

Listed under: INDIVIDUALLY DISTINCTIVE GROUPS
DRUID - *ÁR NDRAÍOCHT FÉIN*: A DRUID FELLOWSHIP, INC

ADDRESS:

ADF, P.O. Box 17874, Tucson, AZ 85731-7874

OTHER NAMES BY WHICH KNOWN:

ADF

LEADERSHIP:

ADF is led today by Rev. Robert Lee (Skip) Ellison, serving in the position as Archdruid.

MEMBERSHIP:

As of 08/29/07, there were 1159 current, dues paying members of ADF.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN:

ADF was founded by Rev. Isaac Bonewits and a group of other NeoPagans in New York, New York, who were interested in researching and reviving the ways of worship of the early Indo-European people. Rev. Bonewits had been associated with several other religious organizations and wanted to develop an organization that better fit his vision for the future. His vision was that one day NeoPagan Druidism would be as readily accepted as any other mainstream religion. He believed, and still does believe, that there should be a local grove in every city.

Rev. Bonewits is the author of *Real Magic* (a classic work on the laws of magic) and *The Pagan Man* (a look at modern Neopaganism), as well as several other books on Neopagan topics. Further information about him can be found at his web site located at www.neopagan.net.

ADF came together in 1983, when the people interested in researching an Indo-European druidic path, decided that what they were finding was worthwhile enough to be spread across the US. According to Rev. Bonewits, the first ritual in ADF format was held on Samhain of 1983 in New York, New York. The organizational structure, on which they settled, was based loosely on that formed by the Reformed Druids of North America. Rev. Bonewits had been ordained a priest by that group in 1969, and was familiar with its structure.

BASIC BELIEFS:

Most people within ADF believe in the following:¹

- We believe that divinity is both within and all around us, immanent and transcendent. We believe that it is most important to pay attention to the divinity within ourselves at this time in history.
- We believe in a multiplicity of Gods and Goddesses, equal in power and status, as well as in a host of lesser beings, known by names such as Nature Spirits, Fairy Folk, and Ancestors.
- We believe it is necessary to honor and respect the Earth Mother as the living being she is. Most members of ADF believe in the "Gaia hypothesis." We also hold ecological awareness and activism to be included in our sacred duties.
- We believe that ethics and morality should be based on love, joy, self-esteem, mutual respect, the avoidance of actual harm to ourselves and to others, and to the increase of public benefit.
- We believe that humans were meant to lead lives filled with joy, love, pleasure, beauty and humor.
- We believe that with proper training, we are able to perform most of the magic and miracles we are ever likely to need.
- We believe in the importance of celebrating the solar, lunar, and other cycles in our lives.

¹ Taken from the pamphlet "What Do Neo-Pagan Druids Believe." Copyright ADF. <http://www.adf.org/about/beliefs.html>

- Most of us believe in reincarnation, with a time of resting and learning in-between incarnations.
- We believe that members of society must give back to society through community service.

As part of ADF's Dedicant program, the first step in our Study Programs, we have developed a list of nine virtues that we have students explain in terms of their own lives. The ways of the providers, are industry, sensuality, & hospitality. The ways of the warriors, are courage, strength, & honor. Finally, the ways of the wise are memory, reason, & vision.

PRACTICES AND BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS:

We believe that our relationships with the Gods, Ancestors, and Nature Spirits (the 3 Kindreds) are essential to spiritual health, and as a result of that, we strive constantly to further them. We do this through the practice of making offerings to the Kindreds so that we may ask for Their wisdom and blessings in return. We call this, 'reciprocity'. Offerings may be physical in nature, such as food or drink, or they may be in the form of praise, song, dance, poetry, etc.

We have eight major High Holidays which take place approximately every six weeks, and these are based on mythological, agricultural and solar cycles. At these events, the entire community is invited to join in the offerings and receive of the blessings.

Many of our local churches, which we call Groves, also hold Blessing Rite services weekly or monthly for the general community. These differ from the High Holidays only in that they are not tied to any specific cycle, but may use themes from everyday life, though the concept of reciprocity is always present.

We base our behavioral standards on our Nine Virtues. All of our interactions as human beings may be governed by these virtues, and our dedicants are asked to think carefully about them and decide how they all relate to each other and to life in general. These can be very tough standards to live up to.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

The Archdruid leads a Board of Directors (BOD) known as the "Mother Grove." The Mother Grove has the comparable function to any other Nonprofit Organization's (NPO) board of directors. Because the Mother Grove members are spread over an entire continent, the full Mother Grove normally meets online three times per year and once per year in person at the annual ADF meeting. They can also be called into session if a need arises, and are consulted frequently on a MG e-list. During the rest of the year, ADF is led by an Executive Committee that is charged with the day-to-day running of the organization. This Executive Committee is composed of the Archdruid, Vice Archdruid, and Secretary as voting members. Also on the committee are the Treasurer and Administrator to help the committee deal with the administrative areas of the organization. The role and policies of the Mother Grove can be found in the ADF Constitution, <http://www.adf.org/about/constitution.html>, and the ADF Bylaws, <http://www.adf.org/about/bylaws.html>.

ROLE OF MINISTERS:

Ministers, either Dedicant Priests or Ordained Priests as determined by ADF, may perform any of the functions normally associated with the clergy of other faiths, including the conducting of weddings, funerals, etc.

WORSHIP:

In our services, be they High Holidays or simple weekly Blessing Rites, we worship the Earth, our Mother, as the foundation of all. We also invoke the cosmos into our places of worship, re-creating it ritually so that we may be at the sacred center of all the Worlds (the Heavens where the Gods dwell, the Midworld where we live, and the Lower World, the place of our Ancestors). Once that is done, we connect our three Hallows to these Worlds (the Well connecting to the Lower World, the Fire to the Heavens and the Tree of the Midworld reaching into all three). When we are connected and present at the sacred center, we call upon a Gatekeeper to help us open the ways between the Worlds, that our words may be heard in the other Worlds, and so that we might know the presence of the Spirits in our own.

Once these connections have been forged, we call upon our Ancestors, the Spirits of Nature and of the Land, and our Gods and Goddesses and ask them all to join with us. We make our offerings and worship to Them all, and when this is done, we ask them, in the spirit of hospitality, to grant us wisdom and blessings in return. Usually a seer will perform an omen, discovering the nature of the blessings to come, and then the presiding Druid will hallow a cup or horn of water or alcohol, which will be shared with the congregation as the Waters of Life, bearing the blessings and wisdom of the Kindreds within it.

Once this is done, any healings or other workings are performed, and the Kindreds are thanked and the ways between the Worlds are closed.

DIETARY LAWS OR RESTRICTIONS:

None.

FUNERAL AND BURIAL REQUIREMENTS:

None. If possible, a Neopagan clergy person should lead the funeral service.

MEDICAL TREATMENT:

There are no restrictions on medical treatments for ADF members.

OTHER:

Current information about ADF can always be found on the website at www.adf.org.

GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:

Bonewits, Isaac. *Bonewits's Essential Guide to Druidism*. Citadel Press. 2006. 272 pages. ISBN 0806527102.

Bonewits, Isaac. *Neopagan Rites: A Guide to Creating Public Rituals that Work*. Llewellyn Worldwide. 2007. 228 pages. ISBN 9780738711997.

Ellison, Robert Lee (Skip). *The Solitary Druid: A Practitioner's Guide*. Citadel Press. 2005. 224 pages. ISBN 0806526750

Hopman, Ellen Evert & Bond, Lawrence. *Being a Pagan: Druids, Wiccans, and Witches Today*. Destiny Books. 2001. 392 pages. ISBN 0892819049

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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Or see <http://www.adf.org/contact.html>.