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# Henge Happenings

The Henge of Keltria, PO Box 4305, Clarksburg, WV 26302-4305

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Issue #61

Editor: Tony Taylor

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Imbolc 2004



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Imbolc, falling as it does in the middle of the Dark Half of the Year, is usually a quiet and introspective feast, as it probably was for our Celtic Ancestors. Cold and uncertain weather kept people from traveling to or holding larger gatherings, and so Imbolc was more of a family-oriented celebration, each family looking to their own hearth and home to welcome Brigid, Bringer of the Light, on her feast day. It remains so in our modern celebrations, as Grove members are separated by winter blizzards and hazardous travel conditions.

I note the lengthening of days at this time, but that is the only outward sign of the sun's return here in the Northeast. This is already one of the hardest winters we have endured in a very long time, and I won't be sorry to see it go. Already I long for the warmth and new greenery of the springtime, the rain and the fresh smell of thawing, fertile earth. Now there is nothing but the bitter cold wind and seas of whirling snow that dampen my spirit and drive me indoors to daydream by a toasty, crackling fire. As I study the fire, I also study the depths of my soul, and I am reminded of the discussion we have been having on Keltria-L concerning the traits of a Druid Leader.

Although not everyone expressed value of the same traits, certain things have come out time and again in our consideration of the traits of a Druid Leader. One is that the words "Druid Leader" are redundant, for by their very nature, Druids are leaders, albeit in many different ways. To lead is to hold responsibility. Some Druids hold the responsibility of a Grove, while others hold the responsibility of an Organization (and in truth, some have both of these responsibilities). Yet others are responsible only to the Gods of their People and themselves; still, that is a huge responsibility, for any responsibility to the Gods can be monumental. Many others feel responsible for the Earth and, thus, hold responsibility to the Nature Spirits, and others feel responsible

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

to the Ancestors by keeping the history and the law and the ancient knowledge. Druids have a great deal of responsibility, to be sure.

But, curiously, many of us also claim responsibility to something a bit more elusive. Many of us claim responsibility to Truth.

That's a rather interesting trait, and one that comes up repeatedly among Druids, this responsibility to Truth. But what, indeed, is this "Truth" we all seem to revere with a capital "T"? We say we must act only from Truth, bring Truth, know Truth, live by Truth, embody Truth. A common Druidic saying is "The Truth Against the World." What do we mean by all of this talk of Truth? How can we serve such an abstract concept as Truth? Is there only one Truth? And how does it help us to lead?

It is commonly known that in ancient Irish societies, the prosperity of the people was directly linked to the truth of a ruler. An Irish document known as "The Testament of Morann" claims that "through the truth of the ruler," plagues are kept from the people and the tribe is prosperous, secure, peaceful, joyous and comfortable. The document goes on to state that a good ruler will be "merciful, just, impartial, conscientious, firm, generous, hospitable, honourable, stable, beneficent, capable, honest, well-spoken, steady, and true-judging."

Of course, in modern times, we are not "rulers," but leaders. Yet the qualities of a good leader remain the same. A good leader's first concern is the welfare of the people s/he leads. A good leader will lead the people in Truth and thus ensure their prosperity. This is what the Testament of Morann tells us, and what has also been echoed by the varied responses on the Keltria list.

There is a Universal Truth, a Great Truth, and that is what we mean when we capitalize the word. Whether it is completely knowable or not is a matter of some debate, humanity being considerably limited in the scope of cosmic understanding. Still, it exists, and Druids work diligently for understanding of this Truth. That is how we serve Truth, how we embody Truth, how we live by Truth. In this service of Truth, we also serve our people, our Gods, this world and the Otherworld. The more we know about this Truth, the more we learn to embody all of the various traits of a leader as expressed on the Keltria list: to follow only the good, to act with integrity, to demonstrate and encourage the search for knowledge, to show compassion and humor, to protect nature, to serve and foster our community, to be grounded in the self, to have an open mind, open heart, and open hand, to respect self and others, to live honorably, to be loyal, to be just, to be patient, to be selfless, to be humble.

As I sit in meditation in front of my fire at Imbolc, welcoming the returning Light, I examine the qualities of a good leader as espoused by both Morann and by the people I have been entrusted to lead. I examine my elected position as President of the Henge and sincerely hope that I can live up to the expectations of my people, just as any of us who find ourselves in a position of great responsibility will question our ability to serve.

Then Brigid whispers to me from the flames as they dance in the cool night air that to live by Truth, act from Truth, and embody Truth is to "Walk with Wisdom."

*Blessings of Imbolc,  
TopazOwl  
Henge President*

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VISIT THE HENGE OF KELTRIA WEB SITE



<http://www.keltria.org/>

Frequently asked questions, reading list, mailing list, membership information and more!

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## FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT FEAST OF STIRRING, 2004

What I Did on my Yuletide Vacation....

One of the responsibilities of the Vice President is to promote membership in the Henge of Keltria. This is mostly accomplished by attending festivals and other events to speak to people directly. Needless to say, that the winter season is rather sleepy in many ways.

I usually don't relate personal stories, however, I'll make an exception here. I have to admit that I'm a SURVIVOR junkie. It's great winter sport to fantasize about being on a deserted tropical island, living off the land by one's wits. Could I really do it? I take stock of my middle age assets, and believe that I could.

It never occurred to me to actually make an audition tape in send it in to the show. However, one cold and snowy day, insanity struck. I had the television on for background noise as I worked in my studio. Out of the corner of one ear, I caught an advertisement for SURVIVOR auditions being held at our local mall. This surprised me a bit. Who would think that they would bother doing this way out here in West -by God-Virginia? This was an obvious sign that I was meant to apply. (Please note that my tongue is placed firmly in my cheek as I write this.) So apply I did.

Filling out the application in itself was great sport. It was an opportunity to fantasize about being somewhere exotic and warm, while the wind blew sideways outside. It also was a fun exercise to explain how this middle-aged suburban housewife (no, I really don't think of myself this way, but it makes good copy.) would be the final survivor. The questions were a lot of fun. For example, "Who would you want to be marooned on an island with?" Well, that is self-evident. Losers. "Who would you NOT want to be marooned with?" The obvious answer is "Winners".

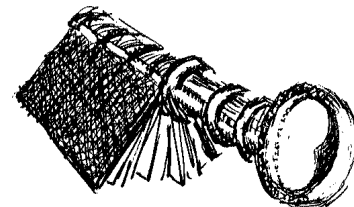
The next task was to put together a three-minute sales pitch for the videotape as to why they should choose me. It may sound easier than it was. Back and forth and forth and back in the kitchen went I - gesticulating and doing my best to commit the script to memory and adhere to the time constraint. I was certain that having to wear my "cheaters" to refer to notes would not be in my best interest.

Audition day arrived and oddly enough, I found myself first in line. As people began to filter in behind me, we immediately began to form alliances joking all the while about how we would "show 'em how it's done in West Virginnny" and how we would spend the prize money. I met many interesting people that day and collected a few phone numbers to keep in touch. After hours of patiently waiting, joking with new friends and trying to study my script, it was time to make the tape. I took my place in front of the camera and the bright lights. The cameraman explained what signals he would use to indicate time and then said, "Okay, go!" Have you ever seen a deer caught in the headlights of an oncoming car? It's that wide-eyed, panic-stricken look. Everything that was so carefully plotted and rehearsed fled my mind or more likely found a place to hide behind some mental laundry, sheepishly peeking out. My lips moved like a guppy's for a few seconds as I attempted to cajole it from its hiding place. Then the dam burst. By gory, I went through three minutes worth of material in less than two. I left the filming room and passed before the waiting hopefuls whacking my forehead with my folder filled with useless words. Oh well.....

So at any rate, if you hold your arms way out wide and hold your hands like you are indicating a really big fish, you can say you know someone who came "this close" to being a contestant on SURVIVOR.

So, what does this have to do with the office of Vice-President. In my colorful fantasy world, I saw myself making a mark for "Druidkind" and sparking interest in our Order. In reality, I keep my religious cards very close to my chest - expecially here in the Bible Belt, so the likelihood of media attention is nil. However, it was great sport to imagine being someplace moist and lush and green while the dark, grey clouds obscure the pale winter sun.

- Wren



# FROM THE TREASURER

*[Editor's Note: This Section of Henge Happenings is available only to members of the Henge. As such, it is not posted on the web site*

# THE BARD'S PATH

## THERE WAS A DRUID NAMED MOE

BY NI BHRIÓ

You won't find his name in a leather book  
or carved in a tree, or on any stone  
not in a song, nor a fable, not in any prose  
but long ago, there was a Druid named Moe

He had pale green eyes and orange hair  
and extra large teeth that made people stare  
he could never partake in any Solstice fun  
he sunburned and freckled under the summer sun

They say to become a Druid it took twenty years  
it took a bit longer with Moe, I fear  
he had to repeat Bard more than several times  
he forgot all the words and couldn't rhyme

Believe it or not, he was worse as Seer  
he'd forecast and it would happen another year  
he'd call upon mist and instead get rain  
he'd wave his wand about and hit people's heads

Gangly he was, his hands hung to his knees  
when they gathered in the grove, he reached the trees  
but sing he could, like nothing you've heard  
songs for the gods with his made up words

And his voice would float across the fields  
and grace all the young maiden's ears  
they came one by one, and then in groups  
the Elders were pleased, Moe had found his groove

The fought to get close and batted their eyes  
the elders were touched at such a remarkable sight  
"Oh... to reach all the youngsters in their spiritual need..."  
the maidens whispered: Look at those hands and feet!

You've heard of druids that counseled Kings  
predicted wars and practiced magickal things  
yet when it came to the youth and their spiritual leanings  
all the Druids agreed: "Boy, that Moe could sure sing"

# THE DRUID'S PATH

## THREE TRAITS OF A DRUID LEADER

BY TONY TAYLOR

I was recently asked, "What are three traits of genuine Pagan leaders?" In my response I said, a Pagan Leader should inspire others in the Path. The leader should truly care about those being led. Finally, to be a leader the person must be recognized as a leader by others both inside their group but also the outside community.

This got me to thinking about the question in Celtic Triad style. I asked a similar question, "The three traits of a Druid Leader are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. [fill in the blanks]" on the Keltria-L list\*. Many indicated that the term "Druid" infers "leader" so the traits of a Druid apply to a Druid Leader. Others wrote about the traits of a leader.

When I looked at the responses in relationship to the Three Foundations, I was startled that no one mentioned Honoring the Ancestors. There were really no references to the past, nor anything about things related to the Celtic World of Sea. There were a couple of mentions regarding Revering the Spirits of Nature. A Druid leader will respect and be a protector of Nature. There were a few more responses regarding what a Druid leader is in Worshipping the Gods and Goddesses, devoting themselves to the Gods, being able to commune with the Gods, and maintaining the private spiritual relations with the Gods. Being Priest and Prophet.

The vast majority of the responses related to traits of the inner self. Truth, Knowledge, and wisdom were the most often mentioned. Truth to live by, to act only in Truth, be a bringer of Truth. Because no one follows an idiot, a Druid Leader must have knowledge: Seeking knowledge,

respecting knowledge, and having the wisdom to use it. Wisdom, which includes knowledge.

Other inner characteristics included, acting with integrity, honesty, sincerity, and selflessness as well as having, understanding, courage, humor, piety, and respect for all.

Being a leader means being able to develop and maintain relationships with those led. Leading the relationship traits was compassion and concern. A leader needs to encourage the search for knowledge, to foster the magick of relationships, and be even-handed.

Although it has been used by many, (PADET, Celtic Shamans, Judaism, Unitarian Universalists, *et al*), one response struck a cord with many. I think it did so because no one has the corner on the truth, and because of its simple elegance. "The three traits of a Druid Leader are an open heart, an open mind, and an open hand."

*[\*Many thanks to the members of the Keltria-L list. The postings which contributed to this article are available to list members in the list archive for the month of January 2004. To become a member of the Keltria-L list, E-Mail Keltria-L-Subscribe@yahoogroups.com.]*

# MORE DRUID'S PATH

## A LECTURE ON THE DRUIDS BY DR. PHILIP FREEMAN

REVIEW BY SEARELS O'DUBHAIN

I arrived early for the reception in the Library Atrium at Marymount University and met Dr. Chris Snyder, the host for Marymount and Dr. Philip Freeman, the lecturer. I found him to be open, friendly, articulate and informed about Celtic matters. It turns out that Dr. Freeman is from a family that lives in Mississippi one lake south of where my parents (who also live on a lake). In fact, their lake is actually named for a member of his family. It's a small world. I discussed attending their seminar at the Smithsonian on Saturday and will have to check my membership to see if it is still up to date as this could cut the \$120 ticket price significantly. Dr. Freeman and I briefly discussed his upcoming book on St. Patrick. I said that (and he agreed) that Patrick must have been quite an individual to have converted the Irish to Christianity from Paganism. (The whole story is, of course, much more complicated and certainly not a finished process.)

The lecture began promptly at 7:30 PM with Dr. Freeman being ably introduced by Dr. Snyder (whose interest is Arthurian matters). A seven page handout was circulated that contained (according to Dr. Freeman) all that is safely known about the Druids from Classical sources. I asked for and received permission to scan this handout which I will be placing in the Summerlands Public Library. It has some interesting renditions/translations of Gaulish spells in it. The list and lecture followed a chronology on the Druids and Celtic culture from about 1000 BCE up to about the 8th century CE. It ranged across Europe from Greek and Roman encounters with the Druids all the way to Ireland where the last organized group of Druids survived almost 800 years longer than on the continent of Europe.

Dr. Freeman correctly identified the Druids as both a priesthood of Celtic religion and a class within

the structures of Celtic society. He discussed briefly the education and types of people who were in these classes. One of his remarks seemed to indicate that many more Druids were women than had been previously thought. I think I'll be purchasing his book on the topic which is *War, Women, and Druids: Eyewitness Reports and Early Accounts of the Ancient Celts*. Dr. Patrick Ford has this to say about Freeman's treatment of the topic:



MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY  
ROSE BENTÉ LEE CENTER

*"I know of no other work that pulls this sort of material together and groups it by such helpful categories (war, feasting, poetry, religion, women, etc.). I will certainly value it in my library and... as recommended reading for several of my courses. It will be a nice companion to Freeman's Ireland and the Classical World."*

*-Patrick K. Ford, Professor and Chair of Celtic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University*

Each of the items in the handout suggests some tantalizing things about the Druids but unfortunately, the information is far from complete. Dr. Freeman did acknowledge that the insular sources extend this continental knowledge of Druids. One interesting aspect of the talk which was accompanied by slides was that the Druid center of the Carnutes is possibly where the present day Cathedral of Chartres is located. It was said in the lecture that this was a common practice of Christianity to co-opt the sacred sites of other religions. Regarding Stonehenge, it was said that the Druids most probably did not build the monument but could probably have used it. Dr. Freeman noted that such sites in Ireland were thoroughly integrated in the Pagan mythos and practices.

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# FOCUS ON GROVES & GROUPS

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# FOCUS ON SOLITAIRES

## SIX SUGGESTIONS FOR SOLITAIRES



By TONY TAYLOR

*"I have the Henge of Keltria **Book of Ritual**, **The Henge: An Introduction to Keltrian Druidism**, and a copy of the **The Henge of Keltria By-Laws**. With no Local Groups, where do I go from here to become a practicing Keltrian Druid."*

1. Practice the rituals as outlined in the Book of Ritual (BoR). It may be difficult to read and perform the rituals and you may feel that you aren't doing it quite right, but that is okay. Eventually you will be able to feel the process involved. Keltrian Druidism is not just an intellectual exercise. Rather it is a process in which you honor the Ancestors, revere the Nature Spirits, and worship the Gods. Once that part of the process is ingrained, it can then become an exploration of knowledge, wisdom, and inner peace.

2. After you have been practicing the rituals in the BoR for a few months, enroll in the Correspondence Course. It can help you understand the questions and processes better.

3. Begin developing relationships with other Keltrians. The Keltria-L E-Mail list is a great starting place. You can ask questions there and get a sense of direction. Remember many of the participants in the Keltria-L list are not members, but generally it is evident if a responses is coming from another Keltria member, a Keltria initiate, or a Keltrian trustee.

4. Work on and develop an E-Mail relationship with one of the Trustees, Grove Leaders, or Initiates.

Your entry into the Correspondence Course can help you develop such a relationship. Know who the trustees are and watch for their opinions on the Keltria-L E-mail list. Take personal questions or follow-up questions "off line" as appropriate.

5. Develop relationships with like minded individuals. The Henge Website lists Chartered Groves and Registered Study Groups. E-Mail the Henge Office about individuals in your area. Although the Henge Office doesn't give out E-Mail addresses of fellow members, it will forward on E-Mails as appropriate. The Henge Office can typically tell you where the closest initiate is as well.

6. Attend a gathering. Each year the Henge has a Gathering of the Keltrian Tribe. The Board of Trustees tries very hard to move the gathering around the country so that members may attend one. The past six gatherings have been held in Minnesota, New York, Massachusetts, Minnesota (again), Kansas, and Georgia. The next gathering is still in the works, but likely sites include, West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### DARKSOME THIRST BY MORVEN WESTFIELD

REVIEW BY WREN

Don't you just love it when you find a book where the Pagans are the heroes?

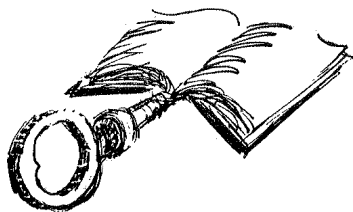
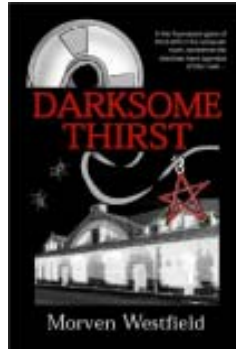
Stories like these are too few and far between, so here comes Morven Westfield to the rescue. *Darksome Thirst* is the first in what will be a thrilling series of novels.

The novel is set in southern New England in the 1970's and follows Alicia Anderson who is a hard-working computer operator on the night shift at Theoretic Scientific Devices. Working alone during these shifts, she thinks she is imagining strange things in the shadows until she can no longer deny that she has company – the vampire, Wesley.

Matricaria is a young witch who is on the receiving end of some very disturbing messages, which she and her coven take very seriously. We see the group pulling together to try to solve the mystery and do what they can to help. Of course, the answers aren't obvious, so the two story lines run parallel to each other building the suspense beautifully.

Ms Westfield's lyrical prose and attention to detail make this an enjoyable read. I will have to admit, though, that I preferred to read this page-turner in the afternoon while sitting in the sunlight rather than at night before going to bed!

**Recommended.** Harvest Shadows Publication, (June 2003) ISBN: 0974174033. Paperback: 336 pp, \$14.95.



## A LECTURE ON THE DRUIDS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

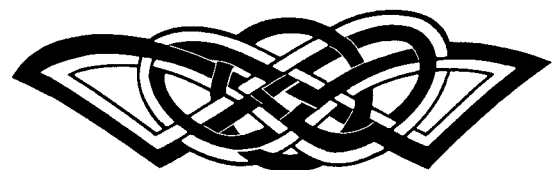
The early part of his talk about Druids specifically discussed human sacrifice among the Celts. Two things were emphasized:

1. Human sacrifice was most probably not a frequent occurrence among the Celts.
2. The Romans forbade it by the Druids mainly because they wanted to have the say in all matters of life and death within their domains. This was given as a likely reason why the Romans persecuted the Druids under the emperors Tiberius and Claudius.

The lecture closed with a question and answer session where Dr. Freeman noted that the Druids persisted in Ireland as a legally recognized group until the 6th century CE. After that (in response to a question from me), he agreed that the Filidh and the Bards took on some of the functions of the Druids in Celtic societies. An example of the continuing Pagan practices of the Filidh given by Dr. Freeman was the practice of Imbas Forosnai wherein the File chews dog meat and makes incantations to have prophetic visions and dreams.

I had some brief informal discussion with Dr. Freeman following the lecture and he departed for another scheduled event with Dr. Snyder. I got to meet some of the Paganfolk and Druids who had come to the event from out of town (especially fellow Keltrian Druid Tracey).

*[Ed Note: This review was originally posted to the Keltria-L Yahoo Group. Additionally, it, copies of the handouts of the lecture, and links to some of Dr. Freeman's books may be found on Searles' website at [http://www.summerlands.com/crossroads/library/Philip%20Freeman%20Lecture%20Notes/a\\_lecture\\_on\\_the\\_druids.htm](http://www.summerlands.com/crossroads/library/Philip%20Freeman%20Lecture%20Notes/a_lecture_on_the_druids.htm).]*



# FROM THE INTERNET

By TONY

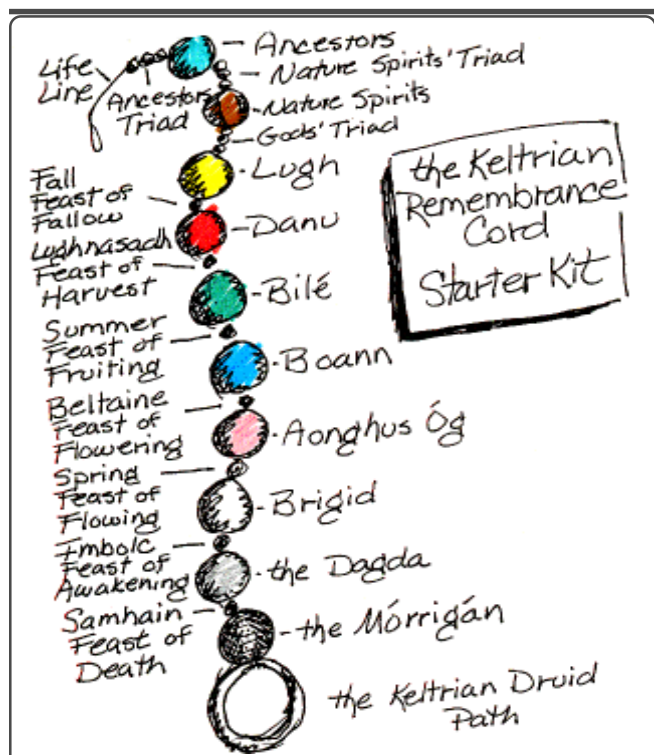
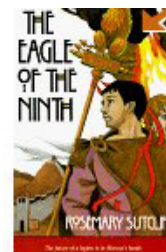
I noticed that a new version of the story of Vercingetorix has been released by Knopf publishing. Vercingetorix was the great Gallic warrior who fought Julius Caesar. *The Druid King*, by Norman Spinrad was released in August, 2003 from Knopf Publishing in a 416 page hardcover edition. \$24.95 - ISBN: 0-375-41110-0.



Henge members Searles and Deborah O'Dubhain updated the portal server software on "The Summerlands". They will be in the opening stages of building the pages for its new Druid Seminary and College. This school will allow interested folks to take online courses in Celtic and Druidic subjects using the ATutor distance learning program. There will be public courses, members' only courses, and courses for enrolled students of the Summer School Druid Seminary. If you haven't checked them out yet, do so at <http://www.summerlands.com>.



Several producers are working on a film version of Rosemary Sutcliff's children's novel, *The Eagle of the Ninth*, which is about the legendary Roman Ninth Legion who vanished after it entered Scotland. No one knows if the Picts killed them or what happened for sure. It is possible that three different movies about the occurrences may be produced. One thing we can be sure of is that they will all depict a Druid rallying the natives to attack the Romans. I can't wait.



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## Investigation Into the Invisible

*World* is a new documentary shown at this year's Sundance Film Festival. In it, director and screenwriter Jean Michel Roux interviews believers of unusual supernatural and strange beliefs in Iceland. This apparently includes Druid priests and supposedly does so with "utter respect for the subjects." Look for it; if you find it, please write a review of it for Henge Happenings.



JEAN MICHEL ROUX

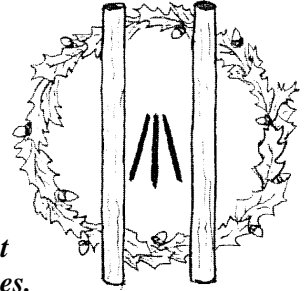
## T-Shirts now Available.

The Henge now has T-Shirts available on-line at [www.cafeshops.com/keltria](http://www.cafeshops.com/keltria). Check them out. We anticipate having a full line of Henge of Keltria merchandise over the next few months. Particular thanks to Ken F. for his beautiful artwork displayed on the back of this t-shirt.



# BELIEFS OF THE HENGE OF KELTRIA

1. We believe in **Divinity** as it is **manifest** in the Pantheon. There are several valid theistic perceptions of this Pantheon.



2. We believe that **nature is the embodiment of the Gods and Goddesses.**

3. We believe that **Natural Law reflects the will of the Gods and Goddesses.**

4. We believe that **all life is sacred** and should neither be harmed nor taken without deliberation or regard.

5. We believe in **the immortality of the spirit.**

6. We believe that **our purpose is to gain wisdom** through experience.

7. We believe that **learning is an ongoing process** and should be fostered at all ages.

8. We believe that **morality should be a matter of personal conviction** based upon self respect and respect for others.

9. We believe that **evil is not a matter of inheritance but of intent**, therefore actions are not in themselves evil. Rather, it is through the **intent behind actions** that evil can manifest.

10. We believe in the **relative nature of all things, that nothing is absolute, and that all things, even the Gods and Goddesses, have their dark sides.**

11. We believe that **individuals have the right to pursue knowledge and wisdom** through his or her chosen path.

12. We believe in a **living religion** able to adapt to a changing environment. We recognize that our beliefs may undergo change as our tradition grows.

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