Blessing Rite: The Three Cauldrons Sassafras Grove, ADF, Pittsburgh PA Spring Tides, Allison Park, PA November 5th, 2009 7:00 PM

TIER ONE: BEGINNING THE RITE & ESTABLISHING THE GROUPMIND

Consecration of Time

Musical Signal: Vicki sounds the horn and Janet plays the drum.

Opening Prayer: Vicki

Blessed Ones, wise and strong, we honor you with verse and song!

Consecration of Space and of Participants

Processional: "We Approach the Sacred Grove"

We approach the Sacred Grove with hearts and minds and flesh and bone. Join us now in ways of old We have come home. (Sean Miller)

Purifications (Land, Sea, Sky):

Participants bless selves with stone, water, and incense during the processional.

Vicki: Who comes forth to acknowledge the Outsiders?

Acknowledgment of the Outsiders: Vicki_

(Sacrificer offers popcorn and cider at the doorway during the invocation)

We make this offering to those who may misjudge us, fear us, or oppose our ways; to the Outsiders, who out of distrust or spite, may seek to impede our work this night.

This space is ours and that space is yours; the boundary line we set at the doors.

For this is the bargain we acknowledge with you; this is the pact which we both strike anew.

These are the terms: to each our own.

In return for this offering, leave us alone.

Vicki: Who comes forth to call our Bardic Patron?

<u>Invocation to Bardic Patron - Taliesin:</u> Maria

(During invocation, **Sacrificer** offers three drops of honey)

Taliesin, Great Poet, we call to Thee, you who have mastered your cauldrons three. By first gaining knowledge, then through transformation, you traversed the path of initiation.

You faced your own death; you were Gwion Bach no more. As the poet Taliesin you were reborn.

Though mortal like us, this feat you achieved, thus we seek your assistance in our own journeys.

Taliesin, Chief of Bards, we invoke your name! Wake within us the burning flame of inspiration, of wisdom, of poetry and song! May our words be sweet; may our voices be strong!

Taliesin, we call to Thee! (All repeat)

(Maria lights a candle for Taliesin.)

Vicki: Who comes forth to honor the Earth Mother?

Honoring the Earth Mother: Janet

(During prayer, **Sacrificer** offers oats and rice.)

Earth Mother, we call to Thee, goddess of strength, sustenance and plenty! You created the world out of the spiraling void. You bring all to fruition, and all you destroy.

As we witness the changing seasons of the Earth, you teach to us the cycle of death and rebirth. You watched over our ancestors and you provide for us still. You are found all around us in tree, stone, and hill.

Earth Mother, we are eternally in your care. Accept our offering and hear this prayer. We give to you reverence, praise and acclaim, and all that we do, we do in your name.

Earth Mother, we honor you! (All repeat. Touch or kiss the ground.)

Song: "Earth Mother, We Honor Your Body"

Earth Mother, we honor your body
Earth Mother, we honor your bones
Earth Mother, we sing to your spirit
Earth Mother, we sing to your stones. (Author Unknown)

Vicki: Who comes forth to ground and center us?

Ground, Center, and Establish Group Mind: Emerald

Two Powers Meditation.

Declaration of Intention & Historical Precedent: Vicki

What then is the root of poetry and every other wisdom?

Not hard; three cauldrons are born in every person:
the Cauldron of Warming, the Cauldron of Motion, and the Cauldron of Inspiration.

The Cauldron of Warming is born upright in each person.
It distributes wisdom to people in their youth.
The Cauldron of Motion, however, is filled after turning;
it is born tipped on its side in a person.
The Cauldron of Inspiration is born inverted
and distributes wisdom in poetry and every other art.

The Cauldron of Motion in unenlightened people is inverted.

It is tipped on its side in people who practice poetry and bardcraft.

For the skilled and the greatest of poets it is upright;

they are great streams of wisdom.

However, it is not upright in every poet,

for the Cauldron of Motion must be turned by sorrow or joy.

The Cauldron of Inspiration is turned by divine joy rather than human joy alone.

The Gods transform a person through divine joys so that they become sacred and knowledgeable, able to speak prophetic poems and dispense wisdom and perform miracles, giving wise judgment and blessings in answer to every wish.

Though this knowledge comes from within a person, the source of its truth and power comes from the Gods.

These passages are excerpts from a poem written around the 7th century which modern scholars titled "The Cauldron of Poesy," poesy being the Middle English word for poetry. Tonight, we will be calling on three goddesses, one for each cauldron. We will call on Danu, the river goddess and mother of the Irish gods to represent the powers of the Cauldron of Warming: the powers of the waters below and the source of life. We will call on Rhiannon, goddess of horses, birds, and the Earth, to represent the powers of the Cauldron of Motion: the power of the heart. And we will call on Brighid, the fiery goddess of the poets, to represent the powers of the Cauldron of Inspiration: the celestial fires of divine enlightenment.

As we enter the dark half of the year and the Earth and its creatures prepare for the coming winter, it is appropriate for us to also turn our attention inward. The purpose of this rite is to allow each of you to search within for your own three cauldrons, and thus come to better understand yourself and the source of your own wisdom.

We have completed our preparations. We know why we are here tonight, and now we will begin to raise the power and energy necessary for our work.

TIER TWO: RECREATING THE COSMOS & PRELIMINARY POWER RAISING

Creating the Vertical Axis

Well, Fire, and Sacred Tree: Vicki

We now evoke and sanctify the two powers of creation: the pure Waters of Rebirth and the burning Fires of Inspiration. With these powers we recreate the cosmos, and between the two, the Sacred Tree springs forth and grows anew. Then together as a Grove, united and strong, We give voice to our wonder and join in song.

<u>Song</u>: "Portal Song" (During the song, the **Sacrificer** makes offering to the Fire (candle), Well (silver), and Tree (asperge))

Chorus, 2x

By Fire and by Water, between the Earth and Sky We stand like the World-Tree rooted deep, crowned high.

Verse 1

We will kindle a Fire, Bless all, and with harm to none, We will kindle a Fire, and offering pour, We will kindle a Fire, A light 'neath the Moon & Sun, We will kindle a Fire, our spirits will soar. (to Chorus)

Verse 2

Come we now to the Well, the eye and the mouth of Earth, Come we now to the Well, and silver we bring, Come we now to the Well, the waters of rebirth, Come we now to the Well, together we sing: (to Chorus)

Verse 3

Gather we at the Tree, the root & the crown of all, Gather we at the Tree, Below & above, Gather we at the Tree, Together we make our call, Gather we at the Tree, In wisdom and love. (to Chorus)

(Words and music by Ian Corrigan ©Stonecreed Grove, ADF)

Opening the Gateway: Vicki, Michelle, and congregation

Transition: Vicki

Together at the center of the worlds we stand, connected to the realms of fire, sea, and land. Now visualize the Gateway, like a swirling pool. We will all lend our aid to create a way through.

(All: Each person moves their dominant hand in sweeping, circular clockwise motions, slowly at first, then gaining in speed with the drum.)

We set the waters in motion, growing faster and deeper, * as we prepare to call on Cerridwen, our Gatekeeper. When the vortex gains speed, space opens in the center, and through that channel, the Kindreds can enter.

*(**Drummer** starts drumming here, soft and slow, very gradually gaining in both speed and volume.)

The path between the worlds we hold and create. While we call upon Cerridwen to open the gates.

Gatekeeper Invocation (Cerridwen): Vicki, Michelle, and participants

(Michelle and Vicki walk around the Gateway, mirroring each other's circular hand motions.)

Michelle:

Lady of the White Sow, Goddess of birth and death, you are the silent void between our every breath. The cavernous depths are your domain; you are the guardian of the mysteries those shadows contain.

Cerridwen, open the gates to the path of knowledge! (All repeat)

(Michelle offers the calcite stone.)

Vicki:

Cerridwen, Wise Woman, mother and crone, Goddess of magic and of secrets unknown. You realize the necessity of trials and pain, of the lessons they bring, and the wisdom we gain.

Cerridwen, open the gates to the path of wisdom! (All repeat)

(Vicki offers the herb bundle.)

Michelle:

You are an exacting teacher; you force us to grow. Many ordeals you ask us to undergo. But when the challenge has been met and the lesson is done, we will find ourselves changed, and the next cycle begun.

Cerridwen, open the gates to the path of transformation! (All repeat)

(Michelle offers the tobacco, unlit.)

Vicki:

Cerridwen, Keeper of the Cauldron, to you we implore, guide us through the dark. Unlock the doors that separate the worlds, both without and within.

Open the gates! (STOP drumming and movement)

Let our journey begin! (All repeat)

Filling Out The Cosmic Picture: The Kindred Invocation Triad

Vicki: Who comes forth to call the Deities?

Deities Invocation: Vicki

Gods and Goddesses, all beings divine, beyond the veils of space and time, we call to you now, we welcome you here. With your strength, your wisdom and your vision clear, you guide us on our paths, you inspire and protect, and we in return offer our love and respect. In keeping the Old Ways, merged with the new,

Deities, Blessed Ones, we call to you! (All repeat)

Song: "Hail All the Gods" (During the song, the Sacrificer will make an offering.)

Hail all the Gods, Hail all the Goddesses, Hail all the Holy Ones, We dwell together. (repeat once)

Hail all the Gods! Hail all the Goddesses! Hail...all the Gods and Goddesses!

Hail all the Gods,
Hail all the Goddesses,
Hail all the Holy Ones,
We dwell together. (Words: First verse, Trad.; Bridge section, Gwynne Green. Music: Paul Maurice, Sean Miller, Gail Williams.)

Vicki: Who comes forth to call the Nature Spirits?

Nature Spirits Invocation: Diane W.

Nature Spirits, Worldly Spirits, join with us now, Spirits of seed and flower, leaf and bough, you who soar on the wind and who play in the sea, you who dance on the earth and who listen beneath. All Spirits of place, wild and free, you teach us to live in harmony with this world we share, our sacred land. Accept our offerings; let us work hand in hand.

Nature Spirits, we call to you! (All repeat)

<u>Song</u>: "Spirits of Nature" (During the song, the **Sacrificer** will make an offering.)

Verse 1:

Spirits of Nature, we call you Earth and Sky and Wind and Rain Spirits of Nature, we call you To remember us again (to Chorus)

Verse 2:

Spirits of Nature we call you Those with whom we share our home Spirits of Nature we call you Fin and feather, flesh and bone (to Chorus)

Chorus:

We call to you,
Those we touch and those we dream
We call to you
To be heard and to be seen (words and music by Diana Paar)

Vicki: Who comes forth to call the Ancestors?

Ancestor Invocation: Michelle

Grandmothers, Grandfathers, elders and sages, we call to you across the ages!
Wise Ones of hearth or spirit, heart or bone, all life's joys and hardships you have known.
You've inspired and shaped the people we've become; we name you Kin, and bid you warm welcome.
We honor and remember all that you do.

Ancestors, we call to you! (All repeat)

Song: "Mothers and Fathers of Old" (During the song, the Sacrificer will make an offering.)

From far beyond this mortal plane, Mothers and Fathers of Old. We pray that you return again, Mothers and Fathers of Old.

To share with us the mysteries and secrets long untold, of the ancient ways we seek to reclaim, Mothers and Fathers of Old. (Words and music by Sable.)

<u>TIER THREE: MAJOR SENDING OF POWER TO THE BEING(S) OF THE OCCASION</u>

Invocation to DotO and Primary Power-Raising: Vicki, Janet, and Maria

Vicki:

We now call to Danu, Rhiannon, and Brighid as the goddesses of our cauldrons three.

Danu: Vicki

Danu, Blessed Goddess of the rivers, we praise your name as the great life-giver. Join us this night; hear our call, you who are the source of the gods as Mother of all,

You watch over your children, our journeys you guide. You teach us to adapt and to flow with the tides. You whisper your love as you course along to any who will listen to the river's song.

Danu, we honor your powers of creation, and your gifts of abundance, fertility and transformation. The rivers and waterways are yours to command, and your blood gives life to the people and the land.

Danu, Goddess of the Waters, we call to you! (All repeat)

(Vicki lights a candle for Danu, Sacrificer pours offering of liquor.)

Rhiannon: Janet

Rhiannon, Earth Goddess and Divine Sovereign, you came from the Otherworld, beyond human ken, riding from the mist on your mare of white, hear our call; be with us this night.

We honor your strength, Mistress of the Birds, for the sorrows and challenges you have endured. You've known injustice and loss, loneliness and pain, yet you always found joy and happiness again.

You teach us to have patience for our most difficult tasks, and to receive your compassion, we need only to ask. You inspire us to follow our hearts and our dreams. We praise you, Rhiannon, Goddess and Queen.

Rhiannon, Goddess of the Land, we call to you! (All repeat)

(**Janet** lights a candle for Rhiannon, **Sacrificer** pours an offering of wine.)

Brighid: Maria

Brighid, we call to you, Goddess of the Fires, Shining Lady of poetry who incites and inspires. In the fires of your forge, our lives are shaped and directed. In the fires of your hearth, we are nourished and protected.

Lady of the Mantle, you help us to open our minds, and be receptive to the enlightening touch of the divine. You gift us with knowledge, art, and inspiration, and encourage us to surpass our human limitations.

Beloved Brighid, we honor you as teacher and guide, you offer us your love and you walk by our side. Your praises we sing, your name we revere, and in us your flame lives throughout the year.

Brighid, Goddess of the Fires, we call to you! (All repeat)

(Maria lights a candle for Brighid, Sacrificer pours an offering of mead.)

Individual Praise Offerings

Vicki:

In following the tradition of our Grove's ways, we now encourage personal offerings and praise.

(People may bring their own offerings or use the provided offerings.)

Conclusionary Offering

(Pour water and salt into a cauldron for Danu.)

Vicki:

Danu, I offer you a symbol of your creative force, a cauldron of salt water, from which sprung our life's source.

(Plant a seed in a cauldron of earth for Rhiannon.)

Vicki:

Rhiannon, I offer you a symbol of what you have taught, that through life's ups and downs, wondrous changes can be wrought.

(Light a cauldron of alcohol and Epsom salts for Brighid.)

Vicki:

Brighid, I offer you a symbol of your inspirational light, a cauldron of sacred flame shining in the night.

Vicki:

Goddesses of the cauldrons three, accept our offerings! (All repeat)

Omen (water scrying): Emerald

Vicki:

It is now time for the ovate to see whether our offerings and gifts have been well received.

(As **Emerald** takes the omen, **All** will sing "Let Our Voices")

Let our voices arise on the fire.

Let our voices resound in the deep.

May the Kindreds accept what we offer.

As we honor the old ways we keep. (Lyrics by Anthony R. Thompson, music by Ian Corrigan.)

Emerald

The message from Danu was a cup, a chalice of inspiration that holds both offerings and blessings. It is *ghosti*, hospitality, the act of both giving and receiving.

Rhiannon's message was a fish, an animal who is naturally at home in the water, the element of our emotions; an animal who moves through the blood of the Mother effortlessly and gracefully.

Brighid's message was the flash of inspiration found in a moment of silence.

The omen is good.

Emerald: (if omen is good) Bíodh sé amhlaidh! (All repeat)

TIER FOUR: RECEIVING THE BLESSINGS

Induction of Receptivity

Vicki:

Our gifts have been given; songs and praises have been said, and our offerings to the gods have been accepted. Thus, in the tradition of hospitality, the goddesses' blessing we may now seek.

Calling for and Hallowing of the Blessings: Vicki, Janet, and Maria

(Vicki, Janet, and Maria will each hold up the goblet of water for each goddess, call for the blessing, and then combine the water into a pitcher.)

Vicki:

Danu, Matriarch and Lady of the waters, we ask that you bless your sons and your daughters. Help us to find our Cauldron of Incubation, that we may better understand the source of creation.

Danu, give to us the waters of life! (All repeat)

(Vicki pours the water into the central pitcher and passes the cup to Janet.)

Janet:

Lady of Earth's creatures, Rhiannon, Great Queen, hear our call and give us your blessing. Help us to turn our Cauldron of Motion, By our joys, our sorrows, and our heart's emotions.

Rhiannon, give to us the waters of compassion! (All repeat)

(Janet pours the water into the central pitcher.)

Maria:

Shining Brighid, Lady of the fires bright, bestow upon us your blessing this night. Give us a glimpse of our Cauldron of Inspiration, that we may experience its divine illumination.

Brighid, give to us the waters of inspiration! (All repeat)

(Maria pours the water into the central pitcher.)

(Pour combined waters into wine glasses for each person.)

Receiving the Blessings: Vicki

(All raise cups in toast.)

Danu, Rhiannon, and Brighid, answer our plea! Help us to find the answers we seek! **Bíodh sé amhlaidh! (All repeat, and drink water)**

Meditation: Vicki

Close your eyes, and take a deep breath. Reaffirm your roots, connecting you to the waters below. Reaffirm your branches, connecting you to the fires above. Now find your center, where the Two Powers, above and below, are in balance. Search within, and envision a cauldron sitting below your belly, near your root. It is standing upright, heated by a fire. You speak its name, *Coire Goriath* (Core Goh-ree-ah), the Cauldron of Warming. As you speak, you notice a woman beside the cauldron, dressed in the darkest blue. Her hair flows down her back, and her eyes have a clarity and depth that reminds you of the sea. It is Danu. Ask for her aid, and envision the Two Powers of creation flowing into your Cauldron of Warming, opening your awareness. Become aware of your body. Become aware of your skin, your bones, your brain, and your blood coursing through your veins. Let Danu show you what you need to know to become healthy and whole. Just as the Two Powers merged to create the world, so you now merge them within yourself. What do you create? (Pause.)

Now, search within, and envision a cauldron sitting in your chest, near your heart. It is tilted to one side. You speak its name, *Coire Ermai* (Core Air'n mah), the Cauldron of Motion. As you speak, you notice a woman beside the cauldron, dressed in bright green and accompanied by a white mare, and there are birds singing as they fly around her. It is Rhiannon. Ask for her aid, and envision bringing forth the Two Powers which have merged within you. Use that energy, and open your awareness, not to see, but to feel. Become aware of your daily life, and remember. Remember the events of the past which shaped you, the times of laughter or wonder; the times of fear or grief. With each memory, you find that your cauldron moves closer to an upright position. Remember the person you were before the cauldron turned, and realize the person you are now. How have you changed? What changes must yet be made in order to turn your cauldron fully? (Pause.)

Now, search within, and envision a cauldron in your head, near your crown. It is inverted. You speak its name, *Coire Sois* (Core So-wish), the Cauldron of Inspiration. As you speak, you notice a woman beside the cauldron, dressed in white with fiery red hair waving around her face. It is Brighid. Ask for her aid as you begin to concentrate your energy into your cauldron. With her help, you are able to open not just your awareness, but your spirit. Become aware of your spiritual work, of your life's journey. As you open your mind, allow Brighid to help you find the divine spark within yourself. It shines bright and clear and flows within you, and as you begin to feel it, your cauldron begins to turn. As your cauldron approaches the upright position, the spark within you grows brighter and brighter, and it grows warmer and warmer, until it is like a blazing star. It becomes so hot and bright that it's nearly unbearable, but don't pull away from it; embrace it. Open yourself up to it. As you do so, your cauldron completes its rotation and is now fully upright, and the brilliant white light now completely surrounds you. You look into your cauldron, and you feel a moment of perfect clarity. What is your inspiration? What is your wisdom? (Pause).

When you are ready, open your eyes.

(Meditation inspired by the Three Cauldrons Attunement by Ian Corrigan, adapted by Victoria Grammer.)

Affirmation of Blessings: Vicki

(Distribute crystals)

Knowledge and illumination we have now received to better understand our cauldrons three.

Remember and take with you this message you've been shown; this blessing from the goddesses which is yours alone.

Song: "Power of the Spirits"

Power of the Spirits, flowing through me.

Power of the Spirits, shining in me.

Power of the Spirits, growing with me. (Words and music by Ian Corrigan, Stonecreed Grove)

Transition

Vicki:

Our work this night is nearly done.

We now thank the spirits for their guidance and wisdom.

TIER FIVE: UNWINDING AND ENDING THE CEREMONY Thanking DotO and Kindreds (in reverse order of arrival:)

Beings of the Occasion: Maria, Janet, and Vicki

Maria:

Brighid, Goddess of the fires bright, we thank you for your guidance and blessings this night. We will honor you always in both word and deed, our thanks and farewell we give now to Thee.

Brighid, Goddess of the Fires, Hail and Farewell! (All repeat)

(Maria extinguishes Brighid's candle.)

Janet:

Rhiannon, strong of spirit, gentle of heart, our rite is closing; it's time to depart.

Accept our gratitude for the blessings we've received.

Our thanks and farewell we give now to Thee.

Rhiannon, Goddess of the Land, Hail and Farewell! (All repeat)

(Janet extinguishes Rhiannon's candle.)

Vicki:

Danu, Goddess of the waters below, we thank you for the blessings which you have bestowed, and for nourishing and gifting us with all that we need. Our thanks and farewell we give now to Thee.

Danu, Goddess of the Waters, Hail and Farewell! (All repeat)

(Vicki extinguishes Danu's candle.)

Vicki: Who bids farewell to the Ancestors?

Ancestors Farewell: Michelle

Ancestors of our blood and hearts, our work here is closing; it's time to depart.
Accept our thanks and our promise renewed:
Ancestors, we will never forget you.
Your memory we'll honor and your stories retell,

Grandmothers and Grandfathers, Hail and Farewell! (All repeat)

Vicki: Who bids farewell to the Nature Spirits?

Nature Spirits Farewell: Diane W.

We offer our respect and admiration to the Nature Spirits and spirits of location. We thank you for your guidance and the lessons we've learned. Our work here is closing; it's time to return to your dens and your burrows, your nests and your shells,

Nature Spirits, Worldly Spirits, Hail and Farewell! (All repeat)

Vicki: Who bids farewell to the Deities?

Deities Farewell: Vicki?

Gods and Goddesses, we thank you tonight for the honor of your presence here at this rite. Our work here is closing, and though it's time to part, always know that you live in our hearts. So as you return to the places you dwell,

Deities, Blessed Ones, Hail and Farewell! (All repeat)

Thanking the Gatekeeper and Closing the Gates: Michelle and Vicki

(Steady drumming, no change in tempo. Everyone moves their hand in a circular motion going the opposite direction – counterclockwise. **Vicki** and **Michelle** move in the opposite circular direction, mirroring each other's motions.)

Vicki:

Cerridwen, Wise Woman, skilled and gray, we thank you for your guidance and for opening the way.

We take with us this night the answers we've been shown, and return to our world. The gates have been closed. (STOP movement and drumming)

Cerridwen, Hail and Farewell! (All repeat)

Restoration of the Ordinary: Vicki

To the mundane world we now return.

Where once the Sacred Fire, mere flame now burns; where once the Sacred Well, mere water now flows, but the Sacred Tree within us continues to grow.

And though we restore the ordinary and let our magic fade, it's touch can yet be seen through the changes we've made.

Regrounding and Recentering: Emerald

Two Powers unmerging, regrounding, and recentering.

Vicki: Who gives our thanks to the Earth Mother?

Thanking the Earth Mother: Janet

Earth Mother, we offer our thanks in deed and prayer for the blessings and sustenance you so readily share. To you, Divine Goddess, no farewells we give, merely our pledge to honor you in all the ways we live.

Earth Mother, we honor you! (All repeat)

Vicki: Who bids farewell to our Bardic Patron?

<u>Farewell to Bardic Patron - Taliesin:</u> Maria

Taliesin, Great Poet, accept our gratitude for your aid this night. Like you, we've imbued the droplets of wisdom from our cauldrons three. Our thanks and farewell we give now to Thee.

Taliesin, Hail and Farewell! (All repeat)

Clear-cut Ending: Vicki

Final Benediction

What the ancient Druids have begun, we, too, have now done.
And as we will likewise ensure that it will be done again in the future, we have once again forged an addition, another link in the sacred chain of tradition.

Long Live the Tradition! (All repeat)

Musical Signal (Horn blasts and drumbeat)

Vicki:

The rite has finished; the end has come. Go in peace, and walk with wisdom.

Recessional Song ("Walk With Wisdom")

Walk with wisdom from this hallowed place.

Walk not in sorrow, our roots shall ere embrace.

May strength be your brother, and honor be your friend,

And luck be your lover until we meet again. (Words and music by Sable)