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Annual Report - Hallowman, 1990: The Rowan Tree Church

Rowan Tree Church

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UUID: 3F890769-875F-BD91-4F25-9BDC54C18B5A

Recommended Citation:

Rowan Tree Church. Annual Report - Hallowman, 1990: The Rowan Tree Church. Dallas, TX:
Rowan Tree Church, 1990. Rowan Tree Church Periodicals Collection, New Age
Movements, Occultism, and Spiritualism Research Library. Archives and Special
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Annual Report - Hallowmas, 1990 The Rowan Tree Church

The past year has been one which embraced major changes within our Church and the Tradition of Lothloriën, the largest since 1986 when The Mystery School opened The Rowan Tree Church to embrace a larger community. We achieved many of our goals and have reasons to take pride in our collective work. At last year's Autumn Equinox The Rowan Tree Church was still functioning as a Minneapolis-based organization with local and other Members. These other Members were referred to as "out of town" or "corresponding" Members which indicated the presence of disparity. As this year's report is being prepared, our Church no longer has "local" Members. Geographic location no longer makes a difference in your Membership. Yet there are areas within North America where communities are developing.

The Universe brings us many lessons. What some might have perceived as the Tower Card was actually our key to success. The decreased ability of the Minneapolis community to provide the primary work force led to an increase in Member activity throughout North America. This coming year will see further changes as more activities are taken up by Members and by Church Communities in other locations. Sunday Circles which once conducted, recorded and the tapes distributed out of Minneapolis are now recorded in Dallas. Soon we will be looking for a Church Member to handle the copying and distribution of cassette tapes which provides one of you with an opportunity for contact with many of our Church.

1989-1990 saw our membership increase from what had been an average of about thirty Members to over fifty Members by the end of Hallowmas. This is in large part due to the publishing of A Wiccan Bardo. 1990 also brought a dramatic increase in the amount of contact we have had with one another. At my Handfasting to Larry Pascoe, Church Members from New York, New Jersey and Texas were brought together with Minnesota Members. This year's Annual Retreat had the largest number of states represented to date (CA, IA, IL, TX, NJ, MN). In addition, I was able to visit our Southern California Members on three occasions and in September was in western New York state to present workshops and music which brought eight of us together from Ontario, New Jersey and New York. The vitality of our Church is greatly affected when we get to know each other. New Members have the ability to begin "meeting" other Members through the RTNews, by developing correspondence and attending the Annual Retreat. Increasingly, as our Church grows and as my opportunities to pack up and head for the airport expand, we are gathering here and there around the country. By networking through the RTNews, Church Members can also get together and meet at other pagan gatherings throughout the U.S.

This Annual Report is sent to all Members and new Members (through the "welcome packet") to keep you better informed and to encourage awareness of all aspects of The Rowan Tree Church. We hope that you will find it of interest and that it will contribute to the growth in your own Member activity. There are many opportunities for you, as a Church Member to join with us and share in these projects. It is my desire that next year will see new names on the Board and that you, as Members, will enjoy sharing in the management of your Church. It is my hope that my name not need to appear so many times in next year's Annual Report.

Bless you all!

Rev. Paul, Founder

Board of Directors Report

At this Autumn Equinox we, as Church Members welcome our new Board of Directors. The election results are in: the new Board of Directors is composed of Rev. Paul V. Beyerl, Lizard Frank Cordeiro, Chris Ospital, P. Larry Pascoe, and John [TaL] Schuh. We received ballots from eleven Church Members. Although there were not enough candidates for a competitive election, we deeply appreciate your show of support for our Board by sending in your ballot. (We had a 25% return on ballots.) I will continue in my role as President; Vice President will be Lizard Frank; Secretary will be TaL; Treasurer will be Larry Pascoe and Chris Ospital will be the fifth Director for the 1990-91 Board of Directors. Non-voting Directors will be Morganna (Constance) Droogas and Rev. Don Schaper. Although this is the same BOD as the previous year, our agenda includes developing greater Church Member participation and interest among other Members becoming active Directors in the coming years. This was the first year that we have had a Board of Directors not dependant upon a local community within the Church. The Board has been able to efficiently handle matters despite the geographical distances between its Directors and hopes that the processes developed in this past year will enable Church Members to become involved in the management of the Church no matter where they live.

Major changes were accomplished by the Board of Directors during this past year. The

President of the BOD completed the forms and filing of our request for tax-exempt status with the IRS. A response from the IRS should be forthcoming during 1990-91 fiscal year.

The BOD Scribe and his committee studied the old Book of Legislation, made recommendations and brought it before the Board at the annual meeting. The old document represents our By-Laws and had not been revised since the 1986 changes in The Rowan Tree, reflecting a different structure and procedures no longer suitable. Larry Pascoe has since drafted a final recommendation which will be published and made available for your approval in the immediate future.

The coming year will require some reorganization of the work flow. Immediate projects undertaken by the Board include expanding the "welcome packet" to better introduce new Members to the various functions of our Church. The "welcome packet" now includes a copy of the subscription library catalogue, a description of all Community Positions (editors, Directors, etc.) and letters from editors and Directors to increase awareness and interest in our services.

At this time financial information is not available. Bookkeeping has not been done since July 1 and in early September our Board Treasurer volunteered to take on this position. Church financial records will be included when the Annual Report is sent to all Church Members in early November, including statements for all budgets through October 31. Other projects which the Treasurer is working on include a letter describing the monthly form to be included in the "welcome packet" and sent to all Members.

We realize that reading about Church business in the mid-month issue of the RTNews may not be your idea of fun, but we urge you to consider changes and growth within our Church as important to you and to all Members. The Rowan Tree Church is its Members. Our future depends upon your care and support.

Rev. Paul, BOD President

Vice President's Report

This past year has seen new growth in the Board of Directors. BOD meetings have changed from localized affairs to taped meetings and finally to a formal agenda and system of responses that enable decisions to be made without long discussion periods and also enables Members to function efficiently even though separated by thousands of miles. There is a current and well-written Book of Legislation and the "dreaded IRS monster" has been conquered. What next?

We are currently in a process of stabilization. This new term I hope to work on providing for a smooth transition between incoming and outgoing BOD VP's and to work the bugs out of the election process. (Lizards like bugs!) I also aim to organize the Vice President's files so that the next V.P. will be less confused.

Blessed Be! Lizard, BOD Vice President

Secretary's Report

From the period of the Autumn Equinox '89 to December '89 I served as Secretary of the Board. This period was somewhat tumultuous, for the BOD during this short period was Helen, Lizard and myself. The BOD minutes were transcribed by myself [from cassette tapes] and sent for inclusion in the latest issue. For a short period, Susan B., former RT Member, served as Minutes Secretary. However, she resigned due to health considerations. During this period I handled miscellaneous correspondence for the Board, as assigned by the BOD President.

In December '89 Board elections were called, upon which I reapplied for the Secretary position. In January '90, I was reinstated.

A change of format for the release of the Board Minutes was decided at the February '90 BOD meeting. The Board voted that the mid-month issue of the RTNews would be the "business issue." The business issue would contain Board Minutes, financial statements, the monthly form and any mundane Church business news. Furthermore, it was decided that this issue would be edited and distributed by the Secretary of the Board. In order to assist with the workload, Larry Pascoe, serving as BOD Scribe was to be responsible for production of the Minutes. Rev. Don regularly sent Member address labels, the Church's financial statements, and a monthly form template for each mid-month issue of the RTNews. Artwork was generously supplied by Chris Ospital. The costs for printing and mailing the mid-month RTNews have been offered by myself to the Church as a donation.

Outside of producing the mid-month RTNews, I responded to miscellaneous correspondence as assigned by the BOD President.

In closing, I wish to express my pleasure in serving with the 1989-90 Board of Directors. Under the leadership of Rev. Paul and Lizard Frank, and with the willing assistance

of all the Members of the Board, we managed to conquer a mountain of issues. I think we can truly be proud of our achievements as we see our Church live and grow. May the coming year bring us happiness and success.

Blessed Be! TaL, BOD Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Attached hereto as Exhibit "A" is the Rowan Tree Financial Report for the fiscal year of the Rowan Tree Church ending October 31, 1990. It must be noted at the outset that the Treasurer authoring this Report commenced his responsibilities on or about August, 1990, and, consequently, he may not have all of the information to answer any questions that there might be concerning this Report. However, such questions which cannot be answered may be referred to Rev. Don Schaper, who served ably as Treasurer prior to August, 1990.

The Church ended the year being over-budget in only three areas: the General Fund, which went over only \$36.93; the Mystery School, which went over only \$3.12; and the Periodical Library, which went over only \$20.60. It will be noted that there is sufficient surplusage in other funds, however, to more than off-set these minor over-budget items, except for The Land Fund and the Blaisdell House Fund, neither of which are considered by the Treasurer to have a surplusage which can be used to off-set shortages.

Although this may seem to be a rosy picture, it is not all that rosy. At the beginning of the fiscal year, there were positive balances in all funds, except one, in the total amount of approximately \$1,125.00 (not including The Land Fund). We ended this year with a positive balance in all funds except three, in the total amount of approximately \$590.00, or a little over half of the surplusage with which we started this fiscal year.

The reason for this can be explained by one major change in the Church budget: The Rowan Tree News, which was by subscription only prior to the beginning of this fiscal year but which became a free publication to all Church members early in this fiscal year. It is apparent that the membership should be made aware of the fact that the RTN is a somewhat costly item and that there support of the General Fund is needed to offset all or most of these costs. It should also be remembered, however, that one member has underwritten the expense of the RTN in order to insure that it be sent to all members of the Church free of subscription fees.

In the forth-coming fiscal year, the Treasurer desires to attempt to increase the awareness of the membership regarding the expenses of the Church and that the Church cannot function without their financial support, to the extent that each member can afford.

It is fortunate and unfortunate for the Church that there are a small number of members who contribute far more than the minimum requested, thus enabling the Church to serve all of its members without having to drastically cut costs and services. All of the members need to be aware of this form of "subsidization" which exists. Without it, the Church would have been in a difficult situation this last fiscal year. There is a rather esoteric question regarding whether or not it is ethical or honest for a member who can afford to "pay his/her way", so to speak, to not do so because some other member is paying enough over the minimum per month to "carry" one or more of the non-paying members. (There is also another rather esoteric question regarding whether anything you get "for free" is worth it.) However, the fact of the matter is that only a few individual members contribute even the minimum requested monthly donation to the Church. Consequently, it is the opinion of the Treasurer that, in spite of the fact that the Church seems to be in a stable financial condition, the financial picture is not a healthy one. And it certainly is not one that the Church should be able to count on to establish its various budgets for this fiscal year (1990-1991). If we were to lose even one of the financial "angels", the financial picture of the Church would instantly and drastically change.

It is, therefore, the opinion of the Treasurer that a broader base of support among the membership must be built in order to establish any meaningful financial stability which can be counted on over the next few years. The Treasurer feels that increasing the membership awareness of the financial needs of the Church, as set forth above, will accomplish this.

In summary, the Church is presently in good financial condition. However, there needs to be a broadening base of support among the members to insure that this financial condition will remain stable. If the base of support is not broadened, then the lose of even one member who is a generous contributor could throw the budgets for this fiscal year into turmoil and possibly require the Church to drastically cut back its services to the membership.

Respectfully submitted.

P. Larry Pascoe, Treasurer 11-xi-1990ce

Financial Statements: 1989-1990 - exhibit "A"

	credits	debits	YTD total
The General Fund	\$3,606.56	\$3,643.49	(\$36.93)
The Mystery School	1,896.21	1,899.33	(3.12)
The Subscription Library	2,251.69	2,033.71	217.98
The Periodical Library	151.01	171.61	(20.60)
Blaisdell House Fund	207.50	179.50	28.00
The Land Fund	2,454.16	300.00	2,154.16
Eldermentor Compensation	1,085.84	1,085.84	00.00
Equipment Maintenance Fund	28.37	00.00	28.37
The Unicorn	790.71	651.62	139.09
The Littlest Unicorn	371.03	281.68	89.35
The Annual Retreat	237.52	161.03	76.49
YEAR TOTAL	\$13,080.60	\$10,407.81	\$2,672.80

[BOD President's comments: In looking at the closing balance for the year it is important to "mentally" deduct the money which is set aside in the land fund leaving an actual balance of \$518.64. Similarly, in looking at the total credits for the land fund for this year, it began the year with a balance of \$1758.00.]

The Ides of Autumn - RTNews

This has been an interesting year for me, so far. Halfway through, I became Editor of the first-month issues of the Rowan Tree news, and it's been a wild ride ever since! I really enjoy being an ACTIVE member, and I've strived to make the RTNews vibrant, entertaining and different each month. I'd like to think that some of my enthusiasm has rubbed off on the membership and that they will continue to respond so positively. The Members are the ones who have helped the RTNEWS become what it is!

I hope, in the coming year, to make the RTNEWS even more "approachable" so that Members, both new and old, feel that writing in is just a comfortable as putting on their favorite, snugly, comfy old slippers. In fact, I envision a time when EVERY Member sits down once, perhaps twice, a month, and writes a poem, a story, draws a picture or just catches us up on their lives.

Whatever the coming year holds, however, rest assured that I will continue doing the best job as Editor that I possibly can.

Love ya... Morganna, editor

The Unicorn

Among the various aspects of our Church ministry, The Unicorn is the oldest, entering its fourteenth year. Readership remains strong and the subscription level remains constant. As we enter our "New Year," The Unicorn is now edited in Dallas, Texas, subscriber issues are mailed from Irvington, New York and issues to other periodicals are mailed from Oshawa, Ontario. The amount of written material per issue has been increased approximately 40% due to computer capabilities and, to a lesser degree, because articles are contributed more than artwork. One of the more visible changes in the coming year will be increased visibility of The Rowan Tree Church. Contributions by Rowan Tree Church Members will be so indicated and there will be an increase in news of Church activities.

Rev. Paul, editor (assisted by Andrius)

The Littlest Unicorn

This has been an exciting year for me as the new editor of The Littlest Unicorn. The TLU is a Pagan publication for and by children of all ages. The format was changed at Candlemas to include more activities for children and subjects of interest including home schooling in pagan families. The TLU has been helped in production by my son David who is 13 who also does a video review page as well. Together we are working on creating a high quality on-time publication children can enjoy as well as expose them to Pagan/Wiccan beliefs, culture and art. Goals for the coming year include increasing the number of subscribers, offering exchanges with other pagan publications and being able to print TLU within its budget. It is hoped that in the future TLU will contain only material from children of the Pagan community at large. The

BOD of The Rowan Tree Church decided this year that the main purpose of TLU was to provide a Pagan publication to children as an outreach service and gift of love from The Rowan Tree Church. It is hoped that additional support from Rowan Tree Church Members will be coming this year in the form of material to be used within the publication, subscriptions to TLU and active marketing of this publication. Suggestions as to content, format and production are always welcome. I see the TLU subscriber base growing this year and our ability to reach into the Pagan community at large increasing. Blessed Be,

Chris Ospital, editor

The Mystery School

The Mystery School is functioning at capacity. With the publication of A Wiccan Bard we are attracting students who have a far greater understanding of our Pathworking, theology and of the necessary commitment to the studies. The Mystery School and its curriculum underwent a complete revision within the past three years. It allowed the Pathworking and those involved to start anew yet retain the previous ten years' experience. At the Autumn Equinox we have five Novice Supplicants, eight Novices, one upper-level Novice. The College of Mentors has three members: one Bard, a High Priest and the Eldermentor.

Entry into The Mystery School has also changed. Church Members who have completed the requirements complete an application and begin individual preparation. When an opening for a new Novice Supplicant occurs, the Eldermentor will choose that prospective student who is best prepared to work the Path of Lothloriën.

Recently a new program of study was initiated to provide training for those students who wish to become "Bards of Lothloriën." We are fortunate in having a highly skilled Bard working with the curriculum. During this "New Year" the first Bardic students will begin their work. These students are already enrolled in The Mystery School as the first stages of Pathworking are the same for both future clergy and future bards.

The growth in the past years in The Mystery School and the evolution of The Tradition of Lothloriën has created a reputation in Wiccan education.

Rev. Paul V. Beyerl, Eldermentor

The Galadhrim: A Report

This past summer at our Annual Retreat an organization within our Church was formed. The Galadhrim began with five Members. Two more joined the Society in September. This group is dedicated to furthering the goals of the Church and has taken the responsibility of managing the Annual Retreat. The Galadhrim will be completing its descriptive information within the next few months and distributing this information to the Membership.

Library Report

Our library has grown considerably. This past year we saw the issuing of a new catalog which shows that our collection has grown to two thousand volumes. Converting the catalog from the old computer system to the new required retyping every entry. There are still a number of typos which will be corrected prior to the next edition. The most important change in the library is the distribution of the catalog to every Church Member and its inclusion in the "welcome packet." Updated library policies have been sent to all Church Members and are also included in the welcome materials. We hope that this will increase circulation and support for one of our finest resources.

Rev. Paul, librarian