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Mystery School of the Rowan Tree Annual Report, Hallows

Rowan Tree Church

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The ROWAN TREE *

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THE MYSTERY SCHOOL OF THE ROWAN TREE ANNUAL REPORT:

HALLOWS 1984 - 1985

"The you shall be taught to be wise, so in the fullness of time you shall count yourselves among those who serve the Ancient Ones; And you shall grow to love the music of the Woodlands, to dance to the Sound of His pipes, in step with cloven hooves & the forest song.... And you shall learn the Mystery of rebirth, filling your heart with Her moonlight, growing in harmony with the Earth, as Her child, protective of your Mother....

"And you shall grow in wisdom, & you shall grow in compassion, & in love shall you heal the sick, pursuing the arts of healing, the lore of the Mother's herbs.... Learning the psychic arts, to cure, to nurture, to help Her children grow....

"And in wisdom you shall give counsel; Knowing the skills of divination, seeing how the children best flow in Universal Harmony; Understanding planetary cycles, and knowing prophecy.... Thus, will you be of the Wise Ones....

(excerpted from our
written Tradition)

HALLOWS 1985ce

This is the religious observance which turns us inward. This is the time for reflection, for self-examination. By reaching to the internal depths, one is able to perceive timelessness, and so, too, have we been gazing into the future. We have gained a more-widespread recognition of those aspects of our study which we value. By following the Tradition of Lothlorien, and working within the Mystery School as a structure, we have found power in our rituals, joy in shared experiences, growth (both easy and with learning pains) and challenge. We grow as individuals, and we grow as a group. We take great joy in presenting to you this year's Annual Report.

Each year at the Autumn Equinox, we vote on issues which have been proposed by the Members. It was decided, this year, to limit the maximum number of Members at 16. We shall remain Thirteen Plus Three for a couple of years, directing our energies to internal development. During those periods when there are no vacancies, those who desire to join with us will be encouraged to spend the waiting time making use of our library, coming to know us as individuals, & making those studies & preparations so that actual Membership will lead to a more facile journey through the Pathworking.

For the first time we have achieved a body of Initiates who place their Priest/hood before any other lifeworks. This is a result of changes in our Pathworking which were instituted one and a half years ago. There is more expected of a First Degree Initiate than ever before, and truly, do we strive to become Servants of the Community, and to place our individual Priest/hood as our Highest Ideal. As a result, the amount of time it takes to progress through our Path has been greatly extended, which creates a deeper and more stable process of opening wisdom within and without. Even outside the Initiated Membership we have, now, a sense of commitment and devotion to the collective works which was in the past only a dream of the founder.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Littlest Unicorn came into being this year past. Founded & created by Don Schaper, it is devoted to children and has shown marked success for only several months of existence. Don has brought together talents from within The Rowan Tree, and also from without, and has truly established a publication of worth.

The Rowan Tree News is the internal publication, sent to Members only. This year it passed from Paul to the loving hands of Mahr Maag. As of the Annual Report, she is in the process of giving it a stronger identity and making it a publication of value to all Members.

The Unicorn this year celebrated its Ninth birthday. That is amazing in the world we live in. Subscriptions are half again as many as a year ago. We have been fortunate to have the gifts of non-Rowan Tree friends such as Takya, as Michael Strong (the tarot column), Artemis (the I Ching column) and Don Lewis, an exceptional artist, each of whom provide us with regular work of original merit and artistic magnitude.

The Rowan Tree Herb Shop is healthier than ever. By placing advertising in 'Circle Network News,' we have expanded our mail-

order services. The Herb Shop has nearly doubled its sales since the previous fiscal year. Under the loving care of Larry Anderson, it is more accessible to the public than it has been in years, and has greatly expanded its selection of herbs. A third of the total sales come from mail-orders, a significant increase. Local purchases may be arranged by setting up an appointment with Larry through 874-9245.

Childmaster is the title carried by David. As such, he provides the children of our Members with extra attention, with an additional Wiccan role model, and takes them on outings and adventures. David took on the position from our former Childmistress, who has moved on to other responsibilities.

Board of Directors, a function of our Corporate regulations, has this year decided to begin to take an increased role. This is in large part due to a change in its structure and composition. Due to the presence of two former Members who had no longer any direct contact with The Rowan Tree, the past functions of the Board were largely titular. This year we look forward to the Board taking an active role in guaranteeing the survival of The Rowan Tree, far into the future. All Mentors, and all Priest/esses will automatically be Members of the Board of Directors. Elders will no longer sit with the Board, but will be available for consultation, should the Board so choose.

The Library is presently managed by a loose group of five persons. One is responsible for maintaining the Archives of Rowan Tree publications. Another is responsible for the Periodical Library, which function is in transition from Paul to Norman Strizek. In the coming year, Norman will be expanding our Periodical Exchange policies, and increase awareness regarding this resource. David, Paul, Don & Roseanna Hudgins are all involved (with other helping hands) in organizing the basic Library, apart from the Periodicals and Archives. Pockets have been placed in all books, and a checkout system instituted. This year, we are considering ways in which we might make the Library available to Friends of the Rowan Tree. You will note that the Library budget has nearly doubled. This past fiscal year we spent well over six hundred dollars on maintenance (adding one set of shelves, acquiring necessary materials to file the Periodicals), and new books.

Other responsibilities have developed within the past couple of months, and will be giving shape to our growth between now & next Hallows. Claire is taking responsibility for maintaining current information and other materials we refer to as our 'Census.' Alice has accepted the responsibility of maintaining a liason between the Rowan Tree and other networking efforts, such as C.O.G. Larry keeps track of the Sunday taping, making certain that everyone gets a copy if unable to attend in person; this has sorted out one source of confusion!! Alex functions as a Pursewarden, gathering the monies which come in as Pledges. And we find that nearly each person makes contributions to our function. The coming year will see this manner of being expand itself to include nonlocal Members.

BEGINNINGS ...

This coming year is Paul's tenth anniversary as one journeying this Chosen Path. We are not only continuing to look into the past

and evaluate, but we are also moving into further healings and group workings than ever before. We anticipate our second Campout, which will be at the same site as this summer past. It is truly choice time for us, taking a few days to spend with one's Rowan Tree kin. As this is a closed event, we place our focus on further sharing & learning, with a prolonged period of group ritual sweeping culminating in a spectacular ritual experience. This year, the effects of our growth are still rippling outwards.

One of the results of experiencing the joy in shared learning is that we now meet weekly. In a society such as ours, the prime time is Sunday morning, and rather than loll about on a 'weekend' we come together & chant & listen & share. This has led to an even greater sense of cohesion, and gives the ability to present news and important discussions. As a collective entity, we have never had such stable strength. It is, indeed, joyous.

This coming year is expected to witness the republication of The Holy Books of the Devas, the little green book that is so special to many of us. First published in a limited edition, it will be reissued this coming Midsummer (1986) in a second limited edition. It is our goal that by advance notice, we can raise the monies necessary to reprint the book. It is time that these Mysteries again move through the communities with whom we are in contact. The paging error will be corrected, and an introduction added to the book. In addition the cover will appear with a different paper, making the two editions distinguishable from each other. Our thanks go to Mari (Prairie) Jackson for granting permission to reprint her artwork.

We are considering expanding our work within the local communities, even as we have expanded our individual commitments and efforts within the Rowan Tree. In recent years, there have been almost no rituals to which guests might have been invited. This we expect to remedy, although it will be done caringly and with discretion. Our primary focus will remain the development of the Collective Power of the Membership within the Rowan Tree.

ROOTS

Our incorporation in the State of Minnesota was complete in February, 1980. We have yet to complete the tax-exempt filing with the IRS. In light of the Helms Amendment, this might be a good thing. From a practical standpoint, we function such that it doesn't make a difference: There are no monies which ought be held exempt from taxes as we truly are non-profit.

The Rowan Tree grew around the Tradition of Wicca which Paul created in his first years of teaching the Craft. Although our Tradition has moved through an evolution of new creation, it remains faithful to the original Tradition in its form, and has moved much further into the realm of spiritual disciplines. Our Pathworking is extensive, the requirements many, and it takes true devotion and great labours to achieve even the First of Initiations. We view ourselves as kindred with many other forms of spiritual discipline, and require not only exacting study within, but also the pursuit through teachers found without The Mystery School.

It becomes difficult to describe the joys (and also the frustrations and pains) of learning to unfold wisdom through our

particular Tradition. When any of us do so, it is difficult to avoid a tone of boastfulness, for we take pride in being a Member of the Rowan Tree, and that pride sometimes shows. We do not maintain that our Tradition is better than any other, but for each of us who comes to the Rowan Tree and takes permanent shelter within its branches, it must be the preferred Path. For each who is a Seeker, the goal is to find that one Path which is better for the self than any other. We are proud to say that most of us within the Rowan Tree have this inner joy.

PEER GROUPS WITHIN

It is difficult enough in this world to learn to feel Perfect Love and Perfect Trust. To do so in the midst of a group of diverse, colourful Wiccans is no easier. One truly faces honesty and reality to announce the intent and direction of change before a group of fellow students, knowing you will thus be observed. Yet, to actively seek Initiation within the structure of the Mystery School is to do just that.

We are parents, single; we work with computers, for the government, and truly in all forms of employment. To belong to the Rowan Tree is to explore variety, and to take joy in the differences at the same time you harness your ego and learn to walk as One with all other Members. We observe the harmonies the Earth shares with the rest of the Universe, as close as the Sun and the Moon, as distant as with the ultimate death and rebirth of all that exists.

We provide many opportunities for experience and growth with others, yet progress is developed in a one-to-one relationship with a Mentor. We believe that growth in wisdom requires action, emotional control, and knowledge of that stuff which comprises Divinity. A Member is also required to have a good working relationship with the manifest world which surrounds us. As Above, So Below, put into action.

MEMBERSHIPS

We admit persons to the Mystery School when an application has been successfully submitted to the College of Priest/esses, who are those who teach within the Rowan Tree and are Mentors. In the coming year, all will study directly with Paul, as we bade farewell to the High Priestess with whom we had shared many years. As we have come to further define ourselves, and sometimes that means we arrive at a fork in the Path. Although we had anticipated an actual growth of the number of Mentors, we have actually gone from two to one (our departed Lady worked with two Novices). This is a result of making a 1985 revision in the requirements for Second Degree Initiation. Although it has added further requirements to the present Candidates, they felt the changes would give them additional strength and skill, and welcomed the revisions.

Should one of you choose to join with us, the absence of a vacancy will not slow your progress. You will be cared for, and will find more than enough to keep you busy, to keep you learning, and to keep you growing in awareness and knowledge of the Tradition you are seeking to join.

We require a twelve-month commitment and a willingness to enter into active involvement. You must be seeking a Path that will meet your needs for a long period of time, and should have within a serious perception of a religious vocation. For us, Wicca is not something that you do, it IS WHAT YOU ARE AND HOW YOU LIVE. We take our Priest/hood as seriously as any other culture, as any other religion. If your dream includes growing into a Priest/esshood which is all encompassing, and which is your primary focus in life, then consider looking further at us. But, take your time. Choose to request an application only after very careful and very methodical consideration. Never hesitate to ask us any question, at all.

You shall study through meetings with a Mentor. Your Mentor is a source of advice, direction, and also regularly evaluates your work, both Above and also Below. Your Mentor is often as valuable as a Guardian Angel, but can also be the scourge of Attila. You will find that there exists both joy & frustration in this form of training. It is not intended to be easy, and it is the Mentor's responsibility to inject challenge, to test faith, and to guarantee that when you emerge as an Initiate, you will be capable of meeting Life headon, and will become a valued Priest/ess who Ministers to the peoples of the world.

THE MYSTERIES

We cherish the particular essence of the Tradition of Lothlorien. We are a Mystery Religion, and the nature of a Mystery Religion is that the wisdom & knowledge are gained only after learning the discipline of the art.

We reflect the need for self-discipline, and among us are those who are mastering martial arts, various musical instruments, creative disciplines, even weight-lifting. Skills at meditation must be gained, and regular meditation is necessary to pass through increasingly difficult levels of study.

Those of us who have studied through The Rowan Tree, even before it was given that name, have found that our study carries over into other pursuits in life. Many of us are involved in other forms of schooling..... Other Members are enrolled in undergraduate study at colleges and universities, and all of us are required to study in other paths. This Path of study is only for those who can handle a challenge.

(This section reprinted from 1983-1984 Annual Report).

THE FUTURE

Perhaps our most exciting goal is the purchase of a tract of land. We hope to do so within this lifetime, although if it takes longer, we know we'll be back in future lives. This land will provide us with the space for a stone Circle, and will also meet the legal requirements as a space within which ashes may be given back to the Mother, for those who choose to dispose of their bodies through the Element of Fire.

You will note in our Budget Report that although we have but established the Fund in the September voting, it has a solid beginning. We know that we will be together for many, many years, and will enjoy the wisdom this goal brings us. In some future Annual Report, we shall be able to say that we moved the site of our Annual Campout to our own cherished land.

1984-1985 Budget & Fiscal Report

Income

\$2669.00	.....	Pledges
821.00	.....	Herb Shop
439.00	.....	The Unicorn
124.00	.....	Littlest Unicorn
97.00	.....	Land Fund
35.00	.....	Printer Fund
107.00	.....	Miscellaneous
<u>\$4292.00</u>	.....	TOTAL INCOME
		(\$2850 in 1983-4)

Expenses

\$ 752.00	.....	Postage & Boxrent
642.00	.....	Herb Shop stock
640.00	.....	Library mtc. & books
596.00	.....	Printing
315.00	.....	Rent
306.00	.....	Office supplies
231.00	.....	Long distance calls
184.00	.....	Bank charges
151.00	.....	humidifier (library)
82.00	.....	adv. in Circle
81.00	.....	purch for Members
70.00	.....	COG dues (two yrs)
66.00	.....	Camp-out expenses
56.00	.....	mtce & misc.
32.00	.....	1984 sales tax
<u>\$4204.00</u>	.....	Total Expenses
+ 132.00	.....	Money in Funds
<u>\$4336.00</u>	.....	annual balance
<u>\$ -44.00</u>	.....	loss for this year

You will note that our closing balance for the 1984-1985 fiscal year shows a \$44.00 loss. We closed the previous year with a balance of \$98.00, so we are covered. More of interest is that our total budget this past year was 48% larger than the previous year.

Pledge monies were up \$600.00, a 31% increase. The Unicorn showed a 38% increase, and the Herb Shop a 90% increase.

The disbursement for Postage includes all costs for the Herb Shop and for all of the publications. When studied, these must be taken into consideration. As we have a significant number of our of town Members, we are dependant upon the Postal System. Beware of badmouthing the USPO. It only comes back to you in your own service...

The previous year, we purchased a dehumidifier, as the library & offices are in Paul & Don's basement. It has proven to be a wise decision, and works wonderfully. The added cost to Paul & Don's electrical bill is just about equal to the \$25.00 a month rent which is paid.

The establishment of a land fund, only a month old, is already a solid beginning. (I guess I used those same words on the previous page). It will be exciting to see the growth between now & next year's Annual Report...

Printing costs continue to be a major expense. This past year, we had the luxury of receiving much printing done free, so this figure is grossly understated. It afforded us the opportunity to increase the library budget by 88%.

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LOOKING FORWARD : 85-86

We are moving out into the Communities more than we have in the past. We are now stable enough to expand our work, and yet maintain strong inner development. Again, we continue to raise our standards, and to increase the responsibilities & demands placed upon those who would follow our Path into the Priest/esshood. We are expecting that each Member be willing to accept disciplined pathworking as a source of personal joy; to accept responsibility to a group as a way of being; to desire long-term commitments. We will be accepting New Members in the coming year. Thank you for your concern.

Blessed Be! *Paul*

Rev. Paul V. Beyerl, DD.
Director