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Rowan Tree Church

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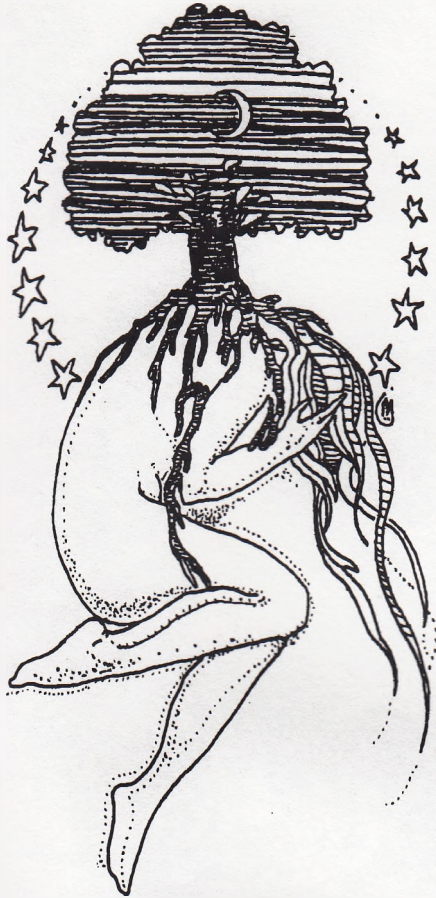
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The Rowan Tree Church

21st Annual Report

Hallows 2002 ce - Hallows 2003 ce



unpublished drawing by Prairie Jackson
originally for *The Unicorn* in the early 1970s

Returning to Our Roots

Each year is an opportunity for learning and this past year has been no less. Some of our Members have experienced the loss of loved ones. Two of us have lost our mothers. We all lost Judith Karliss a year ago, who was a bright star among those of us who attend Rowan Tree activities at The Hermit's Grove. This past year we bid a bittersweet farewell to a long-term former Member whose struggles with bipolar disorder have led him to a different path and we have seen new Members come and go, and old Members return to involvement after long periods of quiet. There has been a changing of the guard within the Board of Directors and within the editorship of *The Littlest Unicorn* and yet with what seems to be profuse change, The Tradition of Lothloriën continues steady and we are not so very different as we have been for many years. The Board of Directors is nearly identical in its officers to the Board of several years ago. Our newest editor of *The Littlest Unicorn* has held this position previously. We look into the familiar past, we look toward the unknown future. Hallows has come and gone and this is the twenty-first Annual Report being brought to Rowan Tree Members.

The Rowan Tree Church is a curious organization, to say the least. Its roots date back to the coven approach to Witchcraft which emigrated from the British Isles in the mid-20th century and was often a white, middle-class and urban. The movie 'Bell, Book and Candle' was based

upon that reality.

The Annual Report is not the medium through which to explore how the Rowan Tree came to be what it is. The Annual Report is published to report to you, the Rowan Tree's Membership, on the work which has been done this past year. It is the way in which the Church's hierarchy and its Board of Directors are accountable. It is also offers insight and information for those who wish to become participants in the spiritual and administrative work, to share in sustaining The Tradition of Lothloriën's future.

When faced with administrative decisions which could affect the Rowan Tree's structure I have often contemplated mainstream religion, Christian, Buddhist and other primary religions, to better understand what aspects of a religious organization seem necessary for those belief systems to survive. Over my thirty years as a Wiccan I also have seen hundreds of neopagan and Wiccan organizations emerge and disappear, like the undulating crests of waves, all part of the emerging group of religions collective known as Wicca.

Among our 'curiosities' is that, although we remain a small organization, we cover a vast geographical region. If The Rowan Tree Church and The Tradition of Lothloriën are to survive for generations, then the first thirty years or more of our foundation will become but the extending of roots, a time of historical interest when the roots of our Tradition are established. It is that founding era in which we continue to find ourselves.

Need we be a 'curious' organization? Will the Rowan Tree's future remain outside that mainstream? It has been suggested to me on quite a few occasions over the years that I should drop the word 'Wicca' from common use within The Tradition of Lothloriën and a number of people urged me to remove all references to 'witchcraft.' Why? Because they found that reading the books I've written, embracing the ritual forms and the ritual experience was deeply moving. They described having found religious truths which they believed would benefit a far larger number of people and were, in so many words, urging me to move The Rowan Tree Church in a 'mainstream' direction.

Many of us have never been 'mainstream.' Most of us have, for various reasons, found ourselves outside the mainstream. Many of us always believed we were 'different.' In earlier times those differences might have marked us as special, as someone to whom the Mysteries of the Elders might be trusted. Many of us today find that we do not even fit in comfortably with all of modern Wicca's mainstream. Is there a 'mainstream' of modern Wicca? If we judge from the many hundreds of books being published endlessly it would seem to be that way.

If there is one event which typifies this past year, it would be the Annual Retreat. It was the nineteenth year that we have gathered together, the second time that we trekked to the cabins at Old Faithful Village. It was much like a family reunion. Even those who were meeting others for the first time found a sense of kinship. We shared some meals, saw some sights together. We went our private, solitary ways. We worked daily ritual, held some meetings, explored our ideas in private conversations. The experience at Yellowstone allows us to live as we might if there were not the geographical boundaries of distance. We shared time together yet had private time and personal lives as well. Out of this Retreat we knew that The Tradition of Lothloriën and The Rowan Tree Church do provide the potential for a sense of community for those who participate in the publications, in the Board of Directors, in the Galadhrim, in various Church activities.

The challenge before us all is to work to better weave this network. Through your letters which are published in *The Rowan Tree News* we know of each other. Through the names of your loved ones (and your own names) on the list for our blessings when The Child of Light is worked we reach out to each other's lives with Magick.

We are a small organization, surprisingly small to many who see the list of publications, the appearance of our name in search engines, who have fantasies of a large, well-formed Wiccan Tradition. But Witchcraft has never been mainstream and I do not foresee The Tradition of Lothloriën extending itself to the masses. What comes to mind is part of a letter I wrote as part of a longer discussion about our Tradition:

You were very accurate when you wrote about The Tradition of

Lothloriën. You wrote that 'a person must have heart and the burning desire to learn...' You also indicated the need for belief (faith?) and commitment. The same could be said of all major religions, of all valid belief systems. When it comes down to the average person, however, the majority prefer a less committed, often more self-serving involvement. This tends to be more conspicuous in small groups (e.g. Wiccan, neopagan) but I don't think it's that different then what would be found in a larger, main-stream organization. If an organization had 2,000 members (which is not uncommon in today's conservative Christian world) they would probably consider themselves fortunate to have a core of 200 serious volunteers, individuals who believe enough about their religious work to maintain a full, religious life.

Within The Rowan Tree Church that 10% would be those who are the core of Lothloriën: the Board of Directors, the editors, those who teach and study within The Mystery School. We are fortunate for we probably find that 20% of our Membership is actively involved and committed. But our numbers are, at this time, quite small. We remain focused upon establishing our core values and practices, and I prefer working to see a few individuals who will be deeply committed and focused rather than a large number who are only partially knowledgeable. One of the essential beliefs within The Tradition of Lothloriën involves how our beliefs and practices can affect our existence as we move through the Initiation of Death and then toward the Mysteries of Rebirth. This requires that we have some Initiates who are fully trained and knowledgeable far more than having numerous members who do not understand how to work with the astral nature of The Tradition of Lothloriën.

Being a Church with a small membership, one scattered in many diverse areas, we can sometimes lose sight of our focus. Beginning with the discussions at this year's Annual Retreat and some conversations held at The Hermit's Grove, many hours have been spent contemplating the nature of The Tradition of Lothloriën and the roles that The Rowan Tree Church and The Hermit's Grove have in our belief system. If there is a theme to the direction believed most appropriate, it might be "back to our roots."

In recent years I have come to refer to 'The Hermit's Grove Community' yet that phrase has been misleading. The phrase 'community' has referred to those who have come and gone, some of whom remain active for many years but are now not part of the Rowan Tree. We see these folk for dinner, weddings and other events. Some return to the gardens. Some we no longer see at all. In returning to our roots I have spent many hours thinking about the concept of 'community.'

One of our realizations is that the primary work which we provide is education about The Tradition of Lothloriën. The Hermit's Grove provides assistance toward that process through its financial contributions and the educational programs, publications and resources which are part of my work through The Hermit's Grove. The combination of our private home and the work of The Hermit's Grove provides space for The Rowan Tree Church and within this space there is often a sense of 'community.' With many of these people there is a sense of family. But the true 'community' which is served by the work of the Beyerl household is that of the entire Membership of the Rowan Tree. The primary community which infuses The Hermit's Grove is that which encompasses each of you.

And, if the social gods are kind, as the years pass out of the education provided here there may well be people who will attain adequate training, experience and knowledge of The Tradition of Lothloriën who will create well-formed communities. The goals of a 'community' as we define a local group within our church structure need more flexibility and freedom than what is likely to be found here at The Hermit's Grove where the needs of the Church as a whole must come first and the practice of The Tradition of Lothloriën is paramount.

This coming summer the Twentieth Annual Retreat will coincide with the tenth anniversary of the gardens gerry and I have had the privilege of creating. We will explore our roots and talk about our shared history. We will contemplate the paths before us. We urge you to participate, to consider traveling to Washington to be here for this Annual Retreat.

Knowing that this is a major journey and expense there are other ways in which you can increase your participation in the larger community of the Rowan Tree. Participate in the elist. Be an active participant. Work the rituals and participate in weaving the fabric of Lothloriën's Magick at each Full Moon and Sabbat. Continue to write your letters to other members through *The Rowan Tree News*. Begin to write or communicate with each other. Subscribe to *The Littlest Unicorn* and *The Unicorn*. Become a contributor to those publications. Listen to Sunday Circle recordings. Send your comments, views and questions to us.

The year before us is also an opportunity for learning. If we can collectively increase our participation by becoming more aware of each other and extending ourselves to each other, in another year we will look back in wonder.

Share this work with us and be blessed!

Rev. Paul Beyerl

The General Manager

It is the General Manager's job to 'manage' everything, from paying the bills to overseeing the work of publishing, ordering, office supplies and utilities.

The management of The Rowan Tree Church is facilitated by the separation of the Church into several areas of function. *The Unicorn* and *The Littlest Unicorn* have separate budgets. The Mystery School provides its own income and maintains its own budget, which includes some of its publishing activities (e.g. the spiral-bound rituals) and the libraries. The expenses for the work flow which is necessary for the general Membership is called the 'general budget.'

One good overview of the nature of our Church is to examine the costs of postage and printing, for it is primarily through the postal system that we maintain our connection.

Total Postage and Shipping = \$1,877.54

Rowan Tree General Budget	\$398.78
postal box rent	\$83.00
postage for <i>The Rowan Tree News</i>	\$297.06
promotional, informational and business	\$330.29
subtotal	\$1,109.13
last year	1,104.62
The Mystery School	\$366.53
Subscription Library	110.32
Periodical Library	109.65
cassette tape mailing	\$17.93
<i>The Unicorn</i>	103.88
<i>The Littlest Unicorn</i>	60.10
total	\$1,877.54
last year	\$2,030.60
change	- \$153.06

Total Printing = \$1,405.20

<i>The Rowan Tree News</i>	\$271.80
catalogs, flyers, etc.	73.80
misc. printing	92.04
annual report (last year)	36.75
Mystery School	613.28
<i>The Unicorn</i>	192.03
<i>The Littlest Unicorn</i>	125.50
total	\$1,405.20
last year	1,594.05
change	- 188.85

Anticipating the potential for the economies Canada and the U.S. to decrease donations and subscriptions, the General Manager worked to hold down expenses. How did we do overall? A look at the change in budget totals reveals the following:

Financial Statements 2002-2003

The following figures represent the budget total (the amount in the checking account for each of these divisions) at the beginning of the fiscal year and at the end, as well as the change:

RT General Budget	\$176.89	\$390.56	+ \$213.67
Mystery School	47.71	157.20	+ 109.49
Subscription Library	158.69	262.32	+ 103.63
Periodical Library	94.72	119.39	+ 24.67
Tape Library	3.00	67.08	+ 64.08
<i>The Unicorn</i>	120.01	159.69	+ 39.68
<i>The Littlest Unicorn</i>	245.76	187.40	- 58.36
Annual Retreat	924.34	389.70	- 534.64
Retreat Scholarships	648.72	934.72	+ 286.00
Yellowstone cabins	980.00	95.00	- 885.00
Land Fund	169.10	416.36	+ 247.26
property tax	437.18	469.47	+ 32.29
liability insurance	215.01	863.04	+ 648.03

t-shirt replacement	156.70	189.20	+ 32.50
sales tax for state	26.30	16.49	- 9.81
computer repair	160.78	152.39	- 8.39
totals	+4,564.91	\$4,950.01	+ 385.10

Member Donations for the year: \$3,876.85

Of this total five percent is allocated to the Periodical Library (\$193.84) and the remainder goes directly into the general budget. We need a total of \$300.00 each month and this year met our needs with a pinch to spare.

Dedicated Donations: \$2,332.45

These figures represent money donated by Members *in addition* to their Church donation, money which is specifically assigned to a designated need:

Note: In the property tax figure \$1,335.00 was donated directly by The Hermit's Grove, representing money from royalties paid to Rev. Paul for *A Compendium of Herbal Magick*.

RT General Budget	\$5.00
computer repair fund	195.00
subscription library fees	23.00
tape library money	13.00
<i>The Littlest Unicorn</i>	37.24
retreat scholarships	180.00
property tax	1,342.95
liability insurance	530.53
Eldermentor gift	5.00
total	\$2,332.45

Rowan Tree Church General Operations

The following figures show all sources of income which were available for our general operations:

Balance from last year	176.89
Member donations	3,688.01
Nonmember donations	28.39
Portion of sample packets	29.50
Wicca 101 course	87.82
Prisoner donations	119.79
fundraising projects:	
Yellowstone cameras	10.00
Stained glass stars	93.00
Donations for robes	11.00
Merry Meet notepaper	14.00
Painless Astrology	0.34
Cookbook	193.70
Total Income	4,469.44

The following figures represent all expenses paid from the Rowan Tree's general budget:

Postal	1,109.13
Web site fees	67.00
Minnesota agent	245.00
Printing	474.39
office supplies	365.25
advertising	20.00
donation to charity	20.00
ritual supplies	119.69
miscellaneous	27.00
computer expense	62.29
telephone	454.54
misc. repairs	21.73
electricity	106.43
disposal services	55.63
propane (heat)	39.71
gasoline	8.60
water	25.00
storage locker	501.00
portable toilet	306.85
legal fees	10.00
bank fees	42.39
money owed Hermit's Grove	-2.75
total	4,078.88

Communication from the Board

The Board of Directors, this past year, has not had any major challenges. We spent time exploring the duties, responsibilities and ethics of various positions within the Church, creating flexible lists of the tasks expected of the various positions within our organization. Although, at times, it seemed like busy work when the time came to fill the position of *The Littlest Unicorn* editor the 'task list' proved useful.

The issues the Board are addressing include providing liability insurance to protect the Rowan Tree against lawsuit should a mishap occur at any Church event, whether the Annual Retreat, a workshop or a ritual. Although those who live within the region may have greater opportunities to attend rituals, any Member is welcomed to visit and, should the Rowan Tree be sued, every Member would probably see their Church lost. This is an issue which ultimately faces us all. This past year our Members donated enough money to cover insurance for a year. We do not yet have a policy, taking the prudent approach of wanting to be assured that we will be able to sustain a policy year after year.

What is the role of President? It is essential that the President of the Board of Directors be the most knowledgeable regarding nearly all activities of the Church. It is to the Church's benefit that the current President is not only the founder of The Tradition of Lothlorien, but that I have also done all of the legal work leading to our full recognition as a church by the U.S. government. In addition to that I provide bookkeeping and the work of the general manager plus coordinating all of the publishing and printing done within the Church. While this adds layers of difficulty for those who will some day take over these numerous responsibilities, at this point in time it is fortunate.

The President assembles the agenda each month, noting new topics for discussion, keeping the various discussions on course and clarified. The monthly agenda is sent by postal mail and responses received by the various Directors and Board participants which the President assembles into the following month's agenda. The President does not vote on issues unless there is a tie.

At times unsettling, we had several resignations this year which resulted in the Board rearranging itself. Former Directors had already returned, ready to resume sharing in the responsibilities and now, as we begin this year, the Voting Directors are all experienced and have served in their present positions in the past as well.

With the Rowan Tree's center located in the United States, we find ourselves dealing with a society which holds more of its population in prison (by percentage) than any other first-world country. Over the years we have offered various levels of services to prisoners. With the success of the Prisoner Outreach Program we are now working to provide a transitional membership to help those with a sincere desire to be participants in The Tradition of Lothlorien establish a healthy membership in the Rowan Tree.

This past year the annual meeting of the Board of Directors was held at Yellowstone, much to our joy. We're already saving our money for 2006 ce but are making more immediate plans for the Board's annual meeting next summer here in Kirkland. All Church Members are welcome (and encouraged!) to attend.

Be very blessed, Rev. Paul Beyerl

It has again been my privilege to serve on the Board of Directors and in the capacity of Vice President this year. In a year which involved quite a few changes, I am glad that the Board of Directors remains strong and quite consistent. Many Members, including most members of the BOD, had the extraordinary opportunity to spend time with other Rowan Tree members in Yellowstone for the annual retreat. Throughout the year and at the annual meeting, the Board accomplished quite a bit. We are attempting to address the need for liability insurance for The Hermits Grove through fundraising and donations. We are developing guidelines to assist POP participants to transition towards becoming members when they are no longer prisoners and are eligible to apply for membership. The cookbook is now finished and available. Overall, although this has not always been an easy year, and was filled with comings and goings, the Board has continued to do its work in support of the Rowan Tree.

Bright blessings, Donna Lewin

This year I feel that I have become familiar with most of the issues facing The Rowan Tree Church. I have progressed from being an Observer to a 'once again' experienced member of the Board of Directors. I am prepared to serve in the capacity of Vice President during this next year.

I look forward to seeking a more sustainable footing for the Church. I also see the need to review our privacy policies and set them out in a clear way in order to be in compliance with the requirements of national

laws.

No doubt there will be unexpected challenges and rewards. I will do my best to meet these in good humor and to deal with them in an effective and compassionate manner.

In fellowship, Jim Saigle

Greetings to each one of the Rowan Tree family!

During the year just completed, i have had the privilege to serve you as Secretary to the Board of Directors. i send sincere thanks to you all for assisting me in fulfilling my duties. Your monthly forms, donations, cards, and letters are truly important to me. i hope that my responses are as meaningful to each of you.

Your notes and ideas have become one of the most important parts of the RTNews. Your requests for energies from the Child of Light Rituals have given strength to many and allowed others to offer their services through the Galadhrim. Once again, each of you have had the opportunity to vote for the Board of Directors for the coming year. Many thanks to those who took time to participate in this important facet of the Church.

For the past year, my goal was to have a response time to your correspondence of one week maximum. For most of the past twelve months, this has been the rule rather than the exception, and it has given me a better feeling about my responses to your writings and donations. i hope you feel more valued as a Member by this. The exceptions have been during this past few months, first with the Yellowstone Retreat and then the garden working of August/September. i will still aim for that one-week response and hope you will bear with me as i work into the cooler Autumn months and catch up.

In the RT News, i have continued to post the number of monthly forms received each month compared to the number of Member households. i also hope you are enjoying knowing how many of us are located in different parts of the continent and world. And, starting in January, i will again be doing some "bookkeeping" to encourage you to save for the Yellowstone Retreat in 2006!

This year at the Yellowstone Retreat, i was not given any proxies for the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors. Indeed, while much was discussed and developed, we did not vote on any major policies or concerns. Much of the formal Board meeting dealt with the POP program.

i continue to send out the two- and three-month reminders to Members who have not submitted Membership forms or responded during a past two or three month period. Current Membership lists are kept in the archives, with copies of current lists sent to Isaiah Dearborne, who is our e-list coordinator.

If you have any questions about your Membership status, or about my duties as Secretary, please send me a note. And please keep those monthly forms arriving at the Grove!

Blessings, gerry Beyerl

Observing the Board is helping me to learn how there is a structure, an organization supporting the church, one that can be easily to overlook yet one we could not go without. I am glad to be able to assist our Scribe by writing the Notes from the Board and hope all find they keep you up to date on the activity of the Board of Directors.

Thanks!

James Henley - Board Observer



The Unicorn

The subscription levels to *The Unicorn* are comparable to what they have been over recent years. The past three years we've been about 20% lower than we were during the previous ten years but during that earlier time we typically maintained an exchange of subscriptions (and, with some, advertising) with two to three dozen other printed publications. The times have changed. Today there are less than a dozen publications and only a few are willing to exchange advertising. Wiccan reading is found in the multitude of books being published with endless variations of the same topic as well as a small but growing number of books with substance.

We are currently short on contributors and no longer have new, original artwork. This year we added the Anonymous Chronicler which is a very enjoyable series. It is hoped that we may be able to cultivate some regular contributors from our Members. The goal would be to increase articles on the Sabbats and on Lothlorien's beliefs.

The Hatchling continues. I do know how the story ends but am unable to say when that might take place. The characters and their lives in Merrydale are far more than fiction for, like Andrius, their being contributes to Lothlorien's vitality, the events in their lives sometimes reflect our reality and *The Hatchling* is directly connected with Lothlorien's Magick.

Over the past two years I have worked through every issue of *The Unicorn* published since the very first. I have the complete archives in my office and now, all published artwork has been digitally preserved, so long as the ever-changing technology doesn't leave our files some day inaccessible.

There are days I wonder if, after so many years, *The Unicorn* has run its course and yet we have many faithful subscribers, some of whom have been readers for a decade. The survival of *The Unicorn* depends upon someone in the Church having a desire to continue the publication as editor and, in the coming years, learning the skills needed; and upon there being enough readers who desire to have some inspirational reading and joy arriving to assist them with their Sabbat work. Personally, I am hopeful that *The Unicorn* will continue. It was instrumental in the emergence of the organization which came to be known as The Rowan Tree Church and remains one of the primary ways by which we are accessible in a creative way with poetry, educational articles, fiction and artwork.

My work is not yet ended. *The Unicorn's* 27th year is beginning.

Rev. Paul, editor

beginning of year	\$120.01
RT Member subscriptions	134.00
Nonmember donations	11.85
Sample packet portion	9.00
Sales of <i>The Hatchling</i>	29.50
Public subscriptions	223.00
Sample copies	9.50
Prisoner donations	17.10
Total income	\$553.96
Postage	\$103.88
Web site	12.50
Printing	192.03
Office supplies	44.98
Advertising	31.00
Telephone	1.88
Storage locker	8.00
Total Expense	\$394.27
Balance	159.69

The Littlest Unicorn

The Littlest Unicorn carries on, though at times this past year it looked doubtful. After my resignation last year and the unfortunate situation involving a hopeful new editor fell through I decided to offer going to a quarterly format so that *TLU* could continue. Fortunately we have found a new and very capable editor who will take over with the Samhain issue this fall. Jim Saigle will carry on *TLU* and will go back to the 8 issues format.

TLU has enjoyed a steady membership this year. We started off last Hallows with 11 paying subscribers and three complimentary issues for contributors. We end this year with 17 paying subscribers, I believe the highest amount since I began years ago!

TLU has been blessed by wonderful contributions this year as well. Dina Marie Rivera has continued to send wonderful puzzles, articles and lovely artwork. Tasha Halpert continued to write her inspirational Puja Tales which we all enjoyed! Rev. Paul continued his informative Deva Story series and my mother, affectionately referred to as Grandma Bean, contributed various science-related articles on subjects ranging from clouds to insects. To everyone who contributed, Thank You!

My editorship will end with the Autumn Equinox and I'd like to say that it has been my great pleasure to serve over these past years. Under Jim's caring hand and guidance I am sure that *TLU* will continue to inspire and inform our young ones.

Bright Blessings to you all,

Noël Knower, outgoing *TLU* Editor



beginning of year	\$245.76
Donations from Members	37.24
Member subscriptions	32.50
Sample packet portion	9.00
Public subscriptions	53.00
Sample copies	3.50
Total	\$381.00
Postage	60.10
Printing	125.50
Storage locker	8.00
Total	193.60
balance	187.40

The Mystery School

The Mystery School was the original foundation of The Rowan Tree Church. For the first years there was no 'church membership.' Someone was a 'member' only if they were enrolled in The Mystery School and studying toward Initiation. A carryover from the coven paradigm (which initially only had coveners, all of whom were studying toward initiation), changing the structure of the Rowan Tree to that of its current model represented a very significant change in our overall activity.



Today The Mystery School remains a quiet presence within the Rowan Tree. Those who are working toward First and Second Degree Initiation and those working toward Bardic Initiation maintain secrecy, one of the aspects of a traditional mystery training which dates back to classical times, even well back into the Age of Aries.

As we enter the new cycle of the Wheel of the Year The Mystery School is preparing itself for the future in a variety of ways.

The Mystery School is, at present, smaller than usual in numbers. This is allowing us to work on some important changes. The Bardic Path continues to undergo renovation and the progress emerging from this work is providing Pathworking which is far more creative and fulfilling for a Bardic personality yet, in addition, there will be an increased expectation of professional skill through a 'Bardic Art' and a Bard's Healing Art.

In addition to this I am revisiting the entire Book of Shadows, a process likely to take me several years. Lothloriën's Book of Shadows is a collection of Sacred Keys (each 'key' opens a portal to one or more of Lothloriën's Mysteries), each of which is accompanied by a study guide, a list of questions to which the student provides written answers. This methodology was created over fifteen years ago and many of the study guides have grown by several questions, making the academic path sometimes 'too academic' for all individuals who wish to eventually reach Second Degree Initiation and Ordination. This process is slow for I am also attempting to gather together many of the memories, insights and information which has traditionally been the Oral Tradition but which will be better available if added to the Book of Shadows.

These process are most assuredly bringing The Tradition of Lothloriën itself back to its roots for what I have learned this past year is that it is time to bring the focus of the Church back to its roots. My personal lifestyle provides me with the opportunity to spend dozens of hours in contemplation during my garden labor each week. One of the questions I have carried with me these throughout the harvest explores how one might describe The Tradition of Lothloriën. What is it about Lothloriën which is not well-described to the outsider?

Of course, much of this has to do with The Tradition of Lothloriën being a Mystery Tradition. To paraphrase *The Admonition*, "One does not read about The Tradition of Lothloriën..." But we are a literate society and The Rowan Tree Church is certainly a religious organization based upon literacy. It is our published words which bring Members to us (through *A Wiccan Bardo, Revisited*), which weave us together (through our publications) and it is through the written word that we learn the Mysteries of Lothloriën.

This November I will begin teaching a five week course which is an introductory series, providing considerable information about The Tradition of Lothloriën which is not found in *A Wiccan Bardo, Revisited*. I have made a commitment to attempt to provide one article each month for *The Rowan Tree News*. I am working my way through nearly 20 hours of audio cassettes which are aging, so that some of the essential history and information is not lost.

As we prepared to move forward this summer brought to us two historic events. First was the ritual which brought Frank Cordeiro to the status of Priest Steward, someone who is an Initiate and a Steward of Lothloriën. Weeks later was the Yoking Ritual, allowing all of us to acknowledge that Jim Saigle is nearing his final year (or so) of study leading to his Second Degree Initiation and Ordination.

And in November of this year we will joyfully celebrate the Dedication of a new Novice Bard. The Wheel turns anew and will continue forever.

Be very blessed.

Rev. Paul Beyerl, Eldermentor

Mystery School Operating Budget

beginning of year	\$48.77
calendar sales	48.95
tuition	1,224.98
nonmember donation	10.00
Colouring Book of Numbers	10.00

Ritual of Lothloriën	65.50
Child of Light	37.50
Sabbat Journeys	105.03
Astral Pursuit	18.50
A Wiccan Reader	14.50
Wheel of the Year	50.25
Ritual of Handfasting	7.50
Ritual for the Dead	29.00
Yule Ritual	30.50
Lesser Banishing Pentagram Ritual	12.50
Wicca 101 materials	10.00
total	\$1,723.48

postage	\$366.53
printing	313.71
office supplies	200.94
book purchases for library	58.43
educational materials	5.41
ritual materials	210.11
computer expenses	30.00
telephone	213.32
electricity	24.55
recycling pickup	5.06
gasoline for transportation	10.00
water	25.00
storage locker	23.00
portable toilet	80.22
total	\$1,566.28
end of year balance	\$157.20

The Land Fund

The Land Fund is mandated by our Book of Legislation. We have been collecting monies for over fifteen years (perhaps closer to twenty) toward the goal of someday acquiring an acreage of sacred land (quite likely untillable) within the reaches of the Upper Mother Valley. The Land Fund is supported by Member donation and by a percentage of monies allocated from Mystery School tuition, and from ritual and spiral-bound book sales. Any blessings for a return to economic health for North America would increase interest rates which have fallen to a historic lows, affecting the return on the money placed into Certificates of Deposit.

total money placed into CDs	\$7,551.67
CD interest to date	1,044.02
total in checkbook at end of year	\$416.36
total land fund money	\$9012.05
increase from last year	\$524.41

Subscription Library



The Church's library has grown some this year but as the shelves near capacity some books which have no educational value or which have been replaced by improved editions or books with better information.

The primary source of new books comes from donations to the library from *The Unicorn*, donations to the library from *The Hermit's Lantern* and from a lesser number of books purchased for the library by The Mystery School. We have added some excellent books!

James Henley worked for a time this past year on the synopses. At some future date either a catalog or internet resource which would provide brief descriptions of a title's contents. At times someone daydreams about creating a data base which could be accessed via the internet but that seems to me to be such a huge project. In the meantime we continue to make slow progress with the synopses although we're adding books faster than the synopses are being written. If anyone wishes to participate in this volunteer work you 1) must be a Church Member; 2) able to write a *description* of a book briefly (not a review or opinion); and 3) be able to pay the postage for returning the books in the same carton and packing materials to keep them protected.

I gave thought to printing an updated catalog of titles but will wait until there is more need. Any feedback on this would be appreciated.

Lisa also deserves thanks for her work on the card catalog. Thanks also to Suzanne who helped with that project several days this past year. Progress is being made!

It's been a good year for the Subscription Library.
With alphabetical blessings, Rev. Paul

Botany & Gardening	81 titles	94 books
Children's Books	69 titles	74 books
Counselling & Wellness	72 titles	75 books
Death & Dying	22 titles	24 books
Fiction & Novels	327 titles	405 books
Health & Wellness	113 titles	123 books
Herbals	224 titles	253 books
Miscellaneous	17 titles	17 books
Occult Sciences: Astrology	113 titles	132 books
Occult Sciences: Color	9 titles	11 books
Occult Sciences: Divination & Miscellaneous Arts	41 titles	44 books
Occult Sciences: Dreams	12 titles	13 books
Occult Sciences: Gems, Minerals and Metals	46 titles	53 books
Occult Sciences: I Ching	11 titles	13 books
Occult Sciences: Miscellaneous disciplines	69 titles	74 books
Occult Sciences: Numerology	14 titles	15 books
Occult Sciences: Occult and Spiritual Herbalism & Healing	40 titles	48 books
Occult Sciences: Spell Magick	36 titles	40 books
Occult Sciences: Tarot	52 titles	62 books
Philosophy & World View	85 titles	95 books
Poetry & Literature	54 titles	61 books
World Religions and Mythologies	364 titles	428 books
Sexuality, Sexual Issues and Sexual Magick	61 titles	68 books
Spiritual Awakening	98 titles	112 books
Unicorns	15 titles	22 books
Western Occult and Magickal Traditions	197 titles	252 books
Wicca, Neopaganism and Witchcraft	264 titles	378 books
	total titles: 2,454	
	total books: 2,964	

Many more titles and books were added than would appear from last years totals (2,446 and 2,924 respectively) but a number of books which had negligible educational value were removed and donated to a local thrift store. They were not worth recycling to Members nor were there any takers from those asked.

tape library

Significant changes have taken place this year. Due to increased difficulties with her health, it was necessary for Tricia to ship the bulk of the Tape Library to the Kirkland office and to step back from making copies of tapes.

To facilitate the change Sunday Circle tapes are now available either by sending a blank tape onto which the monthly discussion will be copied, or by purchasing one directly for \$5.00. We have enjoyed an expanded audience as the latter option has proven popular.

Meanwhile, Rev. Paul is attempting to listen to and transcribe the tapes which have been collected over the years. It is a slow task and may take more years than he has! (It's not easy but can be a terrific volunteer task).

Tricia was our best Tape Librarian ever and has our continued love and admiration.

Other Activities of the Church

In preparing my report I looked back through more than two years of our archives and see that little has changed. *The Rowan Tree News* is the most visible function of the Church among our Members. Each issue is mailed in time to reach the Members prior to the 1st of the month although it now takes longer to arrive in Canada.

The Rowan Tree News is usually duplicated by the copy service we use but once in a while a combination of a holiday and a weekend has meant printing the entire run on the small laser printer in my office. This keeps us on schedule but it has not been good for the Hewlett Packard which is not constructed for such a workload.

The only change foreseen in the coming year would be increasing the emphasis on The Tradition of Lothloriën, a theme which will be found throughout many functions of the Rowan Tree.

I would like to add a thank your Membership Secretary, Gerry, for the time he devotes to typing up excerpts from your letters, getting them to me on disk.

With our scattered membership, *The Rowan Tree News* is a most important publication which allows us to remain in contact with each

other.

With many blessings for swift mail,
Rev. Paul

I feel good about the Prisoner Outreach Program this year. It's taken some time to get the dust settled over the past four years but it is going well.

At times individuals think that running the program is very time consuming but managing the Prisoner Outreach Program has been made a highly efficient process. It is not difficult and printing and mailing the requested study materials goes swiftly.

What does take time is reading the written assignments and evaluating them, a job which requires an in-depth knowledge of The Tradition of Lothloriën. The other time-consuming work is providing some degree of written correspondence but the POP is clear about this not being anything to be expected.

In the coming year definition will be provided which establishes a 'transitional membership' for former prisoners who wish to become Church Members and who have not completed the two levels of written assignments. Whether 'transitional membership' will apply to individuals who remain incarcerated but have completed the work has not been decided.

I feel assured that the Prisoner Outreach Program has accomplished its goals. Prisoners are able to continue in the program only when they also provide and learn to handle responsibilities.

I look forward to this work for, while in prison, many of these people work very hard on their growth as Wiccans and within The Tradition of Lothloriën. It is unfortunate that, in the United States which imprisons a higher percentage of its population than any other fully developed country, prison prepares them so poorly to cope with society following their release.

With blessings,
Rev. Paul

This year I became a Priest Steward and was able to teach a Basic Wicca course that is based on the ethics and wisdom of Lothloriën. During the time of the Annual Retreat I was able to stay at the Grove to tend the gardens and lead the local community in the Lammas Journey. Due to health problems, my work on the BOD has become similar to that of an editor or ordained clergy and, although I read each agenda, I have not responded unless I had a comment that I wanted to share. I am impressed at the smooth working of the Board and the well-thought out responses that I have seen over this past year.

I remain in charge of the e-list although Isaiah has taken over the role of adding new members. I remain an active member of the Galadhrim although, with my heart problem, I was more active on the receiving end than the sending end of the Child of Light rituals.

Lizard (Frank) Cordeiro, Priest Steward

Lay-Ministry and Minstrel Program

This year we were blessed to have Isaiah Dearborne complete the requirements for the Lay-Ministry program of the Church. We also currently have a Member who has completed the adjudication questions and is very close to certification as a Lay-Minstrel. I hope to post an announcement of certification in the RTNews in the next few months. If anyone is interested in finding out more about the Lay-minister program, please write to Gerry Beyerl at the Church's Kirkland office for more information. The program takes work to complete, but those who have completed it have a great knowledge of the Rowan Tree's beliefs and functions.

Blessings, Gerry Beyerl, Lay-Ministry Coordinator

This year I have participated regularly in ritual, offered counseling both with and without the aid of oracles, corresponded and written articles.

I have studied both the ritual and organizational practices of other religious groups in order to gain insight into their strengths and challenges. We are a small group and still face the trials of a small organization. For our absolute numbers, I cannot help but believe that we continue to be very effective and very successful.

My own personal Pathworking allowed me to part some of the veils of secrecy this year. I progressed through the Yoking ritual to become a candidate for Ordination as clergy in the Tradition of Lothloriën. In becoming more visible, I look forward to increased communication and to opportunities to share group ritual.

May we all continue to make progress on our respective Paths.
In service, Jim Saigle, Lay-Minister



Annual Report for the Galadhrim Society of Unicorns

The Galadhrim Society of Unicorns is a herd of (currently) 11 Unicorns who desire to give additional service to the Rowan Tree beyond the participation as a Member sending in donations and forms. This is accomplished through extra activities and projects which are (hopefully) beneficial to the Members of the Church. Each Galadhrim Member submits an idea of the activity they would like to do as a service to the Church. Each may change service offered at any time, if they feel that their current project is not "working."



It has been my honor and duty to communicate with the other Unicorns, to let them know how we are all doing and to remind them of their commitment to support, and communicate with, each other, as well as offering service and encouragement to the Members of the Rowan Tree Church. Currently, the Unicorns are offering services of many types to the Church Members and each other; many of the services are available through the "classified ad" section of the RTNews. Please remember that any Church Member may join. If you are interested in becoming part of the Galadhrim, contact me at the Grove for more information.

Several of us were able to "herd" together at Yellowstone and had a great time. As a result, we have been trying to add more whimsy to our communications. AND we had a fun quest this fall to each find a unicorn rubber stamp to use on our communications.

The Child of Light healing rituals have been, are, and will continue to be a major focus of our group working. Many thanks to each Member of the Church that has made a request for energies. Your requests help us to stay focused on the importance of this working. We would always like to hear how our working of this ritual has brought relief or extra energy to those whose requests we have honored. We had a very good time working the ritual during the Yellowstone Retreat this year; each morning we gathered with other Rowan Tree Members and worked one of the blessings for a specific purpose. It was a wonderful way to start each day.

Each Unicorn has been asked to submitted a brief statement about their service for the past twelve months. I hope these responses from the Unicorns about what they have been doing in service for the Church during this past year is helpful to you in understanding how the Church Members are important.

In Service, *felaarof*

I am the Uni-town crier for the Child of Light lists and other needed information.

Amalthea

My primary Galadhrim service has been performing the Child of Light Ritual at New Moons. Some people wonder and a few even ask, "Does it work?" the simple answer is, "Yes." the ritual "works" in several ways:

1. The ritual continues a practice and a philosophy reaching back more than two thousand years.
2. The ritual celebrates and creates order in the Universe.
3. The ritual creates and collects positive energies.
4. The ritual makes these positive energies available both to the celebrant and to those seeking healing energy.
5. the energies facilitate change. Some use the energies to help in making important life decisions. Some use the energies to ease life transitions. Some are successful in healing on a physical level. Some learn how to reach a place of peaceful acceptance.

The requests and the process are generally treated as being confidential, but let me sketch one experience. "Z" asked for healing energies. She had recently been diagnosed with lung cancer by her family physician. She meditated, changed some eating habits, became more active and stopped smoking cigarettes. When she went for further medical imaging and a biopsy, the lesion had become so small that it was not possible to take the sample. She is being watched but for the present is still in remission.

The popular literature has more than a few reports of people who "do better" when others pray for them, whether with or without their knowledge. Our ethics require us to ask permission before taking an active part, but we are not the only ones practicing in this area. Feel free to order a copy of "The Child of Light" Ritual and join me in this ministry.

Keerdan

My human and I have had quite a busy year and haven't been as diligent about the Galadhrim service and communication as we'd like to

have been. However, our hooves and hands have found time to do a bit of sewing as volunteer service for the Church. We are working on ritual robes and an occasional banner for special occasions. We look forward to continuing our service in the coming year.

Odonata

My first annual Uniport. For a human that'd be a Humaport, I mean a report. You know... port then port again. report.

Me and my human are observing the Board of Directors, writing Notes from the Board, doing book synopsis for the library. I have learned a lot about human's unprofitable organizations. Or is that non-profit? Well, at least it's organized. Lots of learning left to do, so you can bet I'll be around.

A Unicorn is never jaded!

Daymon

As part of the Galadhrim, I try to take on a different service project each year. My project for the last two years has been to compile and edit the cookbook. Although this was a bigger project that I anticipated, and it took a lot more time than I thought it would, I am glad to report that this project has been completed, and that the cookbooks are now on sale through the Kirkland office. Many thanks to everyone who submitted recipes! All proceeds from the cookbook go to the Rowan Tree. For the coming year, I would like to again focus on a fundraising idea for the Rowan Tree. My current thought is to make bath salts that would be available for sale, with the proceeds going to the Church.

Blessed be,

Carling

It's time to report about our activities. Generally, our humans know about our whereabouts, but each of us also have our own private times when we can "kick up our heels," follow our own lights, and generally act like Unicorns. For some of us, the time at Yellowstone was a particularly fun time. We got to run the trails, sniff the new vegetation and run through the spray from the geysers. We had to make the best of it since that opportunity only comes every three years.

My human and I are quite involved in keeping in touch with several in the POP. One has been out about a year, three should be out within the next year and one has several years to go. they each welcome the resolutions of the Members of the BOD, resulting from the discussion of the future of the POP at Yellowstone. Each of them have indicated a desire to continue on as "transition" Members once they get out. My human has also posted a notice in the RTN inviting correspondence with any new prisoners who might like to write. Only one has responded so far.

Re'em

I have been falling behind in sending letters of encouragement and reminder to Members. I will be change my service for the time being. I will be making-donating my glass-star ornaments as my Galadhrim service until further notice.

Yellowstone was such a magickal time. the landscapes were most wondrous. I had lots of fun exploring trails, forests, waterfalls and many other amazing places. On the last day of our stay, we happened to be standing down wind of Old Faithful at the time of an eruption. We were sprayed by the waters, just like little foals playing in a sprinkler on a hot day!

Moon Dancer

E List & E mail

In addition to our monthly issue of *The Rowan Tree News* we have additional ways to maintain contact. Messages are sent from the Kirkland office by email. Any Member who has email capability is encouraged to let the Kirkland office know. Increasingly, notices regarding ritual work and other information which is best when timely is available through the group mailings.

We also encourage you to sign up for the Rowan Tree's elist. This is a closed list - for Members only. You may share ideas, ask questions, recommend books and movies, express opinions and make contact with others. It's not a large list so you needn't worry about being deluged with email.

The elist moderators are: Lizard Frank Cordeiro, James Henley and Rev. Paul. Contact any one of us and we can add you to the list!

Be Blessed !!!