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The Rowan Tree Church 23rd Annual Report, Hallows 2004 ce-Hallows 2005 ce.

Rowan Tree Church

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The Rowan Tree Church

23rd Annual Report

Hallows 2004 ce - Hallows 2005 ce

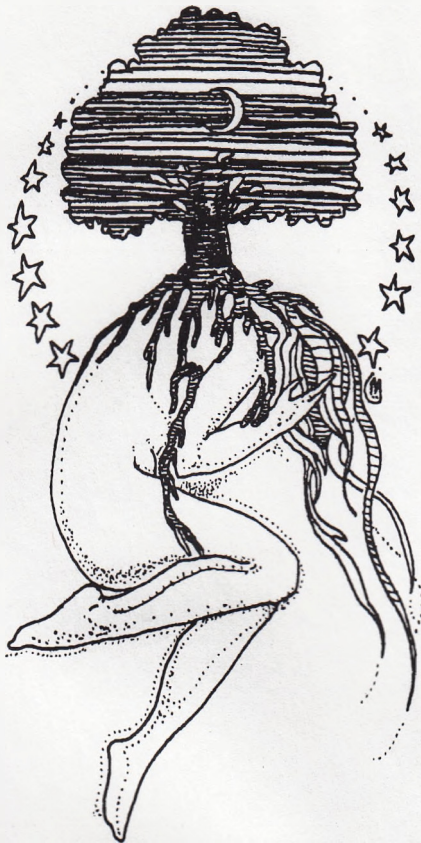


illustration originally for *The Unicorn*, approximately 25 years ago,
by Prairie Jackson

Rise the Sap: We Foster Growing Energy

This is the 23rd year that an Annual Report has been created for the Members of The Rowan Tree Church. That alone is a statement of some significance. Twenty-three years! What was once a small group of students gathering in my apartment on Oak Grove (when The Rowan Tree Church was incorporated as a Church) has grown.

This year has brought many challenges. We have spent much of our time since last year's report looking well beyond the reach of our organization. At a global level, this past year showed our species how insignificant we are in the scheme of our Mother Earth. There are times She needs to rearrange herself, whether adjusting the land masses for Her physical comfort (e.g. earthquakes) or tending to Her temperatures. Hurricanes are how the global

temperatures are kept in balance.

At the same time there is a growing recognition that global warming is not simply a theory, but is a reality. As much as our species tends to gather itself in low-lying coastal areas or build cities and settle civilization over earthquake faults or take advantage of the richness of the Mother's soil where simmer volcanoes, our relationship with our Mother is frequently that of the earth's insects to the gardens. Sometimes we are like the ants. On the other hand our species has demonstrated, and continues to demonstrate, its ability to impose greater change upon our Mother Earth than any other species. The pollution of our Mother is the great crime of our species and we, as Wiccans of Lothlorien, are committed to caring for our Mother.

If I follow the theme of the Annual Reports of the past two years, we first 'put down roots' and last year's report was subtitled 'drop down seeds.' What would characterize this past year? If we follow the Rowan Tree chant, this year would have been the 'rising of the sap.' Does that metaphor apply? Perhaps, although we must always be cautious for one can take the assorted events of a year and make them appear applicable to nearly any metaphor. The seeds are dropped in the autumn and the sap will not rise again until spring. Winter includes that time when one's store of supplies and fuel is being used and will not be replenished until the Wheel has turned.

And yet, although the external appearances of The Rowan Tree Church may seem relatively quiet, truly the life forces within our 'tree' have been rising. Some pruning was necessary, but that is another winter task.

Within The Mystery School one of our more intensely focused rituals is worked, coinciding with the Full Scorpio Moon. The Elder to prepares for months including study, meditation, and, at the end, fasting and more. The goal of the Elder is to set aside personal goals and expectations as well as any hopes and concerns which might be reflective of The Mystery School and The Rowan Tree Church. One of the facets of this past Tarot Ritual (for this year held in April) was the message that we would appear to be giving more attention to the mundane aspects of The Rowan Tree Church. Certainly a tight budget has kept the General Manager watching the bottom line and jiggling some monies here and there to keep things flowing. *The Unicorn* editor has watched the slowly shrinking number of paid subscribers, a reality since the emergence of the internet. The Board of Directors works to keep enough revenues for essentials, including the dedicated donations we must have to maintain things like liability insurance, money for property taxes, and the minor things (minor?) like having a working computer and printer, paying for postage, printing, buying the envelopes and paper and other

expenses which keep our Church functional.

Within the personal lives of many, the realities of life have sometimes interfered with the joys of ritual and the luxury of spiritual pursuits. A number of our Members live with major health issues. For a few it has meant making life work and seeking fulfillment even though health issues have kept them from having the income which would allow greater freedom. Life in the United States has changed. The upper middle class and above has gained in wealth. The lower middle class is having a hard time of it and the working classes are often having to make hard choices. Many are struggling. But we live with Lothloriën in our hearts and we move forward.

This past summer's Annual Retreat had one of the lower levels of attendance and yet the experiences we had, the discussions and the rituals were wonderful and profound. Joyful energy was given to Lothloriën as a gift.

If I were to look at one single event which represents this past year, it would be our annual Hallows food drive. Last year we collected more food than ever, several times more. This year we had a smaller base of active donors and yet the results were even greater than last year. The 'giving' was not something which reflected just those who were able to donate, but the donations were all with the pride and knowledge that our Rowan Tree would be well-represented. The results were simply amazing.

The work ethics of Lothloriën include the lessons of the Six of Pentacles as well. In order to sustain life and have enough 'pentacles' flowing into one's life, being generous is what makes that Magick work. We donated several dozen books from our library, books from the religious studies on Christianity which were not being used, duplicate copies easily spared of books on Wicca (our library gains such a profusion of 'Wicca 101' books sent by publishers for review) to help Stafford Creek Correctional Center establish its religious center library and we gave books to the Monroe Correctional Center (at SOU) to add to their library.

Although "receiving" remained a necessary topic for discussion as we faced tight budgets within the Board of Directors, The Rowan Tree Church also enjoyed the reality of it being "better to five."

And now it is true, the sap and life forces within our 'tree' do seem to be rising. Thanks to the enthusiasm of Wendy, who originally volunteered to work on fundraising and found herself pressed into service as the Vice President of the Board and through my expanded work, now as the Wiccan Chaplain and Sponsor for the above two institutions, we've had some Members return because they again wish to have the Rowan Tree in their lives. With Wendy's enthusiasm as incentive, our presence on WitchVox has been significantly expanded. And, just after this year's Annual Report goes to press, there will be two "meet and greets" held at The Hermit's Grove to make The Rowan Tree Church better known in the Puget Sound area.

This coming year join me. It will be appropriate that we visualize our Rowan Tree "bringing forth leaves."

Humbly,
Rev. Paul

The General Manager

As General Manager I oversee the paying of bills, the work flow, purchasing, and budget management (among other duties). It is the General Manager's responsibility to oversee balance of the various budgets. Sometimes this requires minor 'Peter and Paul balancing,' - you know, paying some of the postage for one budget which is temporarily robust from another which is temporarily anemic. Over time it averages out. The General Manager also oversees the maintenance of the facilities, from working with The Hermit's Grove regarding the management of the acre of land to the rental of the storage locker. And the General Manager ensures that services are made available for Church operations, from electricity to telephone, from the portable toilet to the web site provider.

Because the General manager is also, by default (and it is at present practical for the Rowan Tree as well) the bookkeeper, he prepares the receipts and reports for a quarterly audit but does not participate in the actual audit process. There is one more aspect of the General Manager's job description, one which is mine only because of my many hats (Founder, President of the Board, etc.). In order to keep the bills paid, I am also the juggler!

But trust me, this is a work of love.

Rev. Paul

It's time for the annual overview of an organization whose Members are dependent upon paper and stamps!

Total Postage and Shipping = \$1,427.63

Rowan Tree General Budget	\$411.89
postal box rent	19.00
<i>The Rowan Tree News</i>	249.70
promotional, informational and business	116.42
subtotal	\$797.01
last year	783.24
The Mystery School	\$340.49
Subscription Library	91.20
Periodical Library	18.84
cassette tape mailing	12.50
<i>The Unicorn</i>	159.34
<i>The Littlest Unicorn</i>	8.25
total of all	\$1,427.63
last year	\$1,406.93
change	+ \$20.70

Total Printing = \$1,089.36

<i>The Rowan Tree News</i>	\$352.19
catalogs, flyers, etc.	91.26
last year's Annual Report	34.13
<i>The Unicorn</i>	216.25
Periodical Library	125.82
The Mystery School	108.91
Subscription Library	160.80
total	\$1,089.36
last year	1,181.73
change	- \$92.37

Juggling? The postage for the Subscription Library and the printing charged to the Periodical Library and Subscription Library helped to offset shortfalls we had during some months during which Member donations could not cover expenses.

Financial Statements 2004-2005

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; at the end of the fiscal year on October 31, 2005 ce; and the change:

operating budgets

RT General Budget	96.95	93.96	- \$ 2.99
The Mystery School	120.02	243.08	+ 123.06
Subscription Library	134.86	76.31	- 58.55
Periodical Library	185.44	57.41	- 128.03
<i>The Unicorn</i>	106.84	146.94	+ 40.10
<i>The Littlest Unicorn</i>	188.22	.00	- 188.22
Annual Retreat	294.26	239.41	- 54.85
computer expenses	12.27	17.00	+ 4.73
tape duplicating services	117.00	110.39	- 6.61
subtotals	1,255.86	984.50	- 271.36

In addition we have money in our checking account which is part of a 'fund,' not available for general expenses.

sales tax money for State	42.58	28.56	- 14.02
food drive	.00	15.00	+ 15.00
t-shirt replacement	189.20	199.20	+ 10.00
Retreat Scholarship fund	939.72	939.72	.00
Members' cabin savings	460.00	1350.00	+ 890.00
Land Fund	589.99	673.86	+ 83.87
property tax fund	470.98	495.00	+ 24.02
liability insurance fund	812.77	835.00	+ 22.23
royalties due	1.00	6.00	+ 5.00
subtotals	3,506.24	4,542.34	+ 1036.10
net balance	4,762.10	5,526.84	+ 764.74

Overall, we were able to adjust to the changes in the economy. You will note, however, that most operating budgets lost money. If it were not for the transfer of the remaining monies from *The Littlest Unicorn* to *The Unicorn*, the story would look worse.

You will also note that sales which would bring in sales tax took a sharp decrease. Sales of books which are used to raise funds for The Rowan Tree Church reflected the downturn in the economy.

Your Help

Member Donations for the year:	\$2,897.40
Member donations last year:	3,054.84
change	- 157.44

Last year's Annual Report showed a decrease in Member donations of \$822.01. In two years we have had to make adjustments to a nearly one thousand dollar decrease in our income. This represents a 25% reduction of our primary income from two years ago. This is pretty tight going... But we managed and we did continue to keep *The Rowan Tree News* published and mailed.

Dedicated Donations: \$1,724.59

These figures represent money donated by members *in addition* to their regular donations with their monthly forms. These monies have been designated for specific uses and cannot be diverted by the General Manager for paying other bills, the exception being money specifically given to the General Budget (including \$130.71 donated by Wendy B. for plumbing repair expense).

food drive	15.00
computer expenses	185.41
Subscription library	21.97
<i>The Unicorn</i> (from TLU)	123.31
tape expense	2.00
Retreat Scholarship	5.00
land fund	5.12
property tax	1,425.00
liability insurance	384.86
total	\$2,138.70
last year	1,724.59
change	+ \$ 414.11

Communication from your Board of Directors

President, Board of Directors

This was a quiet year for your Board of Directors. We made adjustments as volunteers came and went and discussed and contemplated keeping the Church functional. We had a couple of 'Observers,' one of whom is now an elected Voting Director.

Most of our work this year was 'maintenance work.' We discussed and made minor changes to the descriptions included in the web site and catalog. It was decided to pay Diane Tice an annual honorarium of \$25.00. She provides us with a mailing address in Minnesota and is the 'agent,' required by the State of Minnesota which is where our original incorporation is filed. Unless we do considerable legal work, this is the standard procedure when an organization no longer is situated in the original State of its incorporation. Were we to pay a law firm for the role of 'agent,' we would incur a large bill.

The "Procedures and Policies" regarding clergy was formally approved. This was required by the IRS. The Board spent considerable discussion creating the policies and then sat with them for a substantial period of time to determine if they would be suitable and appropriate. These policies, along with other descriptive policy information, are available to Church Members and offered through *The Rowan Tree News* (check the classifieds).

Several amendments were passed by the Membership. It was decided that we have the right to ask formerly incarcerated individuals to participate in the Transitional Membership Program and, should a person does not wish to enrol in that program, s/he has the right to appeal. Two other amendments tidied up the wording of established by-laws.

This year it was necessary to allow *The Littlest Unicorn* to go to rest. The last two editors, Jim Saigle and, before him, Noël Knower, were wonderful but, just as *The Unicorn* is dealing with a slow downturn in subscribers, TLU had even more difficulty. It never did have a large subscriber base.

This has been a quiet year. Our Annual Retreat was attended but modestly. And yet we had a joyful and well-attended Lammas Eve Ritual at it's close. This allowed us to go to the bank with Dharma, who is now authorized to sign checks, something which could be useful were there unforeseen circumstances.

And, as you would expect, the issue of fund-raising and of stimulating enough revenue to remain functional was part of our discussion. We now have a fund-raising Coordinator. (Thanks, Wendy!)

Just as many in the United States are earning less than they were two and three years ago, the income for The Rowan Tree Church has also dropped. The hardest challenges for us are these budgetary issues. Although our membership numbers remain roughly the same, we finished the 2003-04 year over \$800.00 short of what is needed and this year does not seem much improved.

Along with this we had a Wiccan in California who had expressed an interest in joining The Rowan Tree Church send a number of checks with various orders for books and subscriptions (two went to The Hermit's Grove as well). We do not hold orders until the checks clear, having never had a problem like this in the past. Every check bounced. That was not a good month. It is felt that we do not need a change in policy. This is the first time in nearly 30 years someone has done something like this.

I have no specific goals for the coming year, other than to do my best so that everything continues running smoothly. With blessings, Rev. Paul

Vice President, Board of Directors

As a new member on the board of directors and witch in charge of fundraising I will outline my goals for the next year. First of all what I think is most important is that we increase our member base, this will bring in more monthly memberships and sales of Rowan Tree items and increase our local community which at the moment is quite small.

I am personally concerned for the future of Lothlorien and feel this first issue also relates to our health and well being now and in the future. Here are my ideas for taking action:

1. Internet presence

a. Increase exposure on Wiccan sites, including member bios, Rowan Tree publications, banner ads on web sites allowing free banner ads.

b. Rowan Tree e-commerce site. With an e-commerce site we can sell our publications, special crafts made by members like our beautiful necklace that is up for auction. Herbs and incense, teas, bath items and possibly services like binding a copy of "A Wiccan Bardo" in leather or animal friendly vinyl. This site would include a shopping cart and one could pay with a credit card linked to our VISA,MC account and possible have a pay pal account and most surely a printable form you can send a check in with. We can also have affiliate links and bring in income this way. I am anticipating with my current schedule to have this up and running by the spring, given I do not have a very sick dog again. Ah Life!!

2. Local magazine exposure

a. A few local magazines have free event listings (more on Event ideas later) Wisdom mag is one. Maybe a few paid ads depending on cost in local mags

like The Stranger, The Weekly, Natural Choice Directory (which has 3 church listings currently and none Wiccan), Widdershins (though not very responsive, I'll have to be tenacious about this one) on Widdershins listing we could have a hyperlink to our site which we currently do not. I have many ideas in this area as far as what to advertise but for now our events are most important.

3. Events

a. Rev. Paul and I have sent out invites for what we call a Merry meet and greet. We will be having 2 in November. This is a grass roots effort. We have written invites and personally invited people allowing invites on their personal listing on Witchvox, so far its looking pretty good. The invite has also been place on a few events lists. In the future we will submit it to magazines like those listed above but for November the cutoff has come and gone.

b. Our Local community participation in these events is essential to the success of these events

c. A local Wiccan forum where members of other Wiccan groups come together to discuss how we as a community can help with educating the public about Wicca, contributing to disasters and contributing to our local communities. One of our members volunteered at Habitat for Humanity along side members of other faiths. (this really is just an idea I would like to pursue further when we have a larger local member base)

What I would like to see us do is increase our exposure in all these areas. We have something fantastic for people who are searching as we all were at one time. It would be great to have more events for new and current members and they all do not have to be on the RT premises. I will be expanding my goals in this area over the year. One last thought is...we had a food drive this October, this might be a story the local news would like to cover. "A small Wiccan group doing good for our community". This is increased exposure. "Local gardens bloom in Spring". These are just ideas and I have many. Some may be out of bounds and some may sound ho hum, the main thing is to get the ideas generating, create more exposure, increase membership, gather funds to keep the church healthy, stick to our highest ideals and have a great time doing it.

Blessings, Wendy

Vice President, (outgoing)

The Board of Directors looks after the planning for The Rowan Tree Church and helps to shape its policies and its future. We have a dedicated and skilled group of volunteers on the Board. The administrative structure of the Church is well designed to be able to serve the Membership at its present size and to work equally well if our numbers were to increase by ten and even by one hundred times the present size. Tell your pagan friends about this wonderful and well kept secret!!!

Jim Saigle

Treasurer, Board of Directors

I have once again had the privilege of serving on the Board of Directors and in the capacity of Treasurer. In my role as Treasurer, I assist in performing quarterly audits of

the Church finances, as well as working on the Board of Directors to shape Church policies and address issues which arise.

This past year has seen The Rowan Tree continue to face financial challenges from the day to day and one time expenses. The Church operates very frugally, due largely to the generosity of Rev. Paul and Gerry. However, even apart for the routine operating costs, there are expenses, such as computer repairs, updates to the web site and insurance, for which the Church must rely upon its members. We have very little in the way of reserve funds if a large unexpected expenditure were incurred. And the cost of our liability insurance, which the Church needs to protect itself in the event someone were injured on Church property, goes up each year.

Because we are a small group, every donation makes a difference. I encourage each of you to recommit yourself to the support of The Rowan Tree Church in the coming year. Even if you think that your small donation won't help, please send it anyway, because it will help. I like to think that all members take responsibility for helping to ensure the Church has a bright and promising future. You can help.

Blessed be, Donna Lewin

Secretary, Board of Directors

Timely greetings to each of you in the Rowan Tree family! During the past year, I have again had the privilege to serve you as Secretary to the Board of Directors. I have been honored to hold this position for the past eight years. I thank each of you for assisting me in fulfilling my duties. Your monthly forms, donations, cards, and letters are very important to me. I hope that my responses are as meaningful to each of you.

The information you share about yourselves is truly one of the most important parts of the RTNews. Your Child of Light requests for energy allow the Galadhrim to offer their services. Once again, each of you has had the opportunity to vote for the Board of Directors for the coming year. More than 40% of you did fill out your ballot and return it. I am gratified by this response.

For the past year, my goal was to have a response time to your correspondence of one week maximum. During the Winter, wet part 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 since the growing season started and the garden working of the summer and of August/September became very intense. I will again aim for a same month response this year and hope you will bear with me as I work into the cooler Autumn months and catch up. I feel this is more realistic with the lifestyle of the Grove.

Starting in January, 2004, I again began doing some "bookkeeping" to encourage you to save for the Yellowstone Retreat in 2006! This year (2005), I added another "layer" of savings possibilities, trying to encourage you to save toward this goal. I hope that several of you have been able to put this money aside so that you will be able to join us at this magnificent natural wonderland to honor the Lord and Lady. Also, I have continued to post the number of monthly forms received

each month compared to the number of Member households. I am enjoying celebrating Membership anniversaries each month. And I hope you are enjoying knowing how many of us are located in different parts of the continent.

At the Annual Retreat held at the Grove this year, I was given the proxy of Jim Saigle for the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors. Much of the formal Board meeting dealt with storage of the Church's possessions and records at the Grove and in a rental storage unit. We were also able to add one of two desired signatures to the Church's bank accounts.

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.

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

Scribe, Board of Directors

I came into this year as an Observer for the BOD. I have very much enjoyed getting to know how the Board operates and learning how we operate. A few months ago I took the place of the former Scribe. Over the past few months I learning the role of Scribe, taking notes at the annual retreat, writing the Notes from the Board for the RTN, and now helping with audit. I have greatly enjoyed working with the other members of the Board on many issues and enjoyed seeing a new and much needed position of Fundraising Coordinator come into being.

All the Blessings in my heart, Dharma

Board Advisor

Although Narcolepsy and the accompanied feeling of exhaustion has kept me from more than a few notes to the Board this past year, accomplishments at home should allow me to become more active this new year. I am looking forward to bringing some organization to my life as I establish a work area and finish unpacking. Judy and I are also looking forward to joining other Members at the next Annual Retreat in Yellowstone.

Harvest Blessings, Lizard

The Unicorn



The Unicorn: Editor

My work with *The Unicorn* is difficult for me to grasp or, in more contemporary terms, to wrap my mind around (which leaves me with a dangling participle)... But *The Unicorn* will be starting its twenty-ninth year with the Hallows issue.

This past year we've been blessed with the creative contributions of Church Members James Henley and Beverly Seymour, both of whom have wonderful skills with words. Beginning with Lammas of 2004 we've been featuring a series of excellent unicorn drawings on the first page, thanks to Michael Brandon, one of our POP participants. Michael also did the illustration for the cover of one of my new books, *Gem and Mineral Lore*. And,

showing that *The Unicorn's* editor has an aging mind, I have, at times, spelled his last name with an extra 't' thrown in and I do apologize.

The best news of this past year was Dharma, who has been doing well in her role as Poetry Editor. What a joy for me, having her assistance.

As I mentioned earlier, subscriptions have slipped a bit but we're managing. It is a challenge to find advertising venues. In those 'olden days,' truly the golden age of Wiccan and neopagan publishing, there were literally dozens of newsletters and journals. Most of us provided mutual ad space, listings and promotion. All of this did well but then, along came the immediate gratification of the internet with its no-cost ability to provide information.

As the Ritual for Fall arrived, *The Unicorn* was in the red. I published the Autumn issue with scarcely any money in *The Unicorn's* budget. The previous year *The Unicorn* had done well but its surplus funds were diverted to cover part of the Membership donation shortfall for The Rowan Tree Church's general budget. Oh, if we but had that money back now! Through the generosity of the Board of Directors, the remaining money in *The Littlest Unicorn's* budget has been transferred to *The Unicorn* to help it keep going.

The goals for the coming year include the possible conclusion of *The Hatchling*. When completed, if the money can be raised, *The Hatchling* will be published in a paper-bound edition with any money raised going to help *The Unicorn*. Do I know how the story ends? Most definitely.

In the meantime we have been appealing to our subscribers and we appeal to all of you. Please consider giving gift subscriptions of *The Unicorn* to those you know. At \$13.00 a year (which just covers the cost), what better gift could you find.

With blessings from Andrius as well, Rev. Paul, editor

The Unicorn: Poetry Editor

I am also the Poetry Editor for *The Unicorn*. I cannot begin to tell you what a joy that has been for me. Not only do I have the privilege of seeing all the beautiful poetry sent in by our wonderful artists, I have also had the opportunity to get to know many of them through letters and cards sent back and forth during the course of our work together. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to do this work. Dharma

beginning of year	\$106.84
from TLU's end	123.31
RT Member subscriptions	26.00
nonMember subscriptions	245.05
sample packets	3.60
<i>Unicorns of Lothlorien</i>	33.40
fund-raising book sales	19.51
sample copies	5.00
<u>prisoner donations</u>	<u>49.82</u>
total income	\$ 612.53
postage	\$ 159.34
printing	216.25
general office expense	26.00
telephone	10.00

electrical utility	8.00
recycling pickup	4.00
Public Storage	23.00
<u>bounced check</u>	<u>19.00</u>
total expenses	465.59
balance	\$ 146.94

The Littlest Unicorn

Editor, *The Littlest Unicorn*

The Littlest Unicorn Newsletter was put to bed for a rest after the most recent editorship of a year-and-a-half. Despite new contributors and new features, and some *color printing*, the interest was dwindling and the resources dedicated to its production were out of balance with the audience numbers. Perhaps the Newsletter will return after a well-earned rest.

Jim Saigle

beginning of year	\$ 188.22
nonmember subscriptions	19.50
sample packet income	3.00
sample issues	2.00
<u>total income</u>	<u>\$ 212.72</u>
postage	\$ 8.25
Public Storage	22.00
bounced check	15.75
budget closed (to <i>The Unicorn</i>)	123.31
<u>budget closed (to computer fund)</u>	<u>43.41</u>
total expense	\$ 212.72
balance	\$.00

The Rowan Tree News

The Rowan Tree News editor

There is not a great deal to share with you regarding *The Rowan Tree News*. With the tremendous assistance of your Membership Secretary who types up the best part of each issue - excerpts from your letters - we continue to produce our membership newsletter each month.

A number of times this past year a change in printing schedules required manually printing and hand-collating the entire issue on the laser printer The Hermit's Grove has here in my office. That's way too much work for this old printer. We now get all of our printing done in Redmond which makes it far easier as gerry's job means that we drive right past the printer five days a week.

So long as membership donations sustain Church expenses, *The Rowan Tree News* will continue to weave the fabric of community which keeps us all aware of each other. Given your contributions of letters and of donations, we'll keep publishing away!

Typingly yours, Rev. Paul

The Mystery School

The work within The Mystery School of Lothlorien remains stable and secure. The process of gathering much of what has previously been Oral Tradition for nearly thirty years and putting it into text secured within the printed study guide material continues. Not long ago this history-gathering



moved into The Second Ordeal, representing the second half of the work leading to the first Initiation. Much of this material is in the collection of recorded New Moon tapes which are aging and much of it is in the founder's memory, which is also aging.

Our primary rites of passage this past year included a Yoking Ritual and a Ritual of Dedication. Gerry Beyerl has joined Jim Saigle, whose Yoking Ritual was held at Yellowstone National Park in 2003 ce.. Both have completed the main portions of their many years' work leading toward Ordination and reached their respective goals, able to emerge from within the veil of The Mystery School and share their 'yoking' to The Tradition of Lothloriën with all of you.

We have also welcomed back, warmly, two former students, a returned Novice Supplicant and a returned Novice. Two additional Novices, on Leaves of Absence, are nearing the time when they will return.

At this point the primary work of The Mystery School continues to be the continuing education within the New Moon Rituals, which includes passing on the Oral Tradition and sharing the ongoing evolution of the Book of Shadows.

My personal work includes the New Moon rituals and extending encouragement to those who are working within The Mystery School as they continue the ever-challenging work of juggling Pathworking with the busy activities of life, of employment and family. My role has grown, in recent years, more quiet. *A Wiccan Bardo, Revisited* was my last 'large' and public statement on behalf of The Mystery School.

The Mystery School and The Tradition of Lothloriën need those who will increasingly be heard. I feel, now, that I am more of the Earth. I have grown to prefer my time spent with back bent, knees in the soil. I continue to work toward the annual Tarot Ritual, a work which is now nearly year-round preparation. We are a mystical Tradition.

We currently have two Novices working on The Second Ordeal. Both have the potential of achieving Initiation (First Degree) in the coming year but, then, The Tradition of Lothloriën is a life-path and there is never reason to rush. Our work remains good.

Humbly, Rev. Paul

beginning of year	\$ 170.02
tuition	1,039.50
Colouring Book of Numbers	8.50
The Ritual of Lothloriën	25.60
The Child of Light	5.00
Sabbat Journeys	52.80
The Wheel of the Year	9.00
Lesser Banishing Pentagram	10.00
Baby Blessing Ritual	5.00
prisoner donation	10.00
Lothloriën 101 tapes	52.00
total income	\$ 1,387.42

postage	\$ 313.49
Board of Directors' postage	10.00
UPS shipping	17.00
web site expense	15.00
printing	108.91
RT catalog printing	13.01

general office expense	134.23
book purchases for library	40.00
charitable donation	2.00
ritual materials expense	128.81
telephone	196.37
electrical utility	25.16
paper recycling & waste pickup	35.33
propane (heating)	30.00
storage locker	35.00
portable toilet expense	33.04
property tax	20.00
total expense	\$ 1,144.34
balance	+ \$ 243.08

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 Mothervalley. 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	1,341.76
total in Church checkbook end of year	673.86
total land fund money	\$ 9,567.29
increase from last year	116.14

Subscription Library

What does one say about shelves and shelves of books? We Beyerls have the honor of living, literally, *within* the Church's library. Our small cottage is wall-to-wall books in the front room and much of the hallway.

The Rowan Tree's library evolved out of my personal library over 25 years ago. Since that time I've managed to dispose of most of my personal books which did not become part of The Rowan Tree Church and have, as the editor of *The Unicorn*, developed resources which add to the library. Each year we get dozens of newly-released books from publishers such as New Page, Llewellyn, Red Wheel and many others to review for *The Unicorn* and *The Hermit's Lantern*. Many of these books - the good ones, anyway - end up in our library.

This summer we received three very large cartons of books. A couple who have previously visited the gardens and who attended one of the general Wicca workshop series are preparing to move to New Zealand and we have been their designated recipient. About 25% of the books proved to be valued additions to the library. A large number of the astrology books not suitable for Stafford Creek were offered to a (now former) Rowan Tree Member who has a strong interest in astrology.

The remaining books were given to Stafford Creek Correctional. The religious department there is intent upon establishing a library. We further donated some duplicate copies which were not needed as much as the space they

occupied, and a few copies of Wicca-related books which were redundant and had no real value.

This past year more progress was made in developing a detailed description of the library. The process of generating synopses of several thousand books is a slow one. We've had some great volunteers in the past but, at present, we could use one or two.

It was quite pleasing to see two new titles appear on the shelves: *Gem and Mineral Lore* and *The Symbols and Magick of Tarot*.

My goals for the coming year include maintaining the library and continuing to cultivate what may well be one of the best reference libraries for Wiccan studies to be found. I'm also working on cleaning the library and am well more than half done. This requires removing the books from a shelf, vacuuming each book, washing the shelf, and replacing the books. My goal for the coming year includes finishing the janitorial duties.

With bookish blessings,
Rev. Paul

book inventory

Botany & Gardening	83 titles, 96 books [gained 2]
Children's Books	70 titles, 75 books [gained 1]
Counselling and Wellness	73 titles, 77 books [n/c]
Death & Dying	23 titles, 25 books [n/c]
Fiction & Novels	331 titles, 411 books [gained 6]
Health & Wellness	119 titles, 129 books [gained 6]
Herbals	240 titles, 268 books [gained 7]
Miscellaneous	19 titles, 19 books [gained 1]
Occult Sciences: Astrology	133 titles, 152 books [gained 18]
Occult Sciences: Color	10 titles, 12 books [gained 1]
Occult Sciences: Divination & Misc. Arts	42 titles, 45 books [gained 1]
Occult Sciences: Dreams	13 titles, 15 books [gained 2]
Occult Sciences: Gems, Minerals and Metals	48 titles, 57 books [gained 4]
Occult Sciences: I Ching	12 titles, 14 books [gained 1]
Occult Sciences: Miscellaneous Disciplines	67 titles, 72 books [2 less]
Occult Sciences: Numerology	16 titles, 17 books [gained 2]
Occult Sciences: Occult and Spiritual Herbalism & Healing	49 titles, 60 books [gained 2]
Occult Sciences: Spell Magick	36 titles, 40 books [n/c]
Occult Sciences: Tarot	59 titles, 70 books [gained 3]
Philosophy and World View	88 titles, 98 books [gained 2]
Poetry & Literature	544 titles, 61 books [n/c]
World Religions and Mythologies	346 titles, 408 books [23 less]
Sexuality, Sexual Issues and Sexual Magick	64 titles, 73 books [gained 3]
Spiritual Awakening	112 books
Unicorns	19 titles, 26 books [gained 1]
Western Occult and Magickal Traditions	207 titles, 255 books [gained 1]
Wicca, Neopaganism and Witchcraft	2
	94 titles, 399 books [gained 8]
beginning balance	\$ 134.86
calendars	85.90
portion of MS tuition	577.50
<i>The Master Book of Herbalism</i>	17.45
sales of <i>Holy Books</i>	52.90
sales of <i>A Wiccan Bardo</i>	137.45

prisoner donation	5.80
book sales through Hermit's Grove	275.70
total income	\$ 1287.56

postage	\$ 79.79
BOD postage	11.41
web site fees	60.00
misc.	160.80
office expense	68.60
book purchases	680.15
ritual expenses	65.60
telephone	13.93
electricity	20.00
disposal service	8.00
public storage	27.00
portable toilet	10.54
bounced check	37.95
property tax	27.48
total expense	\$ 1,211.25
balance	76.31

Tape Library

I was, at one time, making steady progress working through many of the old tapes and transcribing them so that the information they contained, much of it the important and irreplaceable Oral Tradition, would not be lost. This is a slow process and with even more demands upon my time this year, I've not had as many hours for this work.

It moves forward at a snail's pace.
With blessings, Rev. Paul

tape library	
beginning balance	\$ 185.44
Member donations & purchase	144.72
sample package	3.60
total income	\$ 333.76

postage	\$ 18.84
web site expense	15.00
printing	51.56
misc.	74.26
ritual expenses	36.69
storage locker	45.00
portable toilet	35.00
total expense	276.35
balance	57.41

Periodical Archives

Nearly 30 years of periodical archives of publications (published by other organizations) are currently stored in Moline, Illinois thanks to the goodness of Tricia Youngquist. Many are too fragile with age for much beyond continued storage and none would survive being in circulation. Every so often someone has a goal of beginning to preserve this priceless resource in a digital format (in earlier times microfilm was contemplated). These materials are the true history of modern Wicca!

opening balance	\$ 185.44
5% allocation of Member donations	144.72
sample packet allocation	3.60
total income	\$ 333.76

postage	\$ 18.84
web site	15.00
misc.	74.26
ritual supplies	36.69
Public Storage	45.00
portable toilet	35.00
<u>printing</u>	<u>51.56</u>
expenses	\$ 276.35
balance	57.41

Prisoner Outreach Program

The Prisoner Outreach Program is one of the more dynamic ministries of Lothloriën. Although many Wiccans (indeed, most citizens of most countries) are uncomfortable at the thought of interaction with offenders, there is considerable need to offer support for Wiccans who are incarcerated.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice in their report dated June 20th, 2004 (from the U.S. Department of Justice's web site), on that date there were "2,131,180 prisoners ... held in Federal or State prisons or in local jails - an increase of 2.3% from midyear 2003." I have read that the United States has the highest percentage of its citizens incarcerated of any developed country. According to the U.S. Department of Justice's statistics, over 50% of offenders are in for nonviolent crimes (drug/property related, etc.). Those of Christian faiths, those who follow Islam, Judaism or even Native American beliefs generally have religious programs. Those who are Wiccan do only on occasion, to which many in our Prisoner Outreach Program will attest.

This past year, surprisingly, the Bush Administration filed briefs in support of a case before the Supreme Court. Several offenders, among them an alternative Christian, a Wiccan and, I believe, even a Satanist, were suing for their religious rights. The administration maintained that the states (Ohio and Texas, although my memory may not be accurate) could not receive federal funding unless they observed the federal mandate that the prisoners of all religions, including non-Christian, have their rights recognized.

Over the past six years, now, the Prisoner Outreach Program has accepted approximately 135 offenders, about 95% men and 5% women. Of these several have successfully completed the Prisoner Outreach Program's studies and are now Members of The Rowan Tree Church. Most of these are released and are self-supporting, continuing to learn how to survive in a world which is not particularly welcoming of former prisoners.

We continue to maintain an average enrollment of roughly 25 individuals. If it were not for the offenders providing stamps and those who make additional donations, we could not sustain this program. Although the prisoners' contribution does not fully cover the costs of the program the POP is able to continue.

This past year my personal ministry was expanded. I am now the Wiccan Chaplain at Stafford Creek Correctional Center in Aberdeen, and the Wiccan Sponsor at the SOU unit of Monroe Correctional Complex. My personal challenge is that the participants in the POP have so much need and a desire for far more of my time (through correspondence) than I am able to manage. This is very fulfilling and

rewarding work. Now, if we could only get a couple of Rowan Tree Members to volunteer some correspondence time. This could be done protecting your privacy (mail forwarding via the Rowan Tree) and could be as little as one letter a month. Any takers?

In service, Rev. Paul

The Hermit's Grove

Work within the organization known as The Hermit's Grove remains steady. The gardens are always the most visible aspect of the Grove's work to Church Members, even in print (the Garden Journal in *The Hermit's Lantern* and in the web site), and great progress was made with them. The major project this year was the purchasing of galvanized sign holders and making of laminated signs to identify individual species, including relevant botanical information with a few notes we need as gardeners. The cost for this was covered by joint funding from The Hermit's Grove and the Beyerls. The new marking system has been immensely popular with those visiting the gardens.

This spring The Hermit's Grove published two more books. These were the culmination of over ten years' of articles which appeared in the monthly journal, *The Hermit's Lantern*. They are important as areas of studies of interest to many who study in The Mystery School as well as Wiccans in general. *Gem and Mineral Lore* and *The Symbols and Magick of Tarot* were both printed in Michigan by Fidler Doubleday. Neither has had any work done to promote them and even the 'reviews by readers' on the Amazon.com site remain nearly nonexistent.

Obviously, as I often tell people, I'm far too good at being non-profit.

Tiny steps of progress were made toward The Hermit's Grove's legal status. We added Donna Lewin to the board of Directors and are hoping to begin setting up bylaws, although this process might be considered stalled 'in committee' and no longer moving forward.

What has moved forward was the work done to create a detailed map of the gardens. There is now a virtual tour of the gardens on www.thehermitsgrove.org. This includes text, about two dozen photos, and a color-coded map.

A major thank-you is due Salt (Nathan Salter), a Rowan Tree Member who participated this summer as our Garden Intern. Salt created a wonderful black-and-white map which required several pages to cover the entire length of the gardens. What was so challenging for myself and others was a simple task, indicative of Salt's artistic skills. I scanned these pages and then made a color-coded copy which, with the photos and text, was sent to the web designer in San Francisco. The map on the web site is wonderful. This winter I hope to complete an edition which will be printed.

The Master Herbalist Program continues. Enrollment is up with the largest number of students to date. We currently have two graduates, three second-quarter students (one nearly third-quarter!) and a dozen first-quarter students.

The Hermit's Lantern continues to be published in a timely fashion with a steady level of subscriptions. The web site also has a link, now, for publishing which includes the introductions to the five books The Hermit's Grove has in print:

Painless Astrology
The Holy Books of the Devas
A Wiccan Bardo, Revisited
Gem and Mineral Lore
The Symbols and Magick of Tarot

Herb sales have been good, keeping our stock turned over. For an organization which offers no salaries and is dependent upon the labors of two old gardeners doing everything at cost, The Hermit's Grove is healthy.

Herbally yours, Rev. Paul

Lay-Ministers and Minstrels

This year we were blessed to have another Member who has completed all the work leading up to the adjudication questions and is very close to certification as a Lay-Minister. 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

The Galadhrim Society of Unicorns

felaróf The Galadhrim Society of Unicorns is a herd of (currently) 9 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 effective in assisting or ministering to the Membership.

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.

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. This year we have also worked to send energy to several global groups, including the tsunami victims, the peoples of Egypt and London who have suffered from terrorism, and the people who have suffered from Hurricane Katrina.

We had a very good time working the ritual during the

Annual Retreat at the Hermit's Grove this year; each morning we gathered with other Rowan Tree Members and worked two of the blessings for those who had requested. It was a wonderful way to start each day. We also had a rededication of a Unicorn who had taken a "sabbatical" and was ready to come back to the herd.

Each Unicorn has been asked to submit 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.

Amalthea I am the "town crier" for the Child of Light, and when needed, I send info that needs to be shared amongst the Unicorns.

Odonata I can't believe it's already time for another annual report. In the past year, I have tried to stay in touch with the rest of the herd and have added names to the COL list. I hope to resume my sewing services sometime next year.

Carling This year in the Galadhrim, my primary service to the Rowan Tree has been through my human's participation on the Board of Directors. She has served as Treasurer this year, participating in the quarterly audits of the Church's financial records. And, as a voting director, she has offered her voice in the decisions the Board has made on behalf of the Church. This year, the Church is focusing on fundraising. As a fundraiser for the Rowan Tree, my human and I brought back water which was blessed at Stonehenge as it was poured over the altar stone on the Full Moon. She and I will continue to add our ideas for projects which will help to improve the financial stability of our Rowan Tree church. Blessings to you all.

Abakar My services to the Galadhrim this last year have been to make necklaces for the Church and to help others, Wiccan and non-Wiccan, to better understand life and life within Wicca.

I have made a few necklaces and hope to continue to do that service for the Church. I will strive to do as much as possible to help the Rowan Tree church survive.

Keerdan My activity has been to participate in the Child of Light at each first quarter of the Moon. We make energy available to those who wish to access it for healing purposes. Have you tried this? What were your experiences & results? Autumn Blessings.

Children's Program

I am in the process of starting a Children's Program for the Rowan Tree's local group to take place for the children during the adults Sunday Circle. I look forward to teaching our young ones about Wicca, the Wheel of the Year, ethics and more. It is my hope that this program will open doors to many of the families in the area. It is often hard to find family friendly Wiccan/Pagan groups and I believe this program will do a great deal of good.

Dharma