Organizer's Handbook, Third Edition, re-edited in 2008)

2. Getting Started

How to Organize a Protogrove

To organize an ADF Protogrove, you must have been a member of ADF for at least six months. Then you will need to follow the steps below. Any questions about the process can be sent to the Chair of the [Grove Organizing Committee](#) (GOC) at adf-grove-org-chair@adf.org.

1. One person who has been an ADF member for at least six months and is willing to organize activities that are open to the public agrees to serve as Grove Organizer. No other members or officers are required to organize a Protogrove.
2. The Grove Organizer should read the [ADF Constitution](#) (along with the other [organizational documents](#)) and either the [ADF Grove Organizers Handbook](#) or the webpages on or linked from the "[Starting a Grove](#)" page.
3. Decide on your Protogrove's name and cultural or other focus (if any).
4. Decide on a publishable mailing address, email address, and (usually) phone number for the Protogrove. You may wish to obtain a post office box or private mailing service box as your publishable address. You will need this information in filing the Grove Organizer's Survey (see #7 below).
5. Identify three personal references you can provide to the Grove Organizing Committee. This information is also required for the [Grove Organizer's Survey](#). One should be your supervisor at work (or an instructor if you are a student), one a Neopagan friend who will vouch for you, and a third can be anyone you wish. You will be able to specify confidentiality about your Paganism with regard to contact with your supervisor or instructor.
6. Write up your articles of association and/or bylaws if you elect to have them. Protogroves are discouraged from immediately creating bylaws in most cases, though groups with large initial memberships may wish to consider this step. In any case where there is more than one member, reaching a basic agreement about decision-making up-front can be helpful in preventing disagreements later. There is more information in the article entitled [Creating Bylaws for Your Grove](#) (p.46).
7. Decide (at least tentatively) how people will become members of your Protogrove. Be cautious about establishing a dues requirement initially; this is often not necessary as long as you do not have substantial expenses and some groups never take this step. As an approved Protogrove, donations of cash or services from individuals will normally be tax-deductible for the donor and most expenses can be covered by "passing the hat."
8. Complete and submit the Grove Organizer's Survey. This can be mailed to the [ADF Office](#), but you are strongly encouraged to submit the online form on the ADF website at: <http://www.adf.org/members/groves/starting/go-survey.html>.
9. Once the GOC has received your completed survey (which may require asking for more information from you), the GOC Chair will open a two-week discussion and voting period.

10. You will be sent a Protogrove certificate after approval, and your Protogrove will then be listed in all ADF publications. You will also normally be assigned a mentor.

Critical Information for the new Grove Organizer

If you have successfully completed the process of applying for a Protogrove and becoming a Grove Organizer, here are some critical pieces of information you need to familiarize yourself with. If you are considering applying, you will be well served by reading this article carefully as it will give you a good idea of many policies that will affect you.

Protogroves are considered probationary local congregations of ADF. Protogroves approved by the Grove Organizing Committee are subject to the oversight of the Grove Coordinating Committee on behalf of the Council of Senior Druids (CoSD). The CoSD is responsible for the oversight of the creation, chartering, reviewing all quarterly reports, and censuring of all groves in ADF. The Council is made up of all Senior Druids and Grove Organizers, Protogroves are subject to the ADF Constitution, to the bylaws of ADF and of the CoSD, and the applicable parts of the ADF Standard Operating Procedures. It is important to look over these materials and become at least somewhat familiar with them. The relevant parts of the CoSD Bylaws are specifically, ARTICLE V. PROTOGROVES, CHARTERED GROVES: DEFINITIONS, REQUIREMENTS, AND LIMITATIONS.

The ADF Constitution can be found at: <http://www.adf.org/about/org/constitution.html>. The entire CoSD Bylaws are at <http://www.adf.org/members/org/cosd/bylaws.html>. The ADF Bylaws are at: <http://www.adf.org/about/org/bylaws.html>. The ADF Standard Operating Procedures are at: <http://www.adf.org/members/org/docs/sop.html>

CoSD policy forbids Protogroves from representing themselves as "Groves" and Grove Organizers from representing themselves as "Senior Druids." Please respect not only these policies but also the hard work and long service of those groups and individuals that have earned the right to use these titles.

Protogroves are neither required nor expected to have officers other than the Grove Organizer (who is the only officially recognized officer initially). You may choose to work with the structure required of provisionally chartered Groves at some point and elect other officers and/or adopt bylaws. Usually this is in conjunction with preparing to file for Chartered Grove status.

PLEASE NOTE: If your Protogrove chooses to adopt bylaws AND/OR elect or otherwise designate officers, it is required that you either proceed to file a Charter Request within 90 days OR you provide a copy of the bylaws and/or the names and manner of election of the officers to the Grove Organizing Committee (via goc-chair@adf.org).

Any additional officers MUST meet the requirements for officers within ADF generally (i.e., they must be current voting members of ADF and be 18 years of age or older). The ADF Office may be willing to keep a record of any additional officers you may choose to add, but this is strictly a matter of courtesy, not official policy. Please read Article V. 1 Protogroves. 2 Requirements. Items 3-4 of the CoSD Bylaws.

The ADF Office and the CoSD must be formally notified of any change in Grove Organizer. The incoming Grove Organizer is required to submit a Grove Organizer's Survey to the Grove Organizing Committee (at <http://www.adf.org/members/groves/starting/gosurvey.html>). In a case where the members of the Protogrove have chosen a new Grove Organizer, it will require a 2/3 vote of the members of the GOC to overturn your

Protogrove's decision—it is not the policy of the GOC to interfere in the business of Protogroves lightly. Please read Article V 1 Protogroves. 2. Requirements. Item 2 of the CoSD Bylaws carefully.

All Grove Organizers are entitled to participate as non-voting members of the CoSD through a subscription to the ADF-SD forum. You will normally have been subscribed at the time of approval of your Protogrove. If you experience any problems or delays regarding this subscription, please do not hesitate to contact the office. As many of the issues brought up on the SD forum affect Protogroves as much (or even more) than Groves, your input on the forum is welcomed and valued.

Grove organizers will not need to participate in any votes that are called, though: voting membership is reserved for Senior Druids. Former SDs of Groves are allowed to remain on the CoSD, but former Grove Organizers are not, so be aware that, should you turn over the GO position to someone else in your Protogrove, that person will replace you on the SD forum. As long as you are on the CoSD, you will also be entitled to be subscribed to the ADF-LEADERSHIP forum.

In order to remain eligible for service as a Grove Organizer, you must keep your membership in ADF current. While there is a three-month grace period before the loss of all membership privileges after your renewal date passes, please try to renew on time to avoid creating work for those volunteer officers of the CoSD who are charged with monitoring this. Failure to maintain your ADF membership can ultimately lead to a loss of status for your Protogrove.

You are asked to submit a short report to ADF on a quarterly basis (within one week of Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1, and Nov. 1). For your convenience, this report is available online at (<https://www.adf.org/members/reports/file/index.html>) and you are strongly encouraged to use that form because it will automatically

be forwarded to all the relevant officers. Repeated failure to submit quarterly reports can result in loss of status for your Protogrove.

Please help us help you succeed by providing us with confirmation of your contact info and notifying us of any problems via the quarterly report. These reports are carefully reviewed by the Grove Coordinating Committee, which will be happy to respond to any requests for support they contain.

You should also be sure to inform the Office (at adf-office@adf.org) if any of your information changes or you are adding a website or e-mail list that can be linked to from the ADF website.

You will find more detailed articles about quarterly reports in the next section on "Groves." Should you have problems submitting the online report, please contact the Chief of the CoSD, the chair of the Grove Coordinating Committee, and the ADF Office at the addresses listed below so that can be resolved quickly.

When your Protogrove is added to ADF's main database, your personal member record will also be updated to reflect your affiliation with the new group. If you have any other ADF members who are part of your Protogrove, please encourage them to edit their Settings in the Member Portal of the ADF website to reflect their Grove affiliation to reflect their membership in your Protogrove (<https://www.adf.org/user/me/edit>) .

Having an accurate list of members of our Groves and Protogroves is important in evaluating requests for provisional Grove charters and other administrative procedures. You should receive an automated quarterly roster report for your group—please notify the ADF Office of any incorrect information or omissions in that report. It's not uncommon, once you have a group established, for some ADF solitaires in your area to choose affiliation with your Grove/Protogrove but only those

who follow the membership and voting procedures approved by that Groves/Protogrove can vote in them.

If you have at least three current ADF members in your Protogrove who are willing to serve as officers and can provide appropriate bylaws and ritual liturgy, you may be eligible to apply for chartered Grove status. Exact requirements may change from time to time, so feel free to contact the Grove Organizing Committee Chair (goc-chair@adf.org) with any questions. It is the responsibility of the Grove Organizing Committee to evaluate all requests for Grove charters. Under the terms of the bylaws of the CoSD, Protogroves are encouraged but not required to apply for a charter within three years of initial approval.

The procedures for requesting a Grove charter are found in the next section of this handbook and are on the ADF members-only website at: <http://www.adf.org/members/groves/starting/goh/provisional.html> and <http://www.adf.org/members/org/goc/starting-grove/tax-exempt.html>

The Council of Senior Druids is committed to providing guidance to Grove Organizers as they build their local fellowships. Mentorship is generally made available, though the form that takes is modified from time to time and may include the assignment of educational articles and essays by senior members of the ADF leadership, including our Clergy Council. The Grove Organizing Committee has customarily been responsible for assigning mentors to new Protogroves.

In addition, remember that you can always turn to your Regional Druid for assistance in the event of interpersonal or inter-group problems. In extreme cases, the Members' Advocate (adf-members-advocate@adf.org) can bring a grievance to the attention of the Mother Grove.

The most comprehensive links of contact info for these and other individual leaders (as well

as for other Protogroves, Groves, Guilds and other groups) are at: <http://www.adf.org/groups/>.

Naming Your Grove or Protogrove

When choosing a name for your Grove there are a few things you should remember about names. First, they stick when you finally choose a name it had better be one with which you can live, for no matter how hard you may try to avoid it later, it will follow you for a long time.

Second, though you were given a name at birth without a choice in the matter, your future Grove members may wish to have been consulted. Though a spiffy name may seem helpful to attract members to your Protogrove, you might find it helpful in the long run to consult with other members or at least trusted friends or family members.

Third, you may benefit if the name means something important to you and give your Grove members something to live by. For example, look at some of the Groves—past and present—that have already been named:

- **Green Man Grove, ADF** – This name refers to the many foliate masks (leaf faces used as symbols of deities of the woods) to be found in the New York metropolitan area, as well as the founders' intense interest in the arts.
- **Finger Lakes Grove, ADF** – This name represents the area of New York known as the Finger Lakes region and stresses a relationship to the local environment.
- **Sun Raven Grove, ADF** – The Grove Organizer chose this name to honor two of the three deities she connects most strongly with. According to one source, her mother's family name, Bonnet (pronounced "bunnay") is derived from Belenos, a Gaulish sun god. Having

died temporarily following a car accident, Beket "belongs" to the Morrigan, whose symbol is the raven.

- **Waters of the Brandywine Grove, ADF** – This name represents the Brandywine Valley (in Delaware), keys into the importance of the Brandywine River as a source of survival, adds a pun related to the waters of life, and gives the peace and healing associated with water.
- **Raven's Cry Grove, ADF** – This name both recognizes the ravens found in California and the founder's dedication to the Morrigan... and it also is a play on words: "Raven's Cry" vs. "Raven Scry".
- **Otter Bay Protogrove, ADF** - The "Otter" in "Otter Bay" comes from the group's totem animal, chosen because these animals are adept at balancing the hard work it takes to survive in the chilly North Pacific with a sense of fun and curiosity about everything they encounter. "Bay" refers to the San Francisco Bay, the notable geographic feature for which the Bay Area is named.

All of these are a lot more impressive and meaningful than "New Jersey Grove" or "Bay Area Grove" would have been, and avoid the problem of other groves in the same area being confused with them.

If you should decide to use a tree name you should add an adjective of some sort, such as "Black Oak Grove, ADF", "Gray Birch Grove, ADF", etc. You could also name your Grove after a significant local geographical feature (but not the Mississippi River or the Rocky Mountains, or something else that exists in several areas), a sacred bird or animal that you find especially significant, or a local Native American term.

Similarly, deity names should probably be avoided, unless you either pick a very obscure deity and/or you add another word or two. For example, rather than use "Brigit's Grove, ADF", you could call your grove "Brigit's Fire Grove, ADF". Or try "Dagda's Cauldron Grove, ADF" instead of just plain "Dagda's Grove, ADF".

If you want to use a non-English name for your grove, use a bilingual format such as "Arboleda de Albaricoquero: Apricot Grove, ADF", "Kvasir Lundr: Sacred Mead Grove, ADF", or "Garran Siorghlas: Evergreen Grove, ADF". This will make communication with folks both inside and outside of ADF much easier.

Are all those initials getting annoying? They are there because Groves have a specific naming convention:

In order to prevent confusion with other organizations calling their local groups "groves", all local groves of ADF shall use the naming convention of "X Grove, ADF" or "Grove of X, ADF" or the bilingual equivalent, in all books, posters, announcements, public letters, etc., meant to be read by nonmembers of the local groves.

(It should be noted that it is contrary to ADF policy and custom for Protogroves to refer to themselves as Groves... so this bylaw has to be understood to read "____ Protogrove, ADF" for our fledgling groups.)

Many other Neopagan traditions, as well as Mesopagan Druid lodges, call their local groups "groves." Therefore, for the sake of courtesy to them, loyalty to and pride in ADF, and to avoid confusion among outsiders, you should always include that "ADF" (with or without the periods) as part of your Grove's name. This is especially important when communicating with people who are not members of your Grove, or in any sort of flyer or mailing that may reach non-members.

Most of these guidelines are meant to prevent duplication in Grove names (we'll let you know

if someone else has already chosen the name you wanted). Using these guidelines will give you food for thought, many hours of good deliberation, and result in a name that you and your grove will be proud of for quite some time. In the future, when we hope to have several Groves with many members in most major cities around the world, these guidelines will pay dividends.

There will be little confusion as to which Grove is which, people throughout the Neopagan community will know what Grove you hail from, and you will feel proud of the bond between the people of your local fellowship of Our Druidry.

Required Activities for Your Group

Whether your local fellowship is still in its Protogrove phase or is looking forward to life as a provisionally chartered Grove, there are certain required activities you'll need to be ready to offer. While ADF has a long history of allowing for a substantial degree of local autonomy for its Groves and Protogroves, it also has a set of policies and customs that need to be respected as you plan your group's activities.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROTOGROVES

The ADF bylaws are basically silent on requirements for Protogroves, so we have to look elsewhere for guidance. The fullest set of instructions is to be found in the bylaws of the Council of Senior Druids, the group within ADF that has primary responsibility for overseeing both Groves and Protogroves. The CoSD bylaws offer the following guidelines for Protogroves:

Protogroves must perform a minimum of eight open-to-public events per year to maintain approved Protogrove status. These events may be ADF rituals, discussion groups, or study groups.

- (CoSD Bylaws V:1:B:3)

Protogroves must show that they are actively attempting to recruit new members through community outreach activities, with the intent of eventually organizing a Provisionally Chartered Grove of ADF.

- (CoSD Bylaws V:1:B:4)

Protogroves should submit a completed official quarterly report, located on the Member's Only section of the ADF website, to the Grove Coordinating Committee Chair, no later than the eighth day of the months of November, February, May, and August, detailing all activities of the Protogrove, to maintain their Active Protogrove status.

- (CoSD Bylaws V:1:B:5)

That's the extent of the requirements. So what are the most important points to keep in mind here?

First off, a Protogrove has the option of performing public rituals or substituting other open-to-the-public events. As we'll see below, this is not the case for Groves, which must perform at least eight public rituals a year. So, if your confidence in your ability to successfully stage a ritual for the public is low... or you feel the need to focus on education and building participation... as a Protogrove leader, you have the option to substitute non-ritual events. We'll discuss what it means for an event to be "open to the public" in the "Requirements for Groves" section.

Beyond that, you'll be asked (via the quarterly report) to demonstrate that you are actively engaged in outreach to potential members. This is not limited to face-to-face "recruiting": You may certainly use such resources as a website or local e-mail lists to build awareness and publicize events.

One thing to think about is the idea of building toward offering the full slate of events required of our Groves (detailed below). A Protogrove is required to meet the requirements for a provisional Grove charter by the end of three years and it isn't wise to wait until the last

minute to be sure you are prepared to operate as a Grove.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GROVES

Once a group has been granted a provisional or full charter, ADF understandably places greater expectations on it than it does on a Protogrove. The ADF bylaws have quite a bit to say, as do the CoSD bylaws. Here are the relevant passages:

Public rituals on the High Days are defined in the ADF Constitution.

- (ADF SOP, Groves:4.1)

For ceremonial purposes, local congregations shall celebrate each of the eight High Days within one week prior to or after the aforementioned dates, or at some other time determined by Board-established policy.

- (ADF Constitution 4:2)

Provisionally Chartered Groves must hold, at a minimum, eight open-to-the-public ADF rites per year, on dates relevant to the cultural focus of the Grove, on or near the dates of the High Days listed in the ADF bylaws.

- (CoSD Bylaws V:2:B:5)

Provisionally Chartered Groves must hold, at a minimum, monthly organizational/business meetings for the Grove.

- (CoSD Bylaws V:2:B:6)

Provisionally Chartered Groves must perform, at a minimum, some type of community service activity once per quarter.

- (CoSD Bylaws V:2:B:7)

Provisionally Chartered Groves must show that they are doing some type of active community outreach to attract new members and make the general public in their local community aware of their presence and open to the public status.

- (CoSD Bylaws V:2:B:8)

Only those persons who would qualify as voting members of ADF, as described in the ADF Bylaws, may vote in official local Grove

elections, be officers of a local Grove, or be counted as official Grove members for chartering purposes. The Senior Druid, Scribe, and Pursewarden, as well as any other local officers who will exercise any legal responsibilities for the Grove, must have passed their 18th birthday.

- (CoSD By-laws 5:4:a)

The three organizational Grove Officers must maintain their current ADF memberships.

- (CoSD Bylaws V:2:B:4)

Provisionally Chartered Groves should submit an official quarterly report, located on the Member's Only section of the ADF website, to the Grove Coordinating Committee, no later than the eighth day of the months on November, February, May, and August, detailing all activities of the Grove, to maintain their Active Grove status.

- (CoSD Bylaws V:2:B:9)

To summarize the most important points above: A Grove must offer "public or semi-public" ritual eight times a year on relevant dates near the High Days defined in the ADF Constitution. Notice that a Grove may choose dates that fit with its cultural focus (if it has one) as long as they are within one week of the official High Days. "Public" and "semi-public" are not defined, but traditionally Groves have been okay as long as a good faith effort is made to publicize the fact that the event is happening and to allow newcomers.

Many groups have elected to hold ritual in private homes and to require a prospective attendee to contact a Grove officer for directions. This is perhaps best described as fitting the term "semi-public." Other Groves have opted to hold events in public (or publicly-accessible) places and to publicize the location.

Groves are expected to make the majority of their events open and inclusionary. Closed

subgroups (such as a women's group) must be composed of less than half the Grove's members.

Groves are expected to hold monthly organizational meetings of some sort and to do quarterly public service. Groves— like Protogroves— must engage in outreach and document that effort via the quarterly report. And Groves must elect three officers — Senior Druid, Scribe, and Pursewarden — and meet minimal eligibility requirements.

FURTHER RESOURCES

The best resource for ideas for how to satisfy these requirements is, collectively, the websites of our existing Groves and Protogroves. All of ADF's subgroups are listed on our website at <http://www.adf.org/groups/index.html>. You'll find event calendars and ritual liturgies on many of them. Protogroves should also be sure to avail themselves of their assigned mentors. These are typically experienced Senior Druids who can offer helpful suggestions (and horror stories as well).

Representing ADF in Public

People are judged, it is said, by the company they keep. Over the years, we have all noticed that no matter who we are as individuals, our deeds, our words, and our interactions all reflect on the company we keep as well. Because of this, it is vitally important that all our members, no matter where they fall in the scheme of the organization, reflect upon their own actions. What's more, those of us who are leaders, however unfair this may sound, must be even more self-critical than the general membership, for we truly represent ADF, both in the leadership we can offer, and also in the quality of our religious practice. There are five places or things that the majority of people will learn about ADF from ADF's written literature, workshops given by our members, rituals put on by our Groves, personal interactions with

members and leaders in real life, and virtual interactions on the internet.

LITERATURE AND THE WEB

ADF seeks to provide Grove Organizers and Senior Druids with example pamphlets, fliers, handouts, and graphics for use at rituals and around town. Extra copies of Oak Leaves, the Membership Guide, and some of the writings created by members of Our Fellowship are highly effective. Here, Groves and Protogroves should consider a website (several places can host for free) to direct people to. The Web has become so ingrained in modern Paganism that it seems that one must first have a website, and then they may have legitimacy. . When you are evaluating a web provider, know that there is nothing wrong with a ready-made site from a company that lets you build your site from a template, or on the fly. There will always be time to create a better site later.

On all your literature, make sure that you have your Grove's (or Protogrove's) name and address, as well as an email address and web address, stamped or written. Distributing information without a method of contact attached won't get you very far at all. Also, don't be afraid to ask your Grove or those attending the ritual if they will chip in a few dollars to help offset printing costs.

Keep in mind that nothing needs to be expensive, just informative and engaging. Simply changing the colour or weight of the paper for your pamphlets might have the exact effect you want to help them stand out from the crowd. If you want to forego the printing costs altogether, that's an option modern Groves can usually make work: social media is great for eye-catching, well-designed graphics, and there are many free programs that can put your name, logo, and web address onto a photo or image of your choice.

Don't be shy about using the ADF logo: if you're an approved PG or Grove, you've got the rights to use the ADF logo and our shared assets as often as you need to in service of

the larger Org and your own Grove. If you make something really cool, consider sharing it with the CoSD: help other Groves benefit from your design skills and creativity, and we'll all grow together.

WORKSHOPS

If you can, find somewhere to give presentations about Druidry. Often, it's best to start out by talking about ancient Druidism and how modern groups work to keep up the worship of the Gods and the Kindred. Several groups have done these workshops, and asking on the CoSD list or in an ADF Facebook group if anyone has something you can use is always a good place to start. You can also give a class on the differences between Druidism and Wicca, or walk people through a basic Druid liturgy. If you do the former, work hard to not be condescending about Wicca, or make the discussion an "Us/Them" issue. If you do the latter, describe why we do what we do, and give the importance of things unique to Druidry, such as the Return Flow and the Omen.

Perhaps you can follow these classes up with a discussion of how one becomes a Druid, discussing the ADF Dedicant Program and the Study Programs. Finally, you might do a lecture on forming a Druid Grove, and give information directly from this handbook (all while pointing out that you've already done the work for them, and they are welcome to come to join your group).

It is fairly clear, we hope, that if you give these workshops, by the time you come to the fifth one, you might already have a clear core group of people who are interested in helping you form a Protogrove. You will have managed to integrate the students into the thought-process and shown them the surface of what ADF is all about, and if you have managed this, you will know that a Protogrove is ready to form. Groves that have become very large and feel that branching out into a new Protogrove (or several Protogroves) might also find it useful to train a few people from a

similar geographical area with this set of workshops, making sure that they are prepared for the journey.

RITUALS

At festivals, the main way people hear about ADF is by attending a rite. Offering to do the opening, closing, or even the main rite at a festival or gathering can cause an influx of new Druids to any struggling Grove. The key is that the rite is well done and that the rite is rehearsed enough that problems and errors are kept to a minimum.

If you have a small Grove or Protogrove and still wish to take on this responsibility, see if there are other ADF members who will be attending. Ask them if they will take parts, for it is likely that they will have a good grasp of the liturgy (or, at the very least, will have seen it performed before). If you cannot find ADF members and need to pull ritual leaders (such as bards, sacrificers, dancers, drummers, or chanters), you will need to be able to explain the liturgy in a manner that they can understand. This may require an extensive briefing for your ritual participants. At the pre-ritual briefing (and you should have one for the benefit of those who have never attended an ADF rite before), explain the steps in the rite, go over the chants, and talk about how to do the processional.

It is usually best not to compare ADF liturgy to other forms of liturgy, especially if you are not well-versed in the other forms. After one festival, I received a complaint that in the process of explaining how the rite would be done, the ritual officiant doing the briefing had made blanket statements about how Wiccans did ritual during the briefing, meaning to explain how ADF ritual was done in comparison. The officiant never considered the fact that he might be coming off as disrespectful to Wiccans in his briefing, and conveyed his regrets that it had come out that way.

If you can memorize your liturgy (or extemporize it well), you will appear more together and impressive than a group that reads everything from paper. You don't need to have everything memorized before you do your first public ritual, but it is best if you work hard at memorizing the lines as soon as possible. Finally, though certainly not the least important thing, your rituals should start on time. The vast majority of Pagans are not happy with Pagan Standard Time (i.e. starting at least 15 minutes late for everything), and starting on time can win you more members than any amount of talking and hand-shaking you can do.

PERSONAL BEHAVIOR (OFFLINE)

It is an unfortunate thing that people judge others, but it is a fact. Most often, we form an opinion about a person very quickly, and that opinion can come from many things: how a person looks, how a person dresses, or even how a person greets another. These impressions are transferred from the person to the company she keeps: in this case, onto ADF. While we cannot offer suggestions about how to dress or tell you to change the colour of your eyes, we can encourage one thing that we hope still speaks louder than all those things: the right action.

It doesn't matter if you joined yesterday or if you have been a member of the organization for over 20 years. If your affiliation with ADF is known, people will associate your behaviour and your actions with the rest of ADF's membership. Those of us who are leaders in Our Fellowship must be more careful, though, for an organization's true worth is always measured by its leaders.

To this end, we encourage the leaders in ADF to constantly review their actions, to become self-critical of what they do. . We strongly encourage our member Groves and PGs to seek to build a culture of consent internally, supported by their leadership, and to be very clear about expectations (and to live up to them as best you can). Practicing consent-

based work has become core to ADF's larger work, and we will always encourage it on the local level as well as the international level.

Each ADF festival should have a short "introduction to consent" workshop as part of their lineup, or a space where you can learn and grow in this skill. We encourage you to attend at each event you go to, as this will help not only keep the information fresh, but also provide guidance on how you can deepen your own culture of consent locally.

A good template for this reviewing your actions can be found in the Nine Virtues found in the Dedicant Program: Wisdom, Piety, Vision, Courage, Integrity, Perseverance, Hospitality, Moderation, and Fertility.

Simply applying your understanding of these Virtues to your situation could make all the difference in how a person views you, your Grove, and ADF as a whole. Much of the time, Pagans are not so interested in which code you follow, but more that you stick to that code through thick and thin. Here are a few simple ways to apply some of the virtues:

Moderation: Probably the quickest and easiest way to make a poor spectacle of yourself (and ADF by extension) is to drink too much and become intoxicated. ADF representatives (and as we have seen, that includes nearly every ADF member, but especially the leaders) should avoid drinking and indulge in severe intoxication. In fact, if you plan on drinking a lot in one night, you might consider removing your ADF t-shirt before heading to the fire, though this doesn't do you any good if everyone already knows that you're an ADF representative. Of course, we aren't telling you not to drink or otherwise indulge and it rarely happens that anyone becomes too intoxicated, but simply to do so responsibly. As a representative of ADF, your Grove, and yourself, it is best that you be in complete control of your faculties at all times.

Courage and Integrity: To tie directly back into moderation, you should have the courage to approach any ADF leader you see who has had too much to drink and become intoxicated and politely inform them that they have had enough. Before doing this, the individual should take an honest look at themselves, and have the integrity to admit whether she has also had too much or not. Also, all ADF events should be any event advertised as "drug-free," and you should have the integrity to stick to that label, and have the courage to enforce the policy. To call an event "drug-free" and not follow your own rules will turn off more than a few participants.

Hospitality: We have already begun to move down this path with integrity, but hospitality is another easy virtue to apply to your personal behavior. It is a fine thing to offer food and drink to friends or strangers who happen to come to your camp at a festival or to offer a potluck dinner after your rites, but remember to have options available to those who do choose not to partake of drink or certain foods for whatever reasons, and always have options for vegetarians and vegans, who make up a large part of Our Fellowship. If someone politely refuses an alcoholic drink, don't ask if they are sure about their choice; offer them an alternative. Let Pagans who state that they are in recovery know that ADF is very supportive of their efforts. Another aspect of hospitality ties into how you run your rites: you should start them on time, all the time. Offering a potluck dinner following your rites is also a good way to build a good reputation for your Grove and ADF.

Piety: Keep the High Days. Each Grove is required to hold eight open-to-the-public High Days per year. Show the Pagans in your area that your Grove lives up to the expectations they have for a functioning church in their area. Make a big deal about them, perhaps even giving presentations on them at a local Pagan shop, or holding a mini-festival in a city park. All this will show that you do indeed practice what you preach, and that will go a

long way toward making you, your Grove, and ADF look good in the long run.

Fertility: Every day, we have the opportunity to explore those things that bring us pleasure, and this is not a bad thing. Love, lust, and creativity are all important things to us, and ADF does not discourage these emotions or feelings. Still, we must constantly remind ourselves that our advances are not always welcome or comfortable and that when we represent ADF to the outside world, we can be seen as "power figures" (and, unfortunately, as "power objects"). You are free, of course, to indulge in your own romantic goals, but remember that ADF is not a dating service, nor is any position in ADF something you should use as power over someone. We need to avoid any hint of abusive or exploitative behavior toward the subjects of our attention or those observing our actions. If false accusations arise, remember that your best (and perhaps only) defence will be your previous responsible, respectful actions.

The other Virtues will also come into play, as well, but the above examples can show examples on how to apply them. Keep in mind that you have the responsibility to provide safe and inclusive rites. If there is a person attending your rites who is behaving in a rude, abusive, or exploitative manner, you do have the right (and responsibility) to exclude them from your public worship. This does not contradict ADF's policy of inclusiveness, since you are acting to protect your Grove and ensure that your congregation has a "safe space" to worship in. The individual can always apply to the Members' Advocate if she is a member and thinks this decision was unfounded, but the Mother Grove will back you up if you can show sufficient cause.

PERSONAL BEHAVIOR (ONLINE)

Modern Pagans use the Internet as a primary form of communication. The lifeblood of ADF is in the electronic forums and email lists, as well as on personal sites and public journal sites. This has caused us to re-think the way these media have impacted the perception of ADF.

Sometimes we need a place to vent our frustration or to just talk honestly about what's going on in ADF. When we're mad, fed up, or simply frustrated with what is being done (or what is not being done) somewhere in ADF, we might take it out on an open journal blog or on our personal website. Something that we need to remember, especially as leaders of ADF, is that such things are not private. They do not get lost in the void that is cyberspace. Non-ADF members read these things, and if you only write about how angry you are with Our Fellowship, it will eventually lead to people shying away from ADF. Remember to write about the good things, as well.

Personal correspondence and venting in journals are, of course, private things. ADF doesn't have a say in what you put in them, and it never will. The most important thing to remember here, though, is that we need to stop and consider if what we're writing reflects what a leader in Our Fellowship should be writing. This goes for all levels of leadership.

The best thing to do is to remember that the Nine Virtues are not a mask that you put on. They should show in everything you do, even online. If you read through an email you have written (and you should always re-read an email before sending it), and you see that you are not displaying a Virtue well, then it might be prudent to re-word it. If you have just finished a journal entry and find that it lacks piety, perhaps you should consider adding some in. Eventually, it will become second nature, and you will not need to revise and add.

Also remember that some of our email lists, such as ADF-Druidry and the regional lists forums are open to the public. Your correspondence on these lists as an ADF

member reflects directly back onto ADF, so on these, you should be extra mindful of the content. ADF-Druidry is where a good number of new members start out external-facing, publicly accessible forums are where most people start out, and we should be showing them the best of Our Fellowship. We don't have to smooth over the "bad" parts, but we need to spend less time on them in public view. Additionally, remember that one of the primary ways ADF will grow is through email lists online fora, both local and national. If your Grove does not have an email list, at least for announcements, get one now. There are several options for hosting Both Yahoo! and MSN offer free hosting for email lists, and they work very well. Again, on these lists, try to remember that when you talk about ADF, try to do so in a generally positive way.

Talking excessively about the shortcomings or the pitfalls that we sometimes experience will not bring in members as quickly as you may hope. You should also get on as many local email lists and fora as you can in order to announce rituals and get-togethers. Online communication is always a difficult thing. Jokes, and especially sarcasm, are very difficult to read in text form, lacking the facial expression or tonal qualities to convey the correct emotion. This can cause many problems. In order to avoid problems in the first place, read every email from different angles. Consider each angle carefully, and then read it in the most positive way you can. If something someone else wrote looks like it might be a joke, treat it as one. If something can be either a sarcastic compliment or a derogatory statement, read it with sarcasm and take the compliment. If you read the positive into it, your own correspondence will be more positive and will reflect better on you, and thus on ADF.

Usually, it is best to simply ignore jokes and sarcasm when working over email. Think about it this way: if you received your missive, and you knew nothing about why it was being written, how would you read your words? It adds time, but if you aren't sure about how

something will be received, delete it. It will save you (and ADF) much trouble down the road.

Finally, we can modify the old saying, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all." Perhaps the best way to put it is: "If the only things you can say will reflect poorly on you, don't say it." Again, what reflects poorly on the individual will reflect poorly on the organization.

DEALING WITH CRITICISM OF ADF

Remember when we mentioned that people judge not only an individual by his company but also the company by the individual? Well, you will constantly meet people who have, in their pasts, had to contact an individual ADF member who turned them off to the whole organization. Perhaps it was an entire Grove that dissolved before you even came onto the scene. Worse yet, they may be former members who were unable to get what they needed out of the organization. No matter what their gripe, they will be hard to convince that ADF has changed and grown from when they last knew us, or that they met a single "bad apple." Sometimes it might not even be worth the time (but it never hurts to try, of course).

Often, if ADF is accused of not being perfect, or not living up to our ideals, the best strategy is to agree wholeheartedly. We're a young organization, relying on a select group of dedicated volunteers, some of whom didn't manage to fulfill their intentions as well as they wished. Recently, though, we have had some major changes for the positive: all of our clergy and Mother Grove members are engaging in consent culture courses; we have Study Programs in place, with more on the way and revisions that consistently improve them; there are Groves that are multiplying all over the world, and we are gaining many more new volunteers who are just as excited (if not more so) than the "old hands" and various projects

are coming to fruition. You might even invite them to a rite or two to see how things are going on the local level, and then give them some good dirt about what's happening nationally and internationally.

Some people see a new ADF Grove or Protogrove as a serious threat to their own political power in the area. When Pagans decide that their place in the community is threatened, no matter how false the threat may be, they become very difficult to deal with. Their arguments are generally impervious to logic and truth, and they will criticize you to no end. The best thing to do is to make it clear that you are not out to "steal" members, emphasize that you'd like to grow and learn from each other while networking and helping to share the "ecumenical" duties required of Pagan groups, and just try to be diplomatic.

If a person (or set of persons) tries to take you on over an email list, the best thing to do is to ignore them. Don't sink to their level and fling insults back. Such fights will get you nowhere and are likely to even get you banned from a social media space. Allow them to hang themselves by their own rope, and if you must reply, do so cheerfully and without malice. If nothing else, that will give you the satisfaction of making them look like the fool they are.

Finally, remember: you can't please everyone. Simply do your best to please the highest number of people possible, and be responsible in your representation of ADF.

Don't Scare the Neighbors

Over the years, we have found that the best way to be successful in a community is by being proactive in showing the other members of the community that our organization is not harmful. This has been done in many ways and we'll list a few of them here.

When your group is just starting out or if you have any problems with neighbours, contact the local law enforcement agency and

introduce yourself. You might give them copies of the information pamphlets and offer to answer questions they might have about Neo-Paganism in general or ADF in particular, or simply let them know that you will be holding rituals in the location chosen by your group. Above all, let them know that your group has nothing to hide and is willing to allow an officer to attend your rituals if they want, out of uniform of course!

After your group has grown to the point when you are comfortable holding public rituals, contact the religion editor of the local paper to add your schedule of worship to the list that regularly appears. Many times, especially around Halloween, papers are looking for a story about alternative religions and might want to do an interview.

Many local colleges have a religious studies course. If you have one located near you, you can introduce yourself to the professor and let them know that your group is willing to work with students from the class to give them exposure to Druidism. Many times the student will only attend one ritual but at times, they may surprise you and become a regular. Contact your local Unitarian Universalist (UU) church and see if they have a Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) chapter. If they do, you can offer to give talks to their congregations or to work with the chapter. Many UU churches offer locations to hold your rituals if it is done in conjunction with the CUUP's chapter.

If you are meeting on private property where the neighbours are likely to see or hear your rituals, visit your neighbours. Give them the ADF literature and assure them that you are not going to recruit their kids or steal their animals. Invite them to attend one of your functions and meet the members of your grove. It is helpful to let them know in advance that if they have any problems with noise, parking or anything else, that they can call you directly and the problem will be resolved.

Be involved in your local community in ways not related to the grove. You or other members of your group can be active in the local Rotary or Toastmaster groups, fraternal organizations or scout groups. If people in the community know you, then your religious beliefs will not be that important. And last, be visible in your community service projects. The more people in the community that know of your work, the easier it will be for your group if problems do arise.

In the event of a crime or serious accident happening in connection with one or more members of your grove or an attack by the media against ADF or you, contact the Archdruid immediately. You may also give his/her phone number to the local media and/or police as necessary.

Attracting and Keeping New Members

How do you attract members to your Grove or PG? What sort of advertising do you do? What has been most effective, and what has been most cost-efficient? How do you keep members once you've pulled them in?

We surveyed the Council of Senior Druids (CoSD) to find the answers to these questions through tried and true experience, hoping that our successes would help you get your Grove moving and expanding. The CoSD was also asked what kind of advertising they did that was not worth it (i.e. either wasn't worth the cost or just didn't work at all).

Nancy:

GOSH [Grove of Seven Hills] has been putting fliers in books in the 2 local bookstores* pretty regularly and we've gotten many responses. Of course, we also have a listing on WitchVox and our rites are listed on PagaNet. Our Adopt a Street sign will soon be up (alas, no room to

list the web address though). We are cheap/poor and therefore have not paid for advertising.

How do we keep members? The mead helps. Being involved with events in the greater Lynchburg area pagan community helps too - most of those who have joined us have come from the larger community and heard about the Grove from a fellow Pagan. Our members go to the PNO's [Pagan Night Out], go to the local Wiccan classes, participate in the rituals of other groups, and belong to and perform rituals at the Unitarian Universalist church—so if there is a new pagan in town, we've met him or her and probably talked about the Grove. The local HPS and I work together often, go to each other's classes and recommend people to each other's groups and she makes a point of including Grove events in the schedules she gives her students. I believe having a presence in the (Pagan) community is the best recruitment strategy of all.

Todd Covert:

For Raven's Cry Grove, there have been three main sources of members: public ritual, booths at various multi-traditional Pagan events (e.g., Pagan Pride), and (to a much lesser degree) interest raised by my teaching of Celtic history and spirituality classes at the LA Celtic Arts Center. Our Three Realms festival (two years old) has started to generate some memberships.

Some folks have found us via the ADF website or web searches, but almost none of those people have ever joined.

Most people who ask to join almost always cite the calibre of our public rituals as the primary factor.

What sort of advertising do you do? What has been most effective, and what has been most cost-efficient?

We try to rely on free outreach as much as possible. We maintain a website on a free host

that is updated on a regular basis (with updated content highlighted). We have event announcements posted on both a 250+ subscriber e-mail list that we maintain as a Grove as well as on a large list maintained by a Pagan shop that hosts many of our events and the ADF-Southwest regional list. We place event flyers in various Pagan shops around LA. We also maintain listings (of the Grove and of individual events) on Witchvox. The one time we placed a paid ad in a Pagan newsletter, the quality of printing was very poor and we got no response, so we decided to be cautious about paid media. We have also tried a couple LA area "Pagan event" e-mail lists and gotten so little response that we've stopped posting to them.

How do you keep members once you've pulled them in?

First off, no one is permitted to join without having attended at least one ritual, so all members have a good idea of the quality and character of our rituals before joining. On an informal basis, as SD, whenever I'm approached by someone interested in joining, I spend a significant amount of time talking to them candidly about what the Grove is... and what it is not (a magical training group, a private coven, etc.). Full membership in Raven's Cry Grove is dues-contingent, so that also tends to screen out people with only a passing interest and also encourages serious reflection prior to joining.

Since the majority of our activities are open to the public, membership is not necessary for everyone. We offer a certain amount of members-only exploration of Our Druidry, but, prior to joining, every prospective member is fully briefed on the core expectation of full Grove membership: supporting the performance of regular public ritual. The net result of all of this — in my view — is a minimizing of inflated expectations (and, hence, of the chances for disappointment).

Because we consistently attract 40-80 people to public rituals, we do not need to convince

everyone who attends regularly to become full Grove members — to do so would make members-only functions quite unworkable.

Anecdotally, the single most important factor in members choosing to stick with the group seems to be Grove's high degree of accountability. Events always begin on time. Rituals are well-organized. Elections are held each year. Almost as important is a sense of mutual respect and support. Many members speak of the Grove as their "family of choice" and we make every effort to encourage each member to feel they have an equal voice in the group, if they choose to exercise it. Since we have grown from two members to over 30 in less than five years and our retention rate has improved over time as well, efforts to focus on organization, accountability, and openness seem to have been effective so far.

Reggie:

We [Hallowed Oaks] do different things. We made a huge 5 x 5-foot banner that we take everywhere. We printed up some pamphlets and dropped them off at all of the local Pagan-friendly spots. We print flyers advertising upcoming High Day rituals and post them in bookstores, new-age shops, and herb shops. We have invested about \$75.00 in the whole thing and have grown from 7 people on an e-list to 42, and average 20-30 folks at each High Day event. In two weeks, I am running an ad in the paper in the religion section to advertise for Imbolg.

By the way... Did I mention that we are dead center in the middle of the Bible belt? We are in Huntsville, AL and thus far have not met with any opposition. Good look to you!

Spiraldancer:

(Who wants to reassure slow-growing Protogroves that they're doing just fine!) Honestly, we're [Little Acorn] not an aggressive bunch when it comes to attracting members. We didn't grow at all for a few years. Now we're growing slowly, and that's by listing in Witchvox and PaganNet News, and word of mouth through the pagan community. We have

no desire to grow any faster than we are now, because we place a high value on really getting along and fitting well together. We don't really consider people members until they've attended a few rituals and expressed a desire to pay dues and stick around.

This seems to work because once we get members, they don't leave. Heh, not only do they not leave, but we end up gaining whomever they form a relationship with as well, so Little Acorn continues to foster a tribal family relationship among its members. This may be a bit against the grain, but we really don't have a growth agenda. We do public ritual and list ourselves, and folks find us if they're meant to.

Rob Henderson:

Most effective for us [Shining Lakes] are the Ann Arbor Observer (a local monthly [magazine] that does free ads for group's events, and they just love listing us, they've even mentioned us in some of their own ads: "We list everything from art shows to picnics to the Druids' coffee hour!") and the Internet, both from our own Web site and WitchVox. And since those are all free (or in the case of our Web site, being paid for by a member), that makes them very cost-efficient.)

The least effective has to be - and this may shock some of you who think of us as a college-town Grove - is any advertising targeted to university students. We've done flyers and college newspaper ads several times since I joined eight years ago, and we've never gotten a single response. Not one. (We have many theories on that one, my own being that the youngsters are looking for a more highly-emotionally-charged environment, the kind of thing that Wiccan circles/covens are better at providing than we boring old Druids.)

Weeding the Garden

This article is about chronically disruptive people in Neopagan groups and what we can do about them. We'll examine who these people are and why we seem to attract so many of them and talk about some of the common types of troublesome people. Finally, we'll explore a simple yet effective strategy for dealing with the problem.

As Senior Druid of Red Oak Grove, ADF, I have been leading a Neopagan group for almost 7 years and have had to deal with at least 9 individuals who were disruptive to the point where they became a major problem. All eventually left the Grove, but some of them caused serious problems for years before they left. I've also talked to the Senior Druids of many other Groves and found out how they handled their problem members. In addition, I have been on the Mother Grove of ADF (its international Board of Directors) several different times, and we have had to deal with disruptive members on an organizational level. I've also been the leader of several non-pagan groups and have been teaching leadership skills for the past 11 years.

All of this experience has given me some insights into this problem that I'd like to share with others. Hopefully, other groups can learn from all the mistakes we've made and the result will be more Neopagan groups that grow, blossom and bear fruit.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am indebted to the book [Antagonists in the Church](#) by Kenneth C. Haugk for getting me to think about this problem and its potential solutions. Although written by a Pastor expressly for Christian congregations, it's a good book and ought to be studied by any Neopagan group leader. It does an excellent job of exploring why certain people behave antagonistically and gives some excellent general advice on how to deal with them in the early stages of their discovery, but I don't think he ever gets specific enough about what to ultimately do about them. In this article, I try to

explore the problem in light of our own unique situation and take his advice to its next logical step.

WHAT DO WE WANT?

You probably belong to a small Neopagan group. You most likely joined this group or started it yourself, because you wanted to worship the Old Gods in your own way and you want company. For most of us, it's a lot easier and more fun to do this when you have a group of friends and supporters to help. You can share the roles and speaking parts in ritual, and the magic seems so much stronger. You also probably like the social interaction of a group. There is friendship, opportunities to learn from people who are knowledgeable in areas you are not, and there may even be romantic possibilities. You can share jobs, like cooking and cleaning up, and there will be people to help you put your tent up when it's getting dark. And you can share resources, like books and ritual tools and camping gear.

When you join or start a group, you hope that everyone will be friendly and open and nice. While you may love the diversity and excitement of associating with many different kinds of people, you don't want them to be too different. While it may be interesting to talk openly with someone who, for example, has a sexual lifestyle that is completely different from yours, you expect them to follow the same rules of behaviour that you do: to take turns speaking, to listen attentively, and not be too offensive or rude, etc.

Many times, when a group first forms, everything seems to work out fine. You get all of the above benefits and then some. And as the group gets bigger many of these positive aspects to blossom even more, and you have more opportunities, more resources, and more support than ever before. It's great! But sooner or later, the group has a problem.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

All too often a small Neopagan group begins to notice that one member, or a small group of members, are repeatedly causing problems. They might be arguing more than most people, or raising their voices a lot more than average, or disrupting the flow of meetings or rituals in some way. They may be making demands about changes they want to make in the rules or Bylaws of the group. Or the problem may be with their interpersonal relationships with other members of the group. There may be sexual factors involved, financial problems, or erratic behaviours, or an inappropriate number of personal favours that are asked for. Frequently, there's a combination of several of the above problems.

When this disruptive behavior is first noticed, the other members of the group will begin talking about it and how it is affecting them. Chances are it will be ignored for quite a while—maybe months, maybe even years. While many people will agree that "something should be done" to change the behavior, there probably won't be a consensus of what that "something" should be. Most people will agree that any steps they take to try to correct the problem will only have a slim chance of being successful but will almost certainly be uncomfortable, so they won't be anxious to take them.

Many people will hope that the problem just goes away. Maybe the person will change on their own. Maybe they will get tired of acting like that. Maybe they will just quit the group and move on. "Let's just wait and see what happens. Maybe it will all work out."

And sometimes that's exactly what happens. Sometimes people change drastically, on their own, for the better. It could happen. But it usually doesn't. And if the problem doesn't go away, it will probably get worse.

Perhaps a few hints are dropped. Perhaps a go-between has a few words with the troublemaker, asking them to be more

"reasonable". That might work; but even if it does, the change usually doesn't last. The leader of the group will get involved at some point. They may try official means to stem the disruption. Once that happens, the troublemaker will usually turn against the group's leader (if that hadn't already happened) and begin a concerted campaign to show everyone what a poor leader they have. It will become very personal.

In all too many cases, the behavior just gets more outlandish, more noticeable, and more troublesome as time goes on. The severity of the behavior will increase and so will the frequency. There may be loud arguments in which the "good people" say some not-so-nice things and some things they shouldn't. There may be some vicious emails exchanged, full of accusations and defences. Sometimes the content of these emails will become a new problem in itself. And sometimes that problem becomes even more important than the original problems were. A tremendous amount of time can be wasted in reading and writing emails which do little more than attack or defend the contents of other emails.

Other people in the group will find themselves talking about the troublemaker a great deal of the time. It becomes a favorite topic, something that almost everyone can agree on. Sometimes people may even enjoy talking about the problem person. They'll make jokes at his or her expense, behind their back. People will roll their eyes when the person speaks or indulges in objectionable behavior. They will catalogue the many instances of bad behavior and recite them to each other, back and forth, many times, memorizing the details and fixing the chronology in their minds. This division of "us good folks" vs "that problem person" can actually become a focus for bonding—bringing other people closer together in a mutual cause. Bonding is good. But there are healthier ways to do it.

Very often innocent people that had nothing to do with the original problem will quit the group or just quietly fade away. New guests may

show up once or twice and never be heard from again. It will probably be suspected that the troublemaker is the reason for this, but it may be hard to prove.

If the problem gets bad enough, eventually something will have to snap. People will form clear sides and make a stand. Someone may say something like, "Either she goes, or I go!" The troublemaker may quit or be forced out of the group through social pressure or by established group procedures. Because almost everyone has a few friends, very frequently other members of the group will also leave at the same time the troublemaker does. If the group survives the split, it will usually be weaker and probably quite bitter about all the aggravation that it went through. Many groups completely dissolve over a situation like this. Other groups stay together but grumble about each other for years after the split. Their ongoing mutual hatred can hang over the entire Neopagan community in that area, influencing decisions about whom to invite to what events.

It's a very nasty scenario, and unfortunately, it has occurred over and over again. Will we ever learn?

WHY US?

All churches attract a share of "odd" people. Even the most conservative Christian church is likely to contain a few individuals that don't integrate well with others. It's to be expected. Most people desperately want to associate with other people in groups for mutual support and social interaction. The vast spectrum of human personalities covers a very wide range, from saints to sociopaths. While most of us would be called "normal" (by definition), there are plenty of people on the fringes, and many of them want to belong to clubs and churches as much as we do. So in any group, there are bound to be a few that fall far enough outside the norm that they cause problems for the others.

A Neopagan group is probably much more likely to attract unusual people than the local Presbyterian congregation. The fact that we are a minority religion with beliefs and practices far outside the mainstream makes it more likely that we will attract people who live far from the mainstream in other areas. Neopagans are usually very open to alternative lifestyles and sexual behaviors. Count how many people have tattoos and body piercings in your Neopagan group. And how many are either gay or bisexual or engage in alternative practices? Compare that percentage to other groups you have been in, and you'll probably see a big difference. Perhaps there is some correlation between people who choose a Neopagan lifestyle and the tendency to exhibit other unusual behaviors. Or perhaps the range of Neopagan behaviors is wider than it is for non-pagans.

Because Neopagan groups are usually much smaller than the average small-town church, the presence of even a single disruptive member will cause far more damage and commotion than it would in another group. In a group of 150 Methodists, a single person complaining about the service is far outnumbered by all the people who liked it. If the dissatisfied person finds one or two friends to agree, they are still in a very small minority. But in a group of 10 Neopagans, that person would make a considerable influence and, if joined by one or two others, would seem to be a much larger percentage of the group than they really are.

Neopagan groups are so small, in fact, that many of them are constantly on the verge of being too small to function. We tend to have fairly complicated rituals that are normally conducted by 6 to 12 different people, all working together. Frequently, every member of the group has a part in the ritual. If several people all seem upset at the same time, maybe we bend over backwards to keep them happy, rather than risk losing so many people that we feel we need. So we tolerate outrageous behavior and let it grow worse.

And because Neopagan groups are composed of many people who live outside the mainstream in other areas of their life, we are probably conditioned to be extra tolerant of strange behavior. So we might not notice a problem person as quickly as the First Baptist Church would, and once we do notice the problem behavior, we may be more hesitant to object to it because we aren't so "normal" ourselves. Our standards for "normalcy" are far more flexible than those of some people.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

We want to play in a garden of beautiful flowers. We want to be supported by their company while we enjoy their diversity and be enriched by their abundance. But every so often, we find a nasty weed right in the middle. No amount of watering and fertilizing is going to turn it into a rose or a lily. It just gets bigger and tougher, and usually, it spreads. Where there was one weed, now there are two or three. They are taking over the garden. There's only one thing we can do: we have to pull out the weeds and throw them out of our garden.

DO WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO WEED OUR GARDEN?

Of course, we do! In America, we talk about Democracy so often that we sometimes get mixed up about what it means. It means that every sound-minded person over 21 years of age has the right to cast a vote and be represented in the Government, but it does not mean that we have to let a few individuals spoil things for the rest of us. The Bill of Rights grants us the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We have the right to associate with whom we want when we want and to not associate with people we find objectionable.

Although there are certain cases where a person cannot be excluded (you can't refuse to serve Spaniards in your restaurant, for example), we generally have the right to form groups of supporting individuals to accomplish common goals. We have the right to restrict

membership to those people who are actually helping and to keep others out.

On June 28, 2000, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the Boy Scouts of America had the right to bar homosexuals from membership because the scouts felt that the homosexual lifestyle was inconsistent with the BSA message. It doesn't matter what you think about that particular case, the important thing is that based on the right of associative expression, the Supreme Court has upheld a group's right to determine who its members are. It is unlawful to bar membership based on certain specified characteristics, such as race or gender, but the law does not require clubs to accept everyone who seeks admission to the group. Ironically, the same law is being used by the United Way to protect its right to withdraw financial support to the Boy Scouts because of the Boy Scouts' homophobic practices!

BUT AREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO BE MAKING THE GROUP GROW?

Yes, that's probably a goal of your group. That makes it extra difficult to pull a weed and possibly lose some other members at the same time. But your focus must be on the long-term health and well-being of the whole group, not just the short-term number of members.

Remember, a noisy weed can cause other people to quit and scare off many potential members before the weed is pulled. The longer the weed is in the group, the more damage it can do. The faster it is pulled, the faster the group can recover and begin growing again. More than once I've noticed that as soon as a weed was pulled, a couple new members suddenly turned up to take their place.

WHO ARE THESE WEEDS?

There are many, many kinds of weeds that can invade your garden. They have a wide variety of attributes and come in many sizes, shapes, and colors. The one thing that they all have in

common is that they cause trouble. They draw an inordinate amount of attention to themselves in some way, and the rest of the group has to work extra hard to deal with the results.

Here are 15 varieties that I've managed to identify, so far:

- The Know-It-All
- The Sexual Predator
- The Amateur Lawyer
- The Evidence Collector
- The Needy Person
- The Generous Giver
- The Vocal Minority
- The Whiner
- The Shouter
- The Questioner
- The Latecomer
- The Alcohol Problem
- The Outlaw
- The Nut
- The Antagonist

We'll probably never finish compiling the definitive list of all the different types of weed because new varieties are bound to show up from time to time. But by studying some of the common types of weed, we'll learn to recognize them quickly; and we'll be able to deal with them fast before they spread too far or get too deeply rooted.

Some varieties require special handling, too, so we need to understand them and know what to do when we encounter each one. And as new varieties appear, we need to be alert for new techniques and new strategies for dealing with them.

Please understand that the use of the term "weed" is only meant as shorthand to identify: a person who repeatedly exhibits one or more objectionable behaviors to a particularly annoying degree within the context of a specific group in a given set of circumstances and doesn't seem capable or willing to change those objectionable behaviors.

I don't really believe that there is any such person as a "Know-It-All" or a "Whiner", and I don't believe these people are "weeds" within the context of general humanity. They are only "weeds" in the very limited context of a specific Neopagan group, which is trying to attract and keep a number of similar individuals who get along together. In reality, each person is a unique and priceless individual, made by the Gods and worthy of being loved. But some of those people are so annoying that it's best to stay away from them.

Keep in mind that most weeds exhibit behaviors from more than one of these "types". Most importantly, remember that just because a person exhibits some of the following behaviours, that doesn't mean that the person is so bad that they should automatically be thrown out of your group. Talk to them first. Give them another chance. None of us are perfect.

Here are a few of the types that I've noticed:

The Know-It-All

This annoying weed frequently contradicts others who are speaking, no matter how little they know about the topic at hand. No matter what the subject, this pesky weed always seems to have contrary information and proof that some other point of view is correct. They will interrupt a speaker with a phrase such as, "No, actually..." or "The real truth about that is..." and then launch into a long explanation that may or may not make any sense or have any relevance.

The Sexual Predator

There is nothing wrong with joining a group because you are looking for friendship, company, or even a romantic relationship. In fact, the Church is one of the very best places to go looking for a potential spouse, because the two of you are more likely to share similar values and beliefs. That common bond will help you in many aspects of life, especially if you plan to raise children together. But some

people seem to join a Neopagan group because they think that it is an easier way to get sexual gratification. While it might be true that some devout Neopagans happen to have a more casual attitude toward sexual encounters, the weeds are there for sex first, religion second. They may begin flirting through email, before they even meet you; or they may try to strike up a romantic relationship the first time they visit your group. If they are rebuffed, they may very quickly move on to someone else. I've seen people like this try to form sexual bonds with three different people during three consecutive events.

The Amateur Lawyer

Some people have a love affair with rules and laws and cannot resist interpreting them in interesting ways. Beware of anyone who asks to see the Bylaws very early in their involvement with the group. (Most people are with a group for years and have no desire to ever see them.) The Lawyer will scour the Bylaws and find conflicting passages or instances where someone has broken the letter of the law, even while following the spirit of the law.

The Evidence Collector

Weeds love to gather evidence. Yet just collecting evidence is not proof of a weed, because the good leader may need to collect evidence against the weed to get them out. But weeds seem to start collecting evidence before anyone knows there's even a problem. They will often tip their hand by quoting back emails to show that they are "right".

The Needy Person

We all enjoy doing favors for each other. It feels good to help someone out. And it feels good when a friend does something nice for you, in return. But there is a subtle balance that goes on in a true friendship; and if it starts to tip over too far in one direction, both people will feel it, and someone will take steps to put things back in balance. The needy weed loves that imbalance—as long as it's tipping in her favor. She'll request favors continually—small

ones as well as big ones. There may be very compelling reasons why this favor needs to be done. It may be a matter of a child's health or the family's income or some such important issue. But the requests will keep on coming, and they may get larger and larger.

The Generous Giver (with strings attached)

The Giver uses the opposite strategy from the needy weed—she gives and gives and gives, but always with some string attached. The string may be just emotional support, or public attention, or an expression of gratitude. The gifts may be inappropriate. They may be too expensive, or too personal, or given at inappropriate times. They will usually require a lot of attention to acknowledge them.

The Vocal Minority—Misplaced

This will frequently be a person following a slightly (or vastly) different path from the rest of the group. They might be Norse in a Celtic group or a Wiccan in a Grove of Druids, or a Reconstructionist with a bunch of eclectics. Whatever they are, they will feel oppressed and under-represented. They will loudly lobby for more equal time. While there is certainly a lot of value in accommodating all of our beliefs or preferences to some extent, it quickly becomes obvious when a small minority makes unreasonable demands upon the majority in the interest of fairness.

The Whiner

The Whiner seems to complain about everything: the dates and times you pick for rituals or meetings, the parts you assign to them and to others, the food, the weather, everything. You can waste a lot of time trying to logically explain why a certain date was chosen or a certain course of action was undertaken, but that won't satisfy the Whiner. They don't really want the answer, they want the attention.

The Shouter

This weed makes lots of noise. He gets upset easily and yells and screams at other people at high volumes. All other conversations in the area will usually have to stop as people sit around uncomfortably and listen to the ranting.

The Questioner

It's great when people ask questions about the ritual and your beliefs and the mythology you use. But when someone seems to ask too many questions or asks the same questions over and over, beware! They may be just manipulating your time and attention, and they can't think of any better way than to repeat a question you've already answered.

The Latecomer

This late-blooming weed can be particularly annoying if you like to start things on time. They will repeatedly arrive late, or find something else they have to do when all the rest of the group is getting ready to begin a ritual, a business meeting, or some other event. They will beg you to wait for them, and you'll be surprised by how long it takes them to use the restroom or to change their clothes.

The Alcohol Problem

This might be a person who drinks every day, or it may be a person who only drinks a few times a year—but those times seem to be at your events and always seem to cause problems with your group. Conversely, this might be a person who is very opposed to alcohol and loudly complains when alcohol is present. Most people are tolerant of the moderate use of alcohol, and most people use alcohol moderately. When someone falls too far outside the norm and causes problems—whether they are falling down drunk or screaming at someone for drinking—they are disruptive. Most of this applies to other intoxicants, as well.

The Outlaw

Many people break a law from time to time—maybe by driving too fast or not reporting

every dollar of their income. I think we can expect that and live with it. But when someone has legal problems that seriously interfere with the normal functioning of the group, they become a disruption. Some people seem to have recurring legal problems, or their legal problems are just more severe than the group can stand. For example, if a member of my group were a rapist, I'd want him gone.

The Nut

I think it's very important that we don't pretend to have medical expertise that we don't really have. To do otherwise is to invite legal trouble, or self-delusion at the very least. But at the same time, it's obvious that some people have behaviour that is so far outside the norm that they are uncomfortable to be around. They might be too happy, too sad, too scared, or too brave. They might see or hear things that no one else does, or they might come to conclusions that no one else can understand. Just exhibiting one or two of these traits to a mild degree doesn't usually make a person a problem—but if someone exhibits them to an extreme, or too often, they can be impossible to be around. This type of person is very perplexing because their thought processes are so hard to understand. In fact, they may be beyond comprehension. If you seriously think someone in your group is a danger to themselves or to others, I think you have an obligation to alert the authorities. But many nuts are not dangerous, just terribly annoying; and in those cases, you might just want to be rid of them.

The Antagonist

This is a person who is hungry for power and influence and will use various methods to attain his goals. He is well described in *Antagonists in the Church* by Kenneth C. Haugk.

WHAT DO THEY ALL HAVE IN COMMON?

Many of them seem to want attention and power over the group. Getting a greater-than-average share of attention and holding on to it are ways to control the group. If we are focused on the troublemaker, we can't be

doing other things. Sometimes we can be pretty sure that they are acting very deliberately and with great cunning.

Others seem to be oblivious to the trouble they cause, or seem to be victims themselves. I sometimes wonder if subconsciously they are very much aware of what they are doing. But we have no way of knowing, do we?

The only thing they all have in common is that they are causing trouble and problems for you and the others.

HOW SERIOUS IS THE PROBLEM?

Look, we all have problems. And we expect that we will have to deal with a certain amount of problems that come our way through others. Just because a given person causes a problem or two doesn't mean they aren't worth having in your group. But when someone has consistent or serious problems that interfere with the smooth functioning of the group, you have to ask yourself if they are worth the aggravation. Most people will be. But some people will be more trouble than they are worth. These are the ones that I am calling "weeds".

HOW DO I REALLY KNOW THIS IS A WEED?

You don't. Despite your very best intentions and all the care you are taking, you might be making a mistake. So you don't pull a weed lightly.

The very first thing you should do is make darn sure the person's complaints are not actually valid. Be open to the possibility that the root cause really lies elsewhere. Perhaps there is a problem with the leadership of the group, or a certain clique of members, or a particular policy. You should be especially cautious if you find the same sorts of complaints coming up repeatedly. Maybe you really have a problem with your own leadership style or something else within your group that you need to fix. Since most of us don't see our own shortcomings, it's a good

idea to ask one or two trusted members of your group to give you some honest feedback on whether you might be contributing to this situation in ways you don't realize. Then listen to them carefully and without argument. You want to be on very firm footing before you cast the blame in another direction.

Even if you are sure the problem stems from the person in question, you should still think about it carefully and pray about it and ask your Gods for guidance. You need to thoroughly explore other ways of dealing with the issue, preferably when it first appears and hopefully hasn't grown to be a major problem. You might offer the person some pastoral counselling if anyone in your group is qualified to give it. Or you might recommend that they get help from outside your group.

If none of the above works, and you are convinced that the group would be better off without the weed, you consult with the other officers in your group or the other members, and you act only when you are reasonably sure that you're pulling a weed—not a strange flower.

Ultimately, you accept the responsibility that you might be making a mistake, but that you are doing it with good intentions and very careful thought. You are doing the best you can. You acknowledge that you may not be perfect, but you have to act. Then you just do it. It's not easy. But I believe it's one of the prices of leadership.

SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

Once you are reasonably sure you've identified a weed, and the important decision-makers have decided that it's got to go, you should pull it as soon as possible. You want to minimize contact between that person or their group and the rest of your group. Don't worry about legalities and rules—just send a short, polite letter to the individual or individuals, on behalf of the group, saying that they are no longer welcome in the group. Use the most euphemistic, generalized language you can.

Resist the impulse to make your case and prove that you have the right to expel them. Anything you say at this point will most likely fall on deaf ears and only open you up to further questions and conversation.

We made a lot of mistakes over the years and tried many different approaches. Here's an example of the kind of letter you might consider sending:

Dear Weed,

As we told you in January and again in March and May, you have repeatedly created a disturbance in our group by raising your voice in meetings and demanding equal time for the Hawaiian Gods you worship. When you told Mary that she was "a low-down, conniving snake" for voting against your potluck supper idea, we felt that you were being mean-spirited and an obstruction to the joyful camaraderie of our little group. When you were late for ritual on August 3rd, after being warned about unnecessary tardiness on at least three or four occasions, you disrupted the energy of the whole group.

Therefore, it is with deep regret that we must ask you to please resign from our group. If you refuse to resign, we shall be forced to banish you in accordance with Bylaws 5, 6, and 9.

Do not write to any of our members; and if you show up at any more of our functions, we will be forced to contact the Grand Bishop of Eris to have your membership revoked. We might also be forced to call the police to have you removed.

Sincerely,

Joe Smith, High Priest, Local Congregation,
Church of Eris

PS: We've all talked it over at great length, and we think you need professional counselling. As your friends, we strongly recommend that you seek the help of a competent psychiatric professional. If you get the help you need and can prove to us that you are significantly better, we might be willing to take you back.

Sounds pretty reasonable, right? In fact, this is the worst possible letter you could write. I should know—I have personally tried all of the techniques within it, and they usually backfired on us. Here are some of the problems the letter has:

1) *As we told you in January and again in March and May...* Too many details, and it sounds like you are collecting evidence. The weed can claim that he didn't get that email, or remembers the meeting differently. It's unlikely that you can prove that he received every email, and it's unlikely you recorded all the meetings. It becomes your word against his.

2) *...you have repeatedly created a disturbance...* That's subjective. The weed might find a member or two who disagrees with that conclusion.

3) *...by raising your voice in meetings...etc.* More details are subjective and can be refuted.

4) *...we must ask you to please resign from our group.* This technique has worked for us a couple of times, but what if they refuse? It prolongs the process and creates more pain.

5) *If you refuse to resign, we shall be forced to banish you in accordance with Bylaws 5, 6, and 9.* Anytime you have to use specific Bylaws to justify your actions, you are opening yourself to those Bylaws (and all other Bylaws) being interpreted differently and possibly even having them used against you.

6) *Do not write to any of our members...* Don't tell them what to do. You have no authority. If you expect a barrage of hate emails, warn your members and help them set up filters, if they want. Or ignore them. Or set up an auto-delete filter for all their email. But you might want to keep a copy of all emails from them in a folder, just in case.

7) *...and if you show up at any more of our functions, we will be forced...* It doesn't hurt to have a couple of backup plans in mind if things don't go the way you want, but you gain nothing by tipping your hand or making threats. And what you lose is the element of surprise, and you also risk their using the threat against you.

8) *...to contact the Grand Bishop of Eris to have your membership revoked.* If the person has been that much trouble, you should have already told the Grand Bishop about the problem, privately and confidentially. But you probably don't have the authority to have their membership revoked, so you're just being dramatic and unnecessarily confrontational.

9) *We might also be forced to call the police to have you removed.* This is escalating the problem unnecessarily. Some sorts of people will take this as a personal challenge and show up, just to see if you'll follow through with your threats.

10) *Sincerely,...Joe Smith* The more impersonal you can make the letter, the better. If you sign it with a single person's name, all of their anger will be focused on that person. It can easily become a personal battle, with name-calling and accusations against the leader, if pointing out any flaws of the leader, whether real or imagined, would make the troublesome person somehow more acceptable to the group. Sure, the leader of the group probably wrote it, or maybe just approved it, but the recipient doesn't know that for certain. Their anger will be diluted by being diffused.

11) *We've all talked it over at great length...* Sure you have. You'd be foolish not to. But to point this out to the person you've been talking about is overly rude and humiliating. You're just trying to ease your conscience by spreading the blame around to more people.

12) *...we think you need professional counselling.* I know how tempting it is to do this: on one side, you feel in your gut that no

sane person could act like that, and you'd like to think that a mental health professional would agree with you. It would give you validation. On another side, you naturally feel bad about pushing a person out of the group, and this makes it seem like you are actually doing it partly to help them. But save your breath. They are not likely to take your advice; they will resent the suggestion and take it in the worst possible way. They might even think that you have overstepped your bounds and are practicing medicine without a license. (This might be true, depending on exactly how you phrased your suggestion, what your position is, what your training is, and the laws in your area.) Just come to terms with the fact that you are kicking them out to make the group better. That's your job. Let someone else be their counsellor. If you feel they are a danger to themselves or others, call the police. If you simply must tell them to seek counselling, for your own conscience, then have an individual member of your group (or several of them) do that on their own. And make sure that they make it perfectly clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the group—they are just expressing their own personal concerns and opinions to a "friend".

13) *...If you get the help you need and can prove to us that you are significantly better, we might be willing to take you back.* What, are you crazy?! That's the last thing you want to offer. You think that they are going to visit a therapist for a few months and run back to you with a note saying that they are nice now? Sure, it could happen, but don't count on it. Again, you're just trying to make yourself feel better. Make a clean break. If they actually do get their heads together and decide to come back to you (both are unlikely), then cautiously reevaluate them.

Almost every point in the above letter is, at best, an opening for a weed to come back to you for clarification, rebuttal, and endless argument. And at worst, some of the above could be used against you as evidence to show that you are in some way unfit to be the leader. Some of it might possibly be used

against you in court. Either way, you will just be dragging out the process and probably causing more pain.

But there are no laws that say we have to like anyone. A much better approach is a very short and polite note that doesn't contain any specifics. Like this:

Dear Weed,

We've noticed that the interpersonal dynamics between you and some of the people in our group are not as smooth as we'd like. We've agreed that while you have many positive qualities that would be an asset to most groups like ours, in our specific case the overall balance would be disruptive.

We wish you all the best in your future spiritual path.

Sincerely,

Local Congregation, Church of Eris

You might want to customize the above letter a bit to better fit the circumstances, but avoid the impulse to add any more detail than is absolutely necessary. Notice that this letter doesn't accuse them of anything, doesn't mention any specific details that could be refuted and doesn't make any sort of legal claim or give any internal justification. It just says that the way they act doesn't mesh with the group. It's short and simple.

DON'T WE NEED TO PROVE OUR CASE?

No, that's the LAST thing you want to do! You are not "charging" the troublesome person with a crime, so they don't have to defend themselves. In fact, if you try to get rid of someone because they broke Bylaw 6.3, and according to Bylaw 8.5 you have the right to banish them, subject, of course, to Bylaw 9.2b, you'll probably regret it. Many troublesome people (or their friends) will delight in scrutinizing your Bylaws and finding loopholes, inconsistencies, different interpretations, etc. You'll end up arguing over the Bylaws even more than you argued over their initial obnoxious behaviour! You're trying to END the problems, remember?

So what you do is simply make it clear, in polite, general, non-threatening language, that your group doesn't care for the way they act and doesn't want them to be a part of the group. End of story. What are they going to do? Sue, you to make you like them?

THAT'S AWFULLY RUDE, ISN'T IT?

Maybe it's a little rude to tell someone you don't like them (or to be more PC, you don't like their behaviour), but it's true. And they were being far ruder to you or you wouldn't be resorting to this. Yes, it's a little harsh, but it's quick and far less painful than any other method we've tried.

WILL THAT BE THE END OF IT?

Yes, if you're really lucky. But lots of times, you'll hear more from them. If they send you a blistering email telling you what you can do with your '%\$#@!' group and what a terrible leader you are, you got off easy. At the other end of the extreme are people who will bad-mouth you every chance they get, on every public list they can. You may have to defend yourself from some of these attacks and tell your side of the story. But I urge you to do so with the utmost restraint and brevity. Then ignore their counter-strike. If your group was right and they really are the problem, other people will see that, too. The weed will be known for what they are and will be shunned and banned by others. Everyone has had experience with this type of person, and they will sympathize with you. Have some faith in yourself and your group and in the good wishes of others in our community. It'll all blow over.

A LITTLE PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

It might not hurt to put a clause in your Bylaws that makes it clear that you will not tolerate disruptive people at your events. You can also discuss the issue with the whole group and make a group decision that you will tell disruptive individuals that they are not welcome. It might have a preventive effect on

some potentially troublesome people, and if not, at least they were warned.

CONCLUSION

There are a good many troubled and troublesome people in the world, and Neopagan groups seem to attract more than our fair share of them. These folks are usually loud, obnoxious, and a constant nuisance to the majority of us that just want to enjoy a smooth-functioning community of like-minded individuals. We have the legal and moral right to form communities that nurture and support us. We have the right to choose our friends. When a particular individual is found to consistently disrupt the harmony of our group or to cause more trouble than the group is willing to put up with, it is the group's right to exclude that individual from its presence.

And as the leaders of Neopagan groups, we have certain additional duties and obligations: We must be observant of the actions of our members and guests, so we will notice disruptive behaviour early, rather than late. We must listen carefully to the words of people in our groups that we trust, because they may be trying to tell us about a disruptive person, in a subtle way. We must try our best to be fair and open-minded so that we don't mislabel a person as disruptive, just because they happen to disagree with a certain policy or decision or don't get along with a certain individual. And finally, when we become convinced that a person is truly a "weed", we must act swiftly and surely to remove them from our garden.

A Personal Inventory for Leaders

While I've never personally been involved in a so-called "12 Step" program of recovery, I've always felt that there are valuable life lessons to be found within the steps. For leaders of groups like ADF Groves and Protogroves, the fourth step can be extremely valuable to undertake:

"We have made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Notice that there is no counsel to catalog the moral failings of others. Notice, too, that there is no limitation to listing only one's moral shortcomings and ignoring one's strengths. But the exercise of examining one's own accountability for the situation one finds oneself in can be tremendously important for a leader, especially when faced with the difficult task of considering disciplinary action against a member.

One of the biggest factors in contributing to conflict within a Grove...and, in my experience, most generally neglected...is the leader's own contributions to the antagonistic behaviour. The majority of the time, antagonists are antagonists and are going to disrupt any group they are in. However, sometimes, unfortunately, defensiveness or just simple misplaced pride on the part of a leader can create frustration and division. A good leader—in my opinion, and in my experience—needs to do the *very* difficult work of *first* asking him or herself (and other trusted members, if possible) what she or he might be contributing to the situation.

It can be very easy to decide, especially in a small group, that you have an irrational malcontent on your hands...because...see?...no one else is complaining...when what you actually have is one candid person and five people who also have issues with your leadership style but don't want to hurt your feelings (because your founded the group/do most of the work/contribute so much money/etc./etc.). The unreflective leader will not be capable of distinguishing between a malcontent and a passionate critic who may actually be making points that need to be heard.

None of that is hypothetical: I've seen it in action, including in ADF. And why shouldn't it happen? Particularly because ADF does not offer systematic training to prospective leaders, it is very important that Grove or

Protogrove leaders take real responsibility to check in with themselves—in a fearless and truly searching manner—as well as with other members and be willing to take constructive criticism in an open and non-defensive manner. That is often very difficult for the sorts of individuals drawn to leadership...it takes a lot of self-discipline and generally an ability to suppress exactly the sort of confident ego a leader needs to have.

The following are some suggestions drawn from personal experience of some things leaders might check in with themselves from time to time, **especially** before passing judgment on a "disruptive member":

1. What purpose does leadership serve in my life? What do I think "leadership" means generally? Have I thought about that? Why did I find the group (or seek my office)? Do I crave attention? Do I strive to put the needs of the group (as I see them and as expressed in founding documents) ahead of my needs when I feel like they are in conflict? Do I feel I'm in the office because no one else would take it on? Do I feel "miscast" in the office at all?
2. What skills do I feel I bring to leadership? What makes me consider myself a leader? If asked... said in an interview with the media...what evidence from education or professional experience would I cite to document those skills? What skills do I feel I lack? What have I done to work on acquiring those lacking skills? Have I asked any trusted members for **honest**, uncensored, feedback on my leadership abilities and style? Do I feel anyone can be a leader? If so, what has led me to think that?
3. How do I lead? How do I recognize when consensus is forming? Am I capable of forging compromise? Do I **enjoy** forging compromises? Do I dictate? Do I vacillate? Do I pontificate?

Do I have a hard time keeping a meeting orderly? Do I feel like meetings become too high-spirited and I can't be heard? Do meetings run longer than I'd like them to? Do I provide an agenda for meetings? Do I **follow** an agenda for meetings? Am I reluctant to say, "We need to move on"? If some members don't want to move on in a meeting, how do I handle that (or imagine I would handle that)? Do events begin on time? How do I provide notice of events? Has anyone ever complained that s/he wasn't informed of something?

4. If my group isn't growing at all, what reasons might there be? Have we settled into being a clique that doesn't welcome newcomers well? If I hug members in a public setting, does that extend to only *some* members? Do I identify a member in the group as my "best friend" to others? Do I play favorites? Do I make equal time for all who approach me about membership or at least have a system so that all who approach can be directed to the same member or group of members for answers?
5. Do I make an effort to identify potential problem individuals *before* they enter membership? What do I do when I encounter a person who makes me ill at ease who wants membership? Does the group have any filters in place? Can I get along with people whose personality or lifestyle choices make me uncomfortable? How do I tend to deal with those sorts of individuals in social settings? Do I do the same things in the Grove/Protogrove? *Should* I do the same things in the Grove/Protogrove?
6. If my group is growing rapidly, do I have a plan for responding to growth? What are the core principles I expect all members to affirm? When was the last time I actually explained them to someone? How do I articulate those to *all* newcomers? (*Do I* articulate them

to *all* newcomers?) Is there a fair and objective system in place for newcomers to advance in rank...if there is rank in the group? If there isn't a formal advancement or training system, on what basis do I decide whom I ask for advice and whom I don't among the members? Do I just work with elected officers of the group or is there an informal "inner circle"? If challenged by a member saying the group had an "inner circle" or "ruling faction" that *seemed* closed to newcomers, how would I respond?

7. How are decisions made in the group? How many decisions have I made in the last month without asking for consent from any other officer or member? The last year? If asked how the decision-making process was arrived at, what source would I identify? Another group's bylaws? Intuition? Formal leadership training? Experience in another group? If experience in another group: Why do I believe that group's structure or culture lines up with the culture and needs of my *current* group? Am I trying to force the other members into a mould into which they don't really fit? Am I honestly following the example(s) of a role model in building structure for the group or am I trying to be someone I'm not?
8. Do I criticize others publicly? To what ends have I criticized others in the group publicly? Have I been criticized publicly? How did that feel? Was I able to experience hurt feelings without rejecting the *content* of the criticism out of hand? Have I ever said to a fellow member, "Thank you, I didn't know I was doing that"? Have I ever shouted at a fellow member? Was I embarrassed afterwards? Did I apologize? Or do I still feel it was justified? Do I feel **they** owe me an apology for prompting my anger?
9. Do I feel unappreciated? If so, why? Who have I spoken to about that

feeling? Do I feel I'm getting more criticism as a leader than I thought I would when I founded the group/accepted the office?

10. Do I delegate enough work? Am I playing martyr by hanging onto enough work for the group that I can always appear overworked? Do I ever justify failing to follow through on a promise to the group or meet a deadline by saying "I had too many other things on my plate?" Was I being sincere if I said that? Why do I allow myself to have so much on my plate that things aren't done as well as I might like? As others might like?
11. Am I planning for the future? Do other members have a sense of what those plans might be? Do I engage in active long-range planning with the membership? If I were to be hit by a bus tomorrow, would the group survive? Do I have information that would be lost if I left the group?
12. Who do I think the group serves? The members? A larger community? Both? How does my group define membership? Where **exactly** is that definition to be found?
13. If someone who belongs to a minority subset of the group asks for accommodation for his/her practices or interests, how do I respond (or imagine I would respond)?
14. How much does my group communicate by e-mail? How many of the interpersonal conflicts I see within the group originated in e-mail communication? Do I use e-mail as a substitute for face-to-face communication? Have I educated myself as to the shortcomings of e-mail? Am I facilitating as much face-to-face interaction as possible? Have I ever disciplined or reprimanded a member by

e-mail? Have I done so on a list? Am I more comfortable...do I feel more articulate...in e-mail than in face-to-face communication? Why?

15. Do I ever feel intimidated when other members come up with ideas I wish I'd thought of? Do I ever nitpick those ideas? Have I ever rejected another's idea out-of-hand without explanation? Do I consider myself an "alpha" type? If so, how do I react when another "alpha" comes into the group (or any other setting where I'm in leadership)? Do I make conscious efforts to find productive roles for other assertive and/or creative personalities in the group? Do I ever marginalize such individuals? Has anyone ever told me they'd like more to do in the group? How did I respond?

I've had to ask myself virtually *all* of the above questions during my tenure as first Grove Organizer and then Senior Druid. Many of them I have had to ask repeatedly. Maybe we've been lucky, but in almost five years of existence and with well over fifty people having come through Grove membership during that time, we've had exactly one serious confrontation and have *never* had to discipline anyone (apart from one formal warning). I don't believe that is an accident—and I can honestly say I've seen us avoid problems other groups have fallen into through hard work and ongoing planning.

I believe that some Protogroves in smaller communities have a higher likelihood of encountering disruptive members because there may be a limited number of visible Pagan groups in the area and it is a truism that Paganism has an attraction for marginalized personalities. (This is what I call the lure of the "archetype of the empowered outsider" and it is endemic...and can be both valuable and toxic...in Neopaganism.) Also there is a greater likelihood of needing to accommodate to various interests in the group (cultural or otherwise) in places where Pagans

are thin on the ground. But I've seen groups in major metropolitan areas with plenty of choices of paths run into problems with disgruntled members, so I think it's important to resist the temptation to say that it is a given that we will be beset with antagonists for particular reasons...and, more importantly, in my opinion, to assume too readily the way to deal with antagonists is *automatically* to show them the door.

It is critically important to do very serious self-reflection...and often reflection within the "core" membership of the group...before asking someone to leave what they have identified as their spiritual fellowship. Once you are clear about your own contributions to a conflict, if you still feel someone needs to be asked to leave, it is a much healthier place to be and you will have more resolve to carry through on the action. A leader should never be afraid to confront a truly disruptive individual who threatens the well-being of the group and coming from a place of clarity as to one's own place in the conflict is an important step in facilitating this.

Protogrove Officers

Protogroves have only one official officer, the Grove Organizer. This is the person who has filled out the Grove Organizer's Survey on the ADF site and has been approved by the Grove Organizing Committee to run a Protogrove.

Note: Grove Organizers are prohibited from using the title "Senior Druid" to refer to themselves. ([CoSD Bylaws](#), Article V.1.C.2)

Protogroves may designate other officer positions, but those positions are not in any way official offices and may not give real authority to a person unless the rules in the [CoSD Bylaws](#), Article V.1.B.4 have been followed.

If the Grove Organizer position changes hands, the new Grove Organizer must submit a new Grove Organizer's Survey.

Fully and Provisionally Chartered Grove Officers

At a minimum, a provisionally or fully chartered Grove must have three "major officers": a **Senior Druid** (President or Pastor), a **Scribe** (Secretary) and a **Pursewarden** (Treasurer). These three must all be voting members of ADF and over 18.

The Senior Druid

Also referred to as the "President," the Senior Druid, who is not necessarily older than the others in the Grove, is chosen from the members who are willing to take on the job. She or he will probably, but not necessarily, be further along in the ADF Study Programs than most other members of the Grove.

Depending on local laws, the Senior Druid of your Grove may not be considered a legal clergyperson in your state or province until she or he has been issued temporary or permanent Clergy Credentials by the Mother Grove. Nonetheless, she or he will preside over most rituals, do spiritual counselling, and perform other traditional functions of the clergy.

Note: Senior Druids who are not Ordained Priests or Dedicant Priests of ADF may not use the term "Priest" to describe their role in the Grove. ([Clergy Council Bylaws](#), Article V.B.1.b and [CoSD Bylaws](#), Article V.2.C.1) Also, legal ceremonies, such as state recognized marriages, should never be performed within the context of an ADF ritual unless the person officiating the ceremony has received Lay Clergy or Ordained Clergy status from the Clergy Council of ADF. ([CoSD Bylaws](#), Article V.2.C.2)

The Scribe

Also referred to as "Secretary," it is generally the Scribe's job to keep minutes of meetings, run meetings, keep an accurate roster of Grove members, and mainly take care of administrative duties that may come up.

The Pursewarden

Also referred to as "Treasurer," the Pursewarden's job involves keeping a close tab on the money of the Grove, ensuring that

financial reports are available to the members and the ADF Office (via the Grove Quarterly Report forms), and dealing with all things financial.

Other Officers

Many Groves also have other officers who do various duties within the Grove. When your Grove is first planted, or later, you may want to add a Bard, a Liturgist, a Healer, a Diviner, a Chronicler, a Registrar, an Ecologist, and possibly other officers as well (these roles may be shared with any of the others).

It should specifically be noted that any other officers beyond the three required officers that your Grove has are not kept on file by the ADF Office as "officers." They are listed in the ADF membership database as "members" only.

Other officers may be chosen by consensus from those ready, willing and able to do the jobs. Informal competitions may be held for some positions, such as Bard or Liturgist. While care should be taken to choose people who can work well together, nepotism should be avoided. Temporary tryouts for positions could be considered as well.

Additional requirements (beyond those in the ADF by-laws) for these additional offices may be described in your Grove's by-laws. For example, you might decide that your Bard is able to sing on pitch, or that your Ecologist has a degree in Biology.

Elections should happen when a Grove is first planted, and thereafter on an annual, bi-, or tri-annual basis. Many Groves choose to hold these elections within three weeks following the Fall Equinox, so that terms of office may start and end at Samhain. In fact, there might be some sort of informal and brief ceremony involved just before the main Samhain rites.

The newly elected Grove Scribe should notify the ADF Office of the election results immediately after each election, including each elected (or re-elected) officer's legal name.

3. Becoming a Grove

Quarterly Reports and Intergrove Communications

The easiest thing you will be required to do as a Protogrove(PG)/Grove of ADF is the quarterly report -- however it is also one of the most important. Above and beyond the obvious necessity for oversight, the quarterly report is the primary vehicle for updating your PG/Grove information on the ADF website which is how new people find you. Remember the adage, 'you never get a second chance to make a first impression'? What kind of impression does it make on prospective members if the Grove Organizer/Senior Druid (GO/SD) can't be bothered to list correct contact information or return calls when inquiries do come in? You are also fortunate as the whole reporting process has been made incredibly easier than it was originally. With the help of modern technology and the hard work of our Web/computer wizards, the online form simply couldn't be easier. I recommend having a template that you can cut from and paste into the online form which makes it even easier.

The report forms can be found at: <http://www.adf.org/members/reports/file/index.html> along with links to the ADF By-Laws, Policies & Procedures Manual, and the Council of Senior Druids.

Below is a list of reasons that the Council of Senior Druids compiled to answer the question, "Why do we Quarterly Report?"

1. The Mother Grove as the 'board of directors of a federally recognized non-

profit organization, is required to be responsible for the organization and required to ensure that the organization is operating within the guidelines of a non-profit organization. This includes:

1. Financial Accountability: (basically) no profits of the organization can go to the benefit of any member(s)
2. Political Accountability: We are not allowed to lobby or at least not allowed to spend a certain amount of our budget on certain forms of political activism
2. How does a board of directors ensure all its satellite offices are operating within the required guidelines? It makes them report their activities and holds them accountable. Now some of these things are defined sort of nebulously. Also, strictly speaking, if a Grove/PG was not actually using the ADF umbrella non-profit status, would the above apply? I don't know, but ADF is a Federally-recognized church, so it is important that local groups which claim affiliation with the organization do not act in ways that might jeopardize its standing.
3. If the IRS ever decided to audit ADF, would ADF be required to provide financial information on the entire organization? Well if they did, that info is in the quarterly reports. Imagine what is would be like if your Grove/PG was suddenly asked to provide the last, oh let's say 5 years' worth, of financial information for the Grove/PG. Imagine if all of ADF had to do it. I've done stuff like this in the federal government, its not fun.
4. What if ADF or a local Grove decided to apply for a faith-based initiative funding or some other type of grant? They would no doubt need to provide documentation supporting the

application. Again, the reports give the PG/Grove historical documentation which has stood up in court as proof of your existence as a legal church. This becomes very important should you/we face any kind of legal challenge.

5. The reports provide a venue for questions which we are trying to post to the SD & Leadership lists and get on the web so that everyone can benefit both now and in the future.
6. Quarterly reports help ensure that the Office (and the website) has the current contact information for a Grove or Protogrove.
7. And last but not least, there is a group dynamic morale incentive in posting what the Groves and PGs have been doing as far as community service. It inspires everyone else to 'go and do' also.

The ADF By-Laws explain what the minimum requirements are for a PG/Grove and what will happen if the Grove/PG does not fulfill the minimum requirements. You can view the full By-Laws online at: <http://www.adf.org/about/org/bylaws.html>.

Bylaws of Ár nDraíocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship, Inc. (as amended on January 27, 2003 c.e.)

Article 23: Open Financial Records

1. Purswardens in local groves shall make quarterly financial reports to the Mother Grove, accounting for all income and expenses, and shall make these reports available to local grove members in a similar fashion.

Article 25: The Council of Senior Druids

1. In the event a Protogrove, Provisionally Chartered, or Fully Chartered Grove of ADF ceases to meet the established minimum requirements to maintain their active status as a subordinate group of ADF, for a period in excess of two consecutive quarters, the Grove

Coordinating Committee shall suspend the Protogrove status or Grove Charter of the subordinate group, and place it on an inactive status, and shall notify the ADF Mother Grove, Chronicler, and general membership of the action taken. In the event the suspended Protogrove, Provisionally Chartered, or Fully Chartered Grove of ADF fails to correct such lapses in established minimum requirements, for a period in excess of two quarters after the suspension, the Grove Coordinating Committee shall revoke the Protogrove status or Grove Charter of that subordinate group, and shall notify the ADF Mother Grove, Chronicler, and general membership of the action taken.

The Council of Senior Druids By-Laws contains information on regaining Grove status once it has been revoked however, if you look under Protogroves you will find that once a PG loses its PG status, it is required to re-apply through the Grove Organizing Committee. So it's best just to stay current and it makes the lives of the ADF Office/Organizational folks so much easier. Thanks in advance!

Tax Exempt Status and Your Grove

The issue of tax-exempt status generates a certain amount of confusion. This article will attempt to clarify the issue for US Groves and Protogroves. Groves located in Canada or elsewhere should seek the advice of a local accountant or another taxation specialist.

Creating Bylaws For Your Grove

One of the most important decisions a Grove will make is how it is to be governed. Because of ADF's longstanding policy of granting the maximum amount of autonomy possible to its local fellowships, there are very few requirements placed on Groves as to their governing documents. Consequently, there is no absolute requirement that a Grove has bylaws (unless the group wishes to participate in ADF's group tax exemption roster with the IRS, in which case a governing document that certifies the Grove's nonprofit nature is expected).

Despite this fact, it is important to plan for the future and one unpleasant but unavoidable factor to consider is that disputes will happen and the more members your group has, the more likely it is that disagreements may arise. Similarly, as your group accumulates both money and supplies and maybe even property, the intensity of a dispute can be magnified. Having a concrete set of rules and procedures in place--in writing and upfront--is generally not only an effective means of resolving disputes but also of preventing them. It is a good idea, therefore, to create such rules and procedures and, for most organizations, they reside in the group's bylaws.

For all the importance of bylaws, it is not necessarily a good idea for a brand new Protogrove to adopt them immediately. For one thing, it may be very helpful to allow the new group to explore its own identity and talk about the aspirations its members have for future activities and growth. And, as a practical matter, Protogroves often have fewer than a half-dozen members and have been organized by a single individual. A group of this nature can usually agree to follow the informed decisions of the founder or founders for the short term. It is almost never too early, though, to begin to discuss the issue of structure and

governance. You may wish to schedule meetings of your members to discuss some of the issues brought up in this article or other sources.

The Nature of Bylaws

The Foundation Center defines the nature and purpose of bylaws for the nonprofit organization as follows:

"Bylaws define how a nonprofit organization will be managed and run. They determine which... members have authority and decision-making responsibilities and how those responsibilities should be carried out. They create a framework for your organization, ensure that income is used properly and aid in resolving internal disputes. You must have a governing organizing document, such as a constitution, charter, or articles of association or incorporation, to secure tax-exempt status."

State laws vary, but generally do not intrude too deeply in the area of the content of bylaws. States ask for articles of association or incorporation and set stringent standards for these. As a local congregation of a national church (incorporated in Delaware), you may or may not need to file anything with your state (or another unit of government). It is best to check with your state's Secretary of State's office.

Bylaws, however, are a contract between the directors of a group and its members. They are binding within the group and should be respected like any contract and changed only when it is clear that there is an evident need. Viewed as a contract with the membership by the directors, bylaws are likely to be preserved intact until the membership agrees with the directors that a change is truly in the group's interests.

At a minimum, it is usual to require a vote of either 2/3 of the directors or 2/3 of the membership to amend bylaws.

The Content of Bylaws

Bylaws generally cover, at minimum, the following areas:

1. Purpose and name
2. Creation and role of the board of directors or trustees (or other governing body)
3. Officers and their duties
4. Election of officers and other directors
5. The use of any paid staff
6. The timing of meetings (of directors and of the membership)
7. Procedures for meetings (of directors and of membership)
8. Resolving conflicts of interest
9. Amendments to the bylaws

To this list, a membership organization such as a Grove (or Protogrove) can add a "Definition of membership" (including a definition of how a member may be removed from membership, should that ever become necessary).

ADF does set certain specific requirements for both Groves and Protogroves, however, and these should be considered both in discussions among members and in drafting any governing documents such as bylaws.

- For Grove status, three current ADF members must agree to serve as Senior Druid (President), Scribe (Secretary), and Pursewarden (Treasurer). These offices must be adopted permanently by the Grove. Other offices may be added to these without limitation.

- Only ADF members over the age of 18 may serve in the above offices or any other offices that might exercise legal responsibility on behalf of the Grove (which is really the legal definition of an "officer," by the way).
- Only current ADF members may vote in Grove officer elections (though non-ADF members may vote on other matters if the Grove so chooses).
- Groves must offer eight open-to-the-public rituals per year on or around the High Days as defined by the ADF bylaws. Variances from this must be formally applied for and approved by the national organization. Protogroves are not required to do eight rituals, but must still provide eight open-to-the-public events (which may include discussion groups, workshops, or other sorts of public events).
- Groves must meet at least once per month and the majority of Grove's activities must be open to the public.
- Groves must file a statement of their income, expenses, and assets to ADF each quarter. Both Groves and Protogroves must make quarterly reports of their activities to ADF.

In addition to these specific requirements that may well need to be addressed in your bylaws if you adopt them, ADF also expects that you will in all cases abide by the ADF bylaws as a condition of your grant of Protogrove status or provisional or full Grove charter.

Beyond that, as a subgroup of a nonprofit church, your group is expected to comply with the ordinary legal requirements for nonprofit organizations, most importantly that no net proceeds of your activities are distributed to any member. You may wish to enshrine this as a requirement in your bylaws. If you are a Grove wishing to be listed with the IRS as one

of ADF's tax-exempt subordinate groups, you will be expected to do so. The necessary language is included in the article entitled Tax Exempt Status and Your Grove, (p.51)."

Sources for Bylaws

Besides the obvious recourse of consulting with an attorney, there are other resources you can consult in drafting bylaws (though it is never a bad idea to have an attorney review your final document if the funds are available). There are a number of good discussions of bylaws on the Internet. However, your most obvious and helpful resource will be the bylaws of existing ADF Groves. You will generally be well served by comparing these various bylaws and modelling yours on one or more examples you think fit your group's needs. (Remember that you can usually make amendments down the road if you find that the bylaws you started with as a template don't work for your group as well as you hoped.) You may also find elements of Grove bylaws that you question or even things you consider mistakes that you might wish to avoid. This comparison process can prove very illuminating. Many Groves have posted their bylaws on the Web.

Here are some links to Grove bylaws:

Wild Onion Grove (Illinois) - https://people.well.com/user/csherbak/wog_bylaws.htm

Shining Lakes Grove (Michigan) - <http://www.shininglakes.org/business/bylaws.php>

Stone Creed Grove (Ohio) - http://www.dragonskeepfarm.com/MG/Grove_Bylaws/Stone_Creed_Grove/indexdoc.htm

Muin Mound Grove (New York) - <http://www.muinmound.org/bylaws.php>

Grove of the Seven Hills (Virginia) - <http://sevenhillsadf.weebly.com/bylaws.html>

TAX EXEMPTION AND CHURCH STATUS

In the United States, churches, interchurch organizations of local units of a church, and the "integrated auxiliaries" of a church are automatically exempt both from federal taxation and even from filing an informational return (Form 990). Because the US government is forbidden by the Constitution from passing legislation respecting the establishment of religion, the IRS has generally followed a policy of treating each application for recognition as a church on a case-by-case basis rather than applying blanket regulations.

For churches seeking explicit (rather than simply automatic) recognition from the IRS as exempt organizations—which can be a wise move for nonmainstream churches such as ADF—the IRS has a set of criteria that it will look at in evaluating an application for formal exempt status, but it does not specify that all of them must be met and generally offers wide latitude to applicant churches. Should an organization's church status be called into question for any reason and an investigation undertaken, the failure to meet the bulk of these criteria could be a factor in stripping the church of its tax exemption.

The criteria included in the application for tax exemption include the existence of a formal creed or statement of faith; requirement for renunciation of other faiths by members; formal code of doctrine or discipline; a form of worship; public access to worship; methods for outreach; the size of the community; services besides worship, such as weddings and funerals; religious education for the young; system of training for clergy; and system of organization or government.

Again, the existence of all of these elements is not a hard-and-fast requirement and ADF has satisfied the IRS that it meets the necessary condition for church status.

ADF'S CHURCH STATUS AND GROUP TAX EXEMPTION

ADF has been formally recognized by the IRS as a church under section 501(c)(3) and therefore its "integrated auxiliaries" (sometimes also referred to as "subordinate groups") are likewise protected by its exempt status. This includes our Groves and Protogroves. You can legitimately refer to your Grove or Protogrove as a tax-exempt congregation or local fellowship of a federally-recognized church and represent to members and contributors that their donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. It can also exempt you from state and local sales or property taxes and qualify you for a nonprofit bulk mail permit (if you anticipate doing any bulk mailing).

ADF has also been granted a "Group Exemption Number." This allows our provisionally- and fully-chartered Groves to be placed on a roster filed with the IRS so that they are explicitly named as exempt subordinate groups if they so request. At the present time, ADF does not allow Protogroves to be placed on the group exemption roster, but that does not preclude them from claiming exempt status under the automatic exemption extended to churches. The minimal requirements for placement on the group exemption roster are to be found in the article entitled "Applying for Group Tax Exemption." In general terms, your Grove merely needs to provide a physical street address, a Federal Employer ID Number (EIN), and evidence in your bylaws of the nonprofit nature of the group.

For the record, Groves and Protogroves are almost always doubly exempt from filing any return with the IRS: all nonprofit organizations with under \$25,000 in annual income are not required to file Form 990.

In addition, occasional sales of goods or services to the general public are exempt from reporting as "unrelated business income" as

long as they are conducted by volunteer members of the church and/or are clearly related to either the spiritual identity of the group or to promoting its visibility and attracting members.

NONPROFIT STATUS

The basic definition of a nonprofit organization is that none of the proceeds from its operation can go to the benefit of any member or director. This does not mean that a Grove or Protogrove cannot ever pay a member to clear brush or trash from a ritual site— or that we cannot someday pay salaries to our clergy— only that net proceeds cannot be distributed to one or more members. Any payments to members must be for specific services or goods provided and, ideally, would be shown in the group's annual budget. In short: Please respect the ideals and the legal restrictions applying to nonprofit groups like ADF and its Groves and Protogroves by avoiding any appearance of profit-taking or financial conflict of interest. If you have any questions on this point, please do not hesitate to contact the ADF Pursewarden at adf-pursewarden@adf.org or to consult with an attorney or accounting professional.

STATE AND LOCAL EXEMPTION

State regulations related to tax-exempt status and exemption from filing vary widely and are beyond the scope of an article like this one. Generally, a search of the website for your state's taxation authority (e.g., the California Franchise Tax Board) is a good place to begin. In many states, the Secretary of State is the responsible official for issues related to nonprofit organizations and relevant information may be found on the Secretary of State's website. Consult with an accountant or attorney in your area if you have serious concerns or uncertainties as to whether or not you might need to file a state tax return and/or pay state taxes.

Hopefully, this brief survey of the issues related to tax exemption will help allay any anxieties you might have about the possibility

that your Grove or Protogrove might need to report its income or pay federal taxes. In most cases, you shouldn't have to worry about that. Remember, though, that automatic exemption as one of ADF's local fellowships is largely determined by Grove's being "integrated" into ADF and operating as a nonprofit organization. Adhering to the requirements of ADF's bylaws as they apply to your group is the primary evidence of this.

Charter Request

Please print this page out, fill in the required information, sign and notarize the form, and mail it to the main ADF address given below. If you have not already done so, also please fill out the Senior Druid's Questionnaire.

We, the undersigned members of Ar nDraiocht Fein: A Druid Fellowship, Inc., living in the vicinity of _____, in the State/Province of _____, in the nation of _____, desiring to plant a grove of A.D.F. in this area, do hereby request the Mother Grove to grant us a Grove Charter. We wish to call our grove "_____
Grove, A.D.F." Our post office box or mailing service address will be:_____. Our grove will function as a local congregation of Ar nDraiocht Fein: A Druid Fellowship, Inc., according to the By-Laws thereof, as well as the regulations issued in the A.D.F. Grove Leaders' Handbook, and subject to the authority of the Mother Grove of A.D.F., Inc. We are aware that we are required to make quarterly financial and activity reports to Mother Grove, and to function in our community in an open, inclusionary fashion. We agree to abide by all local, state/provincial, and national laws and regulations relevant to the activities of churches, except insofar as we may be specifically authorized by the Mother Grove to test a particular law or regulation for the purposes of establishing a legal precedent. We agree that we will indemnify, save harmless, and defend A.D.F., Inc. from all liability from damages to persons or property in any suit at law arising out of our status as a chartered grove. We agree that neither A.D.F., Inc., nor any other local grove, will be

responsible for any debts incurred by our grove. We agree that we will at all times proudly acknowledge ourselves as a grove of A.D.F., and will not claim, as a grove, to represent any other form of Neo-Paganism or Druidism. However, we shall be free, as individuals, to practice other forms of Neo-Paganism and/or Druidism, as we may see fit, provided that we do not represent activities that are in contradiction to A.D.F.'s proclaimed beliefs and customs as if they were sanctioned by A.D.F. The following people will be the three primary officers:

Senior Druid (President) Legal Name:
Religious Name (Optional):

Scribe (Secretary) Legal Name:
Religious Name (Optional):

Pursewarden (Treasurer) Legal Name:
Religious Name (Optional):

Each of us has passed her/his 18th birthday. Each of us is currently a voting member of A.D.F., and each of us agrees to remain so as a condition of his/her position. Any changes in our primary officers will be reported within three weeks to the ADF Office. Each of our signatures has been affixed below. Optional- The following individuals, being also voting members of A.D.F., wish to add their signatures to this Request, declaring their intentions to be members of this grove:

Signatures

Senior Druid (President)

Scribe (Secretary)

Pursewarden (Treasurer)

4. Fully Chartered and Beyond

So You've Become Senior Druid of an Already Existing Grove.

Much of the material in the Grove Organizers Handbook is directed—not surprisingly—at Grove Organizers, ADF members starting a brand-new local fellowship. But the leadership of our Groves and Protogroves is usually not permanent and a newly elected or appointed Senior Druid may well not have had as much preparation as she or he might wish. It is hoped that succession from one leader to another is always orderly and well-organized, but it must be recognized that this is sometimes not the case. And so, here are some things a new Senior Druid should be aware of...

NOTIFICATION OF THE ADF OFFICE AND OTHERS

It frequently happens that Groves neglect to inform the appropriate officials within ADF of a change in officers. Be sure that the following have been notified: the ADF Office (adf-office@adf.org); the Chief of the Council of Senior Druids (adf-senior-druids-chief@adf.org); and the Chair of the Grove Coordinating Committee (adf-grove-coord-chair@adf.org). You should include any other new office holders besides yourself in this notification.

THE COUNCIL OF SENIOR DRUIDS

All serving Senior Druids of provisionally- or fully-chartered Groves are voting members of the Council of Senior Druids (CoSD) and

Grove Organizers of approved Protogroves are non-voting members. The opinions of all members of the CoSD are valued and it is crucial that voting members respond when votes are called. As a Senior Druid or Grove Organizer, you have a right to be subscribed to the CoSD's e-mail list, ADF-SD. If you have not received notice of having been added to the list, contact the ADF List Master at adf-listmaster@adf.org.

THE ADF LEADERSHIP E-MAIL LIST

All Senior Druids and Grove Organizers are entitled to be subscribed to the ADF-LEADERSHIP e-mail list, a general discussion forum for ADF's leaders. If you are not already subscribed by virtue of holding another office in ADF, you can request a subscription from the List Master at adf-listmaster@adf.org.

QUARTERLY REPORTS

Your single biggest administrative responsibility outside your Grove and your community will be to file reports on your Grove's activities and finances with ADF on a quarterly basis. You are strongly encouraged to use the online form provided for this purpose. You will be asked to provide the names of your officers and their ADF renewal dates, current contact info for the Grove, number of members, details about recent rituals, and financial info, including quarterly income and expenses and cash on hand. These reports are due on February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1. It is a good idea to talk with your Grove Pursewarden well in advance to confirm that you will be able to have the needed financial info in a timely manner. The online form may be found at <http://www.adf.org/members/reports/file/grove.html> (the form for Protogroves is at <http://www.adf.org/members/reports/file/protogrove.html>).

These are just some practical organizational matters that are commonly overlooked in transitions. Obviously, the experience of anyone inheriting the mantle of Senior Druid is going to be highly personal and must be dealt with on an individual basis. But basic

psychology tells us that all change is inherently stressful, so be sure to be as patient as possible with the frustrations that are likely to develop for you, both the practical and the interpersonal... patient with yourself as much as with others. Trying to impose change on a group can exacerbate the stress that is already present, so it is healthy to operate from a perspective of not only patience but trust in the work the group has done already in shaping its identity and customs.

Some new Senior Druids may be in the challenging position of replacing a charismatic founder who may still be active in the group and feel the need to get out from under the founder's shadow. Others may inherit the position after resignation and conflict within the group. Whatever the unique stresses you face, always remember that all of you—yourself and the other members of your Grove—are together out of the same basic spiritual impulses and that you are supported by a larger international community. Don't hesitate to call on that community in whatever manner seems most helpful.

Creating a Permanent Nemeton

Normally, Groves start out holding rituals in parks, members' homes or just about anywhere they can find enough space at a reasonable price. In time, however, many Groves will decide that it is time to build a permanent Nemeton. This article will first cover permanent Nemetons in general and then follow with the description of an example in Arizona.

There are some advantages that a permanent ritual location can have over temporary ones. The primary one may be consistency. While a temporary Nemeton can always be put up and purified, there's something to be said for a site already there and ready to go. A space dedicated to the sacred and never used for profane activities is one that need never have

its energies dissipated. These energies can build up over time and the location cannot help but become more powerful.

A permanent Nemeton can also become a focal point for the Grove's energies. Members can decorate it in a more permanent fashion, making the space their own.

A permanent location is also good for community building. People are more likely to show up for rituals when they don't have to search out the location every time. And having a permanent Nemeton can also give newcomers the impression that the Grove is "successful" and therefore more attractive. Of course, the quality of the rituals held in the Nemeton may be the deciding factor for potential new members.

So how does one go about getting started? Once the land and/or building are secured, decide what sort of layout would work best with your Grove's ethnic focus or rituals. The two most common ones are based on the rectangle and the circle.

Layouts

Rectangular Nemetons

In at least the ancient Hellenic and Roman cultures (and possibly in the Celtic lands during Roman times), it was common for a small temple to exist at one end of a rectangular space. The statue of the God or Goddess dwelled in the temple, and the doors would be opened for ritual. In front of the temple would be an altar for sacrifices, and the people would stand in the space facing the altar and temple.

Outdoors, could easily be accomplished by using a small garden shed, purchased at your local garden center, as the temple. The backyards of most houses are rectangular in shape and would fit this layout very well. Indoors, most rooms are rectangular, and could also be laid out in this fashion, though the 'temple' might be suggested rather than actually built.

With rectangular Nemetons used in this way, the people and priests all face one direction – towards the altar and the image of the God or Goddess. As Rob Barton put it, our clergy represent the face of the people in dealing with the sacred, not the face of the sacred dealing with the people. All of our members, not just the clergy, are able to perform any sacramental functions. No one claims authority from the Kindreds, only the people.

Circular Nemetons

A very popular layout is the circle. Probably drawn from Wicca and Ceremonial Magic, the circular sacred space is quite common. The megalithic stone circles of the ancient British Isles and Western Europe may also be reflected in this layout, however. There are scholars in the academic community that believe that the Celtic cultures came to Britain via a sort of cultural osmosis rather than by physical invasion. If this is so, then the megalithic stone circle builders may have been ancestors of the Insular Celts, making a circular layout for a Celtic-based Grove not unreasonable.

Indoors, there can be the problem of making a circle within a rectangular room. One Grove has solved this problem very neatly. Their well, fire and tree symbols have been built into a single unit in the shape of a straight line, and the unit is situated in the center of the room. The people can surround this in a circular way. Outdoors, and stones can be arranged marking the edge of a circle with the ritual taking place inside. These stones can range from simple flagstones laid on the ground to large standing stones in the megalithic tradition.

In circles, the people and clergy all face inward, towards one another. While this may make for a more egalitarian feel to ritual, care should be taken to ensure that everyone is focused on the appropriate Deities, Nature Spirits, Ancestors or symbols.

Marking Sacred Space

Indoors, when an entire room is the Sacred Space, little is needed to mark it out. Entrances will be the doors, and any Outdwellers area will be elsewhere. Spaces out of doors, however, may require markings to delineate the area. Stone circles are obviously marked with stones. Other circles and rectangular spaces can be marked with stones, stakes, fencing or anything else that pleases you. Some groups put up posts with markings in a culturally appropriate script, or carving or with art. But you will want to mark the edges of your sacred area.

Well, Fire And Tree

The symbols of the Indo-European cosmos that many Groves use are the Well, Fire and Tree. Other Groves use symbols more culturally specific, such as the Focus, Mundus and Portus of Roman cosmology.

Groves wanting to use these or other more culturally specific symbols should contact the appropriate ADF Kin for information.

Ideally, the Well should be a free-flowing spring. Failing that, it can be a small pool or large cauldron. The Fire is usually a fire pit – indoors, a fireplace will do nicely. The Tree can be either a real tree, planted in the ground or in a large pot or a carved pole. Whatever you use, be sure that it is large enough to be seen and be useful with large groups.

Some Groves also includes a shaft or pit used for offerings to the earth.

Outdwellers

Different Groves handle the Outdwellers differently. Many make an offering to Them, asking Them to stay away and not bother the rite. Others dispense with offerings and instead invoke a warrior God or Goddess to protect the rite. Still, others don't bother with Them at all.

For those Groves who make offerings to the Outdwellers, simply having the celebrant walk somewhere outside of sacred space to make the offering is enough. Other Groves have built

altars for the Outdwellers outside of sacred spaces for the offerings.

Summerlands Stone Circle

One purpose-built Nemeton is the Summerlands Stone Circle in Tucson, Arizona. The home Nemeton for the Sonoran Sunrise Grove, ADF, this circle was laid out as part of a larger sacred precinct.

As the procession approaches the Sacred Space, they first come to the Outdwellers Altar, built of a basalt stone set upon smaller stones with a grimacing plaster face attached to the base. Beyond that are two granite pillars marking the entrance to the sacred area, each carved with a triple spiral. The Procession then winds down a path to another pair of stones flanking the entranceway to the circle itself. The Procession enters the circle from the east, and there are benches built into the foundations holding the standing stones. The twelve standing stones are quite large and vary in weight from 3500 to 7000 pounds each.

There is a Southern Live Oak tree (representing the World Tree or Bile) in the north end of the circle with a large, stone altar just to the south of it, a "Well" (actually a small, raised pool representing the earth power, underworld and the western sea) in the southwest and a raised fire pit (representing the sky power and the heavens) in the southeast. There is also a covered socket in the center of the circle for a Maypole.

Outside the circle, itself are the altars, each with appropriate glazed icons. The altar in the east (Brigit) marks the rising of the sun on the Equinoxes and the altar on the west (Cernunnos) marks the setting of that sun. Altars on the southeast (Taranis) and southwest (Rhiannon) mark the rising and setting of the Winter Solstice sun and the altars on the northeast (Lugh) and northwest (Manannan Mac Lir) mark the Summer Solstice sun. There are also altars on the south wall of the Sacred Precinct.

As of this writing, there are also plans to add two more altars (Nature Spirits and Ancestors) as well as a labyrinth and Sweat Lodge to the Sacred Precinct. Since the circle was completed in early 2001 today (December 2003), the Sonoran Sunrise Grove has gone from 7 members to nearly 30 (with ritual attendance between 35 and 80). But even if no one else ever came, the circle gives the Grove a special home, full of power and wonder and beauty.

How to Get Your Grove Chartered

To become a chartered grove of ADF you will need to follow the steps below. Local groups are required to start as ADF Protogroves. Any questions about the process below can be sent to the Chair of the Grove Organizing Committee at goc-chair@adf.org.

1. Gather at least three current voting members (including yourself) of ADF who have passed their 18th birthdays (one of whom must have been a member of ADF for at least six months).
2. Review the ADF By-Laws, The Council of Senior Druids (CoSD) bylaws and the ADF Grove Leaders' Handbook (GLH).
3. Decide on your grove's name and cultural or other focus (if any). There is further information in the GLH article on Cultural Focus.
4. Write up your grove bylaws. Bylaws that include a statement of the nonprofit nature of the Grove are mandatory for groups wishing to be listed with the IRS as part of ADF's Group Tax Exemption roster. There is further information in the articles entitled Creating Bylaws for Your Grove and Applying for Group Tax Exemption.
5. Following the procedures in your bylaws or however otherwise agreed to by your members, decide who will be your

officers and what publishable names they will use.

6. If you haven't already done so, obtain a post office box or private mailing service box to be your official mailing address.
7. Check with your state/provincial Secretary of State (or equivalent public official) to find out what procedures you'll need to follow as a branch of a church incorporated in Delaware, USA.
8. Print, fill out, sign, and have your legal signatures (individually or jointly) notarized on the [Charter Request Form](#).
9. The person who is going to be your first Senior Druid (who may or may not be the original grove organizer) must fill out the Senior Druid's Questionnaire
10. Photocopy your Request and Questionnaire, then send the originals, along with photocopies of your by-laws (or equivalent organizing document), a sample ritual script, and the [ADF Tax Exemption Request Form](#) (optional) to the ADF Office. Sending electronic versions (scans or Word docs) to the [Grove Organizing Committee Chair](#), in addition to the hard copies mailed to the Office, will expedite the approval process. The Office will confirm receipt of your paperwork and verify its contents with the members of the Grove Organizing Committee.
11. Once the GOC has received your completed application (which may require asking for more information from you), the GOC Chair will open a two-week discussion and voting period.
12. You will be sent a Charter certificate after approval, and your grove will then be listed in all ADF publications

Section 5:

Miscellany

How to Do a Liturgical Briefing

At every ritual (especially those where newcomers are present) you need to make sure that everyone has a good idea of what is going on. "Who," "what," and "why" are the questions to be answered; "how" is less important. Everyone should understand the basics of Druidic holy theology, symbols, and deities. They should also feel comfortable with whatever participation is expected of them, i.e., know the chants, etc. The exact details of what will happen when and the precise words that will be said can be skipped - it spoils any potential surprises anyway. Although there's a lot of material to be covered, the briefing should be just that, brief- 15-20 minutes. Items that should be gone over even with experienced Druids are marked here with an asterisk.

1. **Introduction:** Briefly explain the goal of the ceremony, i.e., what holiday or rite of passage is being celebrated, any special magical work to be done, etc. If a rite of passage or a spell casting is to happen, describe the target to be focused upon.
2. **Cues:** Go over the signals that will be used during the rite, i.e., what gestures or sounds will mean "stop," what will indicate a change in volume, etc. Ask for questions.
3. **Liturgical language:** What language is being used? Assure everyone that translations are provided.

4. **Processional/Sigil Marking:** Speak the words to the song/chant, then sing through. Have everyone sing once or twice. Show how the Sigil will be formed.
5. **Differences from other Neopagan traditions:** Explain that the ritual boundaries are not exclusive but inclusive. No circle is cast. It's OK to come late or to leave quietly. The participants are not "between the worlds" but in the center of all worlds: Land, Sea, Sky and the fiery realms of spirit - not cabalistic "Four Elements." Directional attributions are different as well.
6. **Unity Chant/Song:** Teach.
7. **Invoking the Gatekeeper:** Who is being used? Briefly describe Him/Her. Explain that He/She will open the Gates Between the Worlds in the, center of the ritual area (generally over the main fire). This is our channel for communication between worlds. Describe the exact visualization to be used for the Gates and their opening. If a dance will be done then, explain. If the congregation will be dancing, show steps and have all practice briefly. *Teach any gate-opening chant/song.
8. **Invoking the Matron/Patron of Bards:** Describe who She/He is and why She/He is being invoked. *Teach any necessary song/chant.
9. **Invocations to recreate the rest of the Cosmos:** Describe the cosmology being used and the entities being invoked. *Describe the energy flow in and out of the Gates. *If chants or songs are to be done, teach and rehearse. *If cups are to be passed, explain which are alcoholic and which are not. *If litanies are to be done, rehearse thoroughly, showing the underlying patterns.

10. **Settling Chant/Song:** *Teach.

11. **Invocation of the deities of the occasion:** Explain that the participants are bringing these deities to the ritual, to offer Them praise and worship, and to receive Their blessings. *Teach any litany, chant, or song to be used.

12. **Praise offerings:** Explain what is wanted. Encourage rehearsed, memorized pieces, while still allowing for onsite spontaneity. *If time allows, ask for auditions to be done after the briefing. *Ask for seasonal pieces, or ones appropriate to the ritual goal, and pieces specifically for or about either or both of the deities of the occasion. Suggest songs, poems, instrumentals, *group offerings, brief dramas or stories, etc. Stress that this is the power raising, our sacrifice to the Gods. Stress that there is to be no applause, either for the praise offerings or at any other time during the ritual (since applause dissipates energy). Ask that questions on praise offerings be saved until after the briefing.

13. **Sacrifice:** Assure newcomers that no blood will be spilled, but that people are to focus their energies through the Gates when the Sacrifice prayer is intoned.

14. **Omen seeking:** Stress that this is for real. Explain that the performance of any spells or rites of passage will be dependent upon receiving an appropriate omen in response to the sacrifice.

15. **Receipt of blessings:** Explain alcoholic/nonalcoholic identification signs again. Stress that all should partake, since the waters hold the Gods' blessings. Teach the passing chant/song. Have all begin to think about personal/group needs.

16. **Optional spell casting or rite of passage:** If one is to be done, repeat the target and goal, explain the procedure to be followed, teach any chants, etc.

17. **Closing:** Rehearse the liturgical language for "thank you" and "so be it." Teach the closing chant/song. Instruct everyone to scatter at the end. Give everyone a last chance to ask questions.

If you have extra time, rehearse the chants and songs, but don't let the briefing run too long or you will dissipate the excitement.

Some examples of pre-ritual briefings can be found on the ADF site. Here are some quick links:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • A Briefing for Newcomers | • A Druidic Ritual Primer |
| • A Cosmological | • A Preritual |

Acronyms Used in ADF

The following acronyms are frequently used in ADF. If you see a frequently used acronym which is not on this list, please mail [ADF-Webmaster](#).

If you are looking for explanations of acronyms used in e-mail conversations, like IMO, FWIW, AFAIK, etc., see the [Newbie Expression Guide](#).

- **1C:** 1st Circle in an ADF study program, such as the [GSP](#), [CTP](#), or Guild programs; the [DP](#) has no circles
-
- **2C, 3C, etc.:** 2nd Circle, 3rd Circle, etc.; the higher the Circle, the more advanced the course
-
- **2CKS, 3CKS, etc.:** 2nd or 3rd Circle Knowledge Set; what a student should know for a given Circle, used in designing SPs
-
- **AD:** [Archdruid](#), head of the MG and spiritual leader of ADF
-
- **ADF:** Ár Draíocht Féin, "our own druidry" (see [What is ADF?](#))
-
- **AG:** [Artisans Guild](#), creating artworks and other artifacts, training in arts & crafts, etc.
-
- **AM:** The [Annual Meeting](#) of ADF members; the site for each meeting is selected by [vote](#) the previous year
-
- **BOD:** Board of Directors; see Mother Grove
-

- **BG:** [Bardic Guild](#), exists to promote excellence in the word: spoken, written, and sung
-
- **CC:** [Clergy Council](#), comprised of ordained and lay clergy, developing the CTP
-
- **CfN:** Call for Nominations, the first step in our annual [elections process](#)
-
- **CLG:** CedarLight Grove in Baltimore MD; see the [grove list](#) for other groves
-
- **CM:** Compassionate Membership; new/renewal membership granted to members with financial hardship
-
- **COL:** [Council of Lore](#); all Guild Preceptors and Chiefs, approves new Guilds, Guild training systems
-
- **COoR:** [Core Order of Ritual](#), an outline of what is necessary for an "ADF" ritual; determined by the [Clergy Council](#)
-
- **COSD:** [Council of Senior Druids](#); past and present Senior Druids, contains the GCC and GOC
-
- **CORD:** [Council of Regional Druids](#), the Chief of whom is on the MG
-
- **CoCoRD or CotCoRD:** Chief of the [Council of Regional Druids](#)
-
- **CoCoSD or CotCoSD:** Chief of the [Council of Senior Druids](#)
-
- **CTP:** Clergy Training Program, training for ADF clergy; being developed by the Clergy Council
-
- **DotO:** Deity(ies) of the occasion, the main deity(ies) being honored in a ritual
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- **DP:** [Dedicant Program](#), year-long introduction to Our Druidry; prerequisite to other ADF training
-
- **DP:** [Druids Progress](#), ADF's quarterly publication before Oak Leaves; archaic acronym
-
- **DG:** [Dance Guild](#), performance and research of dance and movement in Our Druidry
-
- **EC:** [Executive Committee](#), a subset of the [Mother Grove](#)
-
- **EO:** [Election Official](#), person who coordinates the yearly ADF elections
-
- **GCC:** [Grove Coordination Committee](#), ensures groves & PGs follow requirements; subset of COSD
-
- **GO:** Grove Organizer, someone who [organizes](#) a Protogrove
-
- **GOC:** [Grove Organizing Committee](#), approves new groves and protogroves; subset of the COSD
-
- **GOG:** Grove of the Other Gods in northern NJ; see the [grove list](#) for other groves
-
- **GOH:** [Grove Organizer's Handbook](#), for leaders of new groves and protogroves
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- **GOSH:** Grove of the Seven Hills in Lynchburg VA; see the [grove list](#) for other groves
-
- **GSP:** [Generalist Study Program](#), scholarly successor to the DP; in development but accepting students
-
- **IE or I-E:** Indo-European, linguistic grouping of cultures including Celtic, Germanic, Baltic, Slavic, Indian (Vedic), Iranian, Hellenic (Greek),

Roman, and other cultures ([classic I-E book](#))

-
- **IM:** Information Manager; coordinates technological work (e.g., website, Office database) in ADF
-
- **IP:** Initiate Program, experiential successor to the DP, under development in the Clergy Council
-
- **IRC:** Internet Relay Chat, a "chat room" technology used by some ADF subgroups for online meetings
-
- **LG:** [Liturgists Guild](#), researching and performing ancient and modern Druid rituals
-
- **MA:** [Members Advocate](#), representative of individual members to the MG
-
- **MaG:** [Magicians Guild](#); studying, practicing and teaching the traditional arts called magic
-
- **MG:** [Mother Grove](#), ADF's Board of Directors; top level of authority in ADF; see also MaG
-
- **NG:** [Naturalists Guild](#); learning about the land and Nature Spirits
-
- **NftMG:** News from the Mother Grove; bare-bones org newsletter before OL, concurrent with DP
-
- **NOD:** [Non-Officer Director](#), an officer of the MG without a defined job
-
- **NPO:** Non-profit organization, such as ADF being a 501(c)3 NPO according to the IRS
-
- **OL:** [Oak Leaves](#), our quarterly magazine publication beginning in 1997
-

- **OM:** Office Manager; manages ADF Office worker(s) on membership processing, info updates, etc.
-
- **OOR:** Order of Ritual; the steps in the standard [ADF liturgical outline](#)
-
- **PG:** [Protogrove](#), "starter" grove with fewer requirements than provisionally or fully chartered groves
-
- **PIE or P-I-E:** Proto-Indo-European, common ancestor of the Indo-European cultures
-
- **PO:** Praise Offering, an offering/sacrifice to one of the Kindreds in [ADF ritual](#)
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- **PPD:** [Pagan Pride Day](#), an event where local pagan groups, often with ADF groves, show "pagan pride"
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- **P&PM:** Policies and Procedures Manual, an old name for the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)
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- **PW:** Pursewarden, basically the Treasurer or Chief Financial Officer of the corporation
-
- **RCG:** Raven's Cry Grove in Los Angeles CA; see the [grove list](#) for other groves
-
- **RD:** Regional Druid, representative of a geographical region on the MG
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- **SCG:** Stone Creed Grove in Cleveland OH, one of ADF's oldest groves; see the [grove list](#) for other groves
-
- **SCM:** [Subgroup Charter Manual](#), in which the MG defines ADF subgroup charters
-
- **SD:** Senior Druid, someone who leads a provisionally or fully chartered [grove](#)
-
- **SG:** [Scholars Guild](#) (research) or [Seers Guild](#) (divination), depending on context
-
- **SOP:** [Standard Operating Procedures](#); various organizational policies/rules
-
- **SotO:** Spirit(s) of the occasion; see DotO. Often used when non-deities are being honored in rites
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- **SP:** Study Program, any post-DP ADF training program; includes Generalist SP and Guild SPs
-
- **SSG:** Sonoran Sunrise Grove in Tucson AZ, one of ADF's largest groves; see the [grove list](#) for other groves
-
- **UPG:** Unsubstantiated Personal Gnosis, conclusions from personal experience alone, not historical support
-
- **UR:** Unity Rite, a [kind of ritual](#) done periodically to strengthen ADF as an organization
-
- **VAD:** [Vice Archdruid](#), sort of like Vice President of the MG
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- **WG:** [Warriors Guild](#); spiritual, mental and physical defense, emergency response, etc.
-
- **WotY:** [Wheel of the Year](#), a supplemental publication to help students work through the DP