



New Beginnings
Online Issue #6 – Winter 2006-2007

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Letter from the Editor

Greetings everyone, I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season. My thanks to the new board, especially Bruce, for entrusting me with the web mistress/ Accord position. I hope that I can make you all proud. I have a lot of plans for the website this year and I am in the middle of a very interesting web site design course that is giving me a lot of ideas to make our website the best that it can be. Also, I want to thank everyone that submitted to this issue. Remember if it is not for the submissions from the membership the Accord would be very thin. I hope that in the next year we will all become more interested in sharing our thoughts with the rest of CMA. Submissions can be anything in good taste that you feel would be of interest to anyone even one person. For example, book and movie reviews as well as articles on specific paths or any other topic you choose.

Again thanks to everyone, I look forward to bringing the world of CMA to life on all of your screens.

Blessings to all-
Rain Land
CMA Web Mistress / Accord editor

2006 – 2007 Executive Director Report By Bran

Merry Meet Everyone!

Well, 2006 was in interesting year. We got to try out a bunch of things that didn't work so well, but we got through it older and wiser.

So, we're about to start a new year with a Board consisting of two returning members and three new members — a wonderful mix of experience and new ideas.

The CMA is in grand shape. Our membership numbers are good, and we are solvent (with much thanks to all of the 2006 Board who pinched pennies to keep expenses under control)!

As we enter 2007, we have our events scheduled. Our Beltaine festival will be held 26 – 29 April 2007, and our Samhain festival will be held 18 – 21 October 2007.

Our Transition Meeting will be held on 13 January 2007 at [La Cabana](#) , at noon. Any member who wishes to be there is invited to attend (and try the new restaurant, which is on Hwy 71, west of Smithville). It's not likely to be very interesting.

Staff members and Area Reps are especially urged to attend, and if you cannot be there, be sure to notify your Lead Rep. We'll discuss what we plan for the year, including plans for Beltaine.

Our plans include a CMA Tarot Calendar for 2008, and franchising CMA events in various cities and improved support for Pagan Pride days.

At the Great Works Meeting at Samhain 2006, the membership approved the Designated Camping plan. This allows several existing camps that have continually been in operation to be listed on the map for the Festivals, and for those responsible for those camps to see to their maintenance. The lease fees from this program will benefit our Land Fund, and the formal recognition makes the site more stable. Persons wishing to participate may contact a Board member or Rep for the details. Persons wishing to establish new camps may also participate.

We are very excited about this program, and expect enthusiastic participation.

The "Leave No Trace" policy at Samhain was a huge success! We've never seen the site left so clean! Our success has encouraged us to keep this policy in place for 2007. Not only did we get to live up to our principles, we saved the not insignificant cost of a dumpster rental.

We have also raised a significant portion of the money need to build a permanent structure for Med Staff. Watch this space for more information.

Remember, You are CMA! We are always working to put together events that meet your needs and which reflect what you want. If you have a suggestion or complaint, we are listening.

BB
Bran

2007 Assistant Executive Director
By Meredith

Hello from your new Assistant Director! Since our theme for this issue of the Accord is new beginnings, I feel that it's important to start things off on the right foot. First, I would like to introduce myself properly to all of you. While I'm a pretty friendly person, I'm sure there are many of you out there that I haven't met yet and you may be wondering "Who is this kid and what is she doing up on the stage with the elders?" Since I'm going to be your liaison for the coming year, I want you to know who I am.

I was born in October, roughly one year after CMA was proposed. That makes me a Libra and, at 25, the youngest board member in our organization. I plan to use both of those facts to the advantage of our organization, but we'll get to that later. I was born and raised in the suburbs of Dallas by two moderate conservative, Southern Baptist accountants. How they created a Pagan environmentalist hippie, they'll never know. I spent my first 18 years in Dallas, moved to College Station to study Genetics and Environmental Sci and then fled to Austin as quickly as possible (no offense to my Brazos Valley people, but you know what I mean).

As far as religion goes, I found my path at the tender age of 16. I'm willing to admit that, like many Pagans of my generation, it started with The Craft. As luck would have it, it also started with a good friend who had been studying Wicca for several years. With some book recommendations and some occasionally silly rituals in the park, I found a religion that spoke to my soul, that gave words to the feelings and beliefs I held. A few months later, it also gave me a whole new community.

After reading an article in the Dallas Morning News about a pagan community center downtown, we discovered Betwixt and Between. It was a revelation. Until that time, the only pagans and wiccans I knew were a handful of my fellow high school kids and a few folks I had met online. At B&B, we met people who had been practicing longer than we had been alive! We met friends and mentors, family and tribe, elders and newbies. We were hooked. I spent several years and countless Friday nights at B&B. My friends and I volunteered quite a bit, running errands, cleaning, organizing, doing whatever we could to help out. What can I say, we got started young.

Through the people I met at B&B, I heard about CMA. In 2000, I joined CMA and attended my first Samhain. It was fantastic! It was like living at B&B for 4 days (with

extra mesquite thorns)! It was a combo of summer vacation, family reunion, ren faire, the longest ritual ever and the best kind of party. I couldn't stay away.

Outside of CMA, I've been pretty active in the Pagan communities I've lived in. After leaving Dallas and Betwixt & Between, I spent a few semesters as WebMistress for the A&M PSA and 1 semester as a rather superfluous Social Coordinator. For a bit over 2 years, I co-hosted a weekly Pagan radio show out of College Station (and yes, we have CDs). In CMA, I served as lead rep for the Brazos Valley for 2 years.

Aside from basic biographical information, I wanted to take the time to clear up a couple of misconceptions before things get started. First off, I am neither Bran Jr or Maeven's daughter (mores the pity on both counts). Secondly, I am not on anyone's side. I've grown up watching politics rip up the pagan community and I won't play the game. If you want to assume I'm on someone's side, your safest bet is to assume I'm on your side. I am your advocate. If you have an issue, bring it to me. I am here for you and for this organization. Thirdly, yes, I am idealistic but no, I don't think that's a bad thing. A fresh outlook, a new perception, an infusion from the next generation may be exactly what we need.

So, that's a little bit about me. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

2006 – 2007 Director of Communications **By Bruce**

We enter into 2007 with a new Board of Directors and new people working with the Website and Member Clicks.

I want to thank Mike Miller for stepping up to take on the responsibilities for Member Clicks. That is going to be a big job with the new functions we are hoping to integrate into CMA's online services.

I also want to thank Lightning for a wonderful two years as my web mistress. She has decided it was time to move on. I want to thank Rain Land for stepping up and taking over the position. She is our new Web Mistress and Accord Editor.

As for the Accord, Rain can only produce the Accord if CMA membership supports her by sending in content. Yes, it is also a forum for the officers to communicate to membership but that is only a minor part of the heritage of the Accord. I know there are people that are upset that we have moved from a hard copy publishing to an online format. I also regret that we had to make the change, but the cost of printing and shipping made the old Accord cost prohibitive. To that end we need to look forward and make our Accord a true place for our membership to pass along our heritage.

Each issue will have a theme. That theme will be determined closer to the publication date. But don't let a theme keep you from making a submission. We will find a place to use anything you wish to submit – keeping with the rules of good taste and good content.

The deadlines for submissions for the rest of the year are;

April 1st 2007

July 1st 2007

October 1st 2007

Jan 1st 2008.

Once the deadline has passed the Accord editor will get the issue online as soon as her schedule, and the amount of required editing, permits.

We have a new board, new people and a new year. Lets make the most of it.

Bruce Denney
Director of Communications 2007.



**DIRECTOR OF RECORDS
DECEMBER 2006**

Well, the time has come.....16 months now and my time as Director of Records is done. I leave this job with a greater awareness of what it truly means to serve this organization and awareness that I could indeed stretch the boundaries beyond my comfort level. I've learned a great deal and I am grateful for those lessons.

I hope you will indulge me as I express a few personal sentiments. To Maeven and Gary: my thanks to you both for your confidence in me and what you always knew I could do.

Lady Valna: you kept on saying to always do my best and it would be enough...you helped me keep my focus and my sanity. Ms. Dragon Wolfe, if ever there was someone who could keep this old Libra to the practical and technical aspects, it is you. Blaze, my

sister in arms, (or is that a dress?) thanks for the ride and the fun. Any fundraiser you ever want to do.....I'm there. Sky, Tinks, Austin Rain, Rhi, Sage, Arrick and all the Radmin folks; I couldn't have had a better team. You made it all so easy. Charlie/Layni may the Gods bless you for what you passed on to me. Bruce, my respect for you knows no bounds. Finally, Alex, my sister, in spite of everything, you still let me go my own way with love....yes, it was worth it.

I leave this office with a lot of new knowledge. By going through everything I could get my hands on, I've been able to see where we have come from and, to a certain extent, where we may go. And, I can say still that I am honored to be a part of this organization.

Despite my best efforts, I'm leaving with my promise unfulfilled and Judy with gaps in our documentation. But, she is a gracious Lady and still will allow me to keep searching for some of what has been lost. So, one last time from me officially as Director of Records, I ask that if any of you have copies of old minutes or old newsletters/Accords, please let me know.

I have strong hopes of still serving where and when my particular skills are needed with the Safety Services Team and working for Matt on various projects this year on/for the land. I hope also to be more involved with the Magickal Gardeners, especially on some planting bed development.

This has been a good time for me; one of growth and learning. I hope that I am a better person for it, but only time will tell. To all of you, may Spirit hold you and yours through the dark of the year. I will see you again once the wheel turns.

Stars light your path,

Mary "Wolf" Gray

2007 Director of Records
By Judy Craft

I'm Judy Kay Craft, the new Director of Records. I'm a native Texan who was raised in Aiken, South Carolina, home of the notorious Savannah River Plant, source of most of the western world's plutonium. I'm a polyamorous polio survivor, and a pagan polytheistic panentheist Unitarian Universalist. I am a bulimic in recovery, and I self-medicate with chocolate very carefully. I'm also a gamer geek, who introduced my son Benjamin to Dungeons and Dragons when he was four. I have helped organize gaming events, fundraisers, and political campaigns working with both local and nationwide groups. I've worked with both virtual teams that did most planning through email, internet relay chat (irc) and instant messaging as well as with local teams that did a lot of face to face brainstorming and debating. I'm a programmer analyst for South Texas College of Law. I have a lot of experience supervising elections, not just for volunteer groups, but also as a precinct judge in Harris County.

Growing up in Aiken during the cold war was very stressful. My siblings and I got security clearances as children so we could take part in "whole body count" radioactivity scans to check whether the 4 milk drinkers were more radioactive than the child with milk allergies. We were, but it was statistically insignificant, which meant my dad was doing his job as a health physicist trying to minimize radiation exposure from the multiple reactors. I was very interested in religion and theology, but soon realized after doing some heavy reading (Kant, Spinoza, Emerson, Thoreau) that I was more a Transcendentalist Pantheist than a Trinitarian Christian.

When I starting looking for liberal religious education to inoculate my children from their grandparents, I rediscovered the Unitarian Universalist Association (<http://www.uua.org>). I had attended anti-war rallies and meetings at First UU Houston in college, but once I started attending, I

realized I had found my religious home, because the 7 principles fit my beliefs. My daily goal is to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
 - A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

I confess that I have more difficulty with the first two than with the remaining five. I was an intellectually happy UU for over 10 years, but something was missing. Although it was very satisfying to learn in a “Build Your Own Theology” class that panentheism is the correct label for my core belief that the divinity present throughout the universe was transcendent, singing in the choir, working with children’s religious education, and discussing spiritual growth left me unsatisfied.

In 1993 a co-worker told me he was running a BBS, The Brewer’s Witch. Donal convinced me to join, even though I argued that I was UU, not pagan. He knew me better than I knew myself. At about the same time, I started noticing the CUUPS (Covenant of UU Pagans) ads in the UU World magazine. Many of the earth centered activities at my congregation conflicted with choir, but I joined a CUUPS mailing list with my brewitch email account. The only p-word I applied to myself was panentheist, even though I usually had to immediately define it. And I definitely did not consider myself a witch, especially since I still considered myself a religious humanist. I confess, I was afraid of both the P & W words.

In late 1994, my darling daughter Susan told me she wanted to study witchcraft. So I bought her copies of Drawing Down the Moon and Spiral Dance and started looking for someone who wanted to teach a twelve year

old. Redflame had started a CUUPS group at First UU Houston, and I asked if Susan could attend. I was told I needed to attend with her. We had scheduling problems and Susan was getting frustrated with me. In March of 1995 she handed me the church newsletter with an event circled. "I know you will make time for this one, the CUUPS group is having a chocolate ritual on April 15, your 42nd birthday."

We did attend the ritual. And I loved not just the chocolate, but also the whimsy of it. And I realized that I had been missing ritual, that I had been missing participating in worship, that I had not been feeding my heart. And I joined CUUPS continental, and worked with other UU pagans, and learned to love myself. I discovered that I wasn't merely a panentheist who liked to have rituals with Jungian archetypes, but that I was polytheistic and pagan. It took four more years and a lot of coaching from fellow CUUPS officers for me to self identify as a witch, but I did learn to recognize that yes, I do practice real magick. And, yes, **I was saved by chocolate.**

Land Report

Happy 2007! Beginning of a new year as well as a busy one for the land crew. There have been projects discussed in the past that we hope to make realities this year. The first project we will be working on is the new Med Building, to be named Mathew's Healing Station, as voted at Beltaine 2006. Thanks to everyone that donated at Samhain 2006. Workends have been scheduled and we hope to see everyone on the land this Spring to work on planned projects as well as preparing for Beltaine 2007.

Matt Land
CMA Land Manager

Workend schedule as follows:

January 13th – 14th
January 26th – 28th
February 9th – 11th
February 23rd – 25th
March 9th – 11th
March 23rd – 25th
April 6th – 8th

Setup weekend for Beltaine: April 20th – 22nd (Remember that this weekend is for setup crew only. Must be approved and name on setup list with the Land Admin, Rain Land)

Setup for Beltaine: April 23rd – 25th

Beltaine 2007: April 26th – 29th

Teardown: April 30th

Youth Services By RavenMae

Holiday greetings everyone! I hope that you all had a fantastic holiday. Here's to a prosperous New Year!

If you were ever curious about what goes on with the youth of our community, here's a little update.

We have 3 age groups that we try to keep entertained and educated during festivals. The Fairy Mound for 2 years through 7 years. The Tweens, ages 7 - 12 and the Teens, ages 13 - 18. We have been blessed to have our wonderful Rachel as our Fairy Mound coordinator for the last several years. She does a great job with the "Littles". Even if you don't have young children who attend festival, if you happen to be walking by the Fairy Mound, you should stop in and give her a big thank you along with all of her volunteers.

This year I would like to focus on getting new **BIG** toys for the Fairy Mound. All of the yard toys have seen better days and I'm sure the kids would love to have some new ones to occupy their time. So if you happen to be passing a garage sale or cleaning out your own yard and come across anything that would be suitable, we would be forever in your debt if you could help us out. If you need assistance in getting them to the land, post it to the list. I am sure that there is someone in your area that would be willing to help out.

Other things in Youth Services that really need attention are the Tweens and Teens. If you have family in these age groups you will know what I mean. We did not have a Tween or Teen camp at Samhain because we did not have a coordinator for each group. If you would be able to help out with that, please contact me as soon as you can. Even if its only part of the festival, it's better than none at all. Maybe, if we have enough people, we can split it up between a few different folks. Remember, this is our future and they need a good festival experience like the adults do.

If you don't feel that you can commit a large amount of time to the Tweens and Teens, what about an hour of your festival? Do you have a talent or some particular knowledge that you would like to share? Do you host a workshop already that you could adjust slightly for the younger members of our community? Do you have some cool games you could share with the young ones? Any of these and more would be greatly appreciate by the youth.

There are going to be some changes at Beltaine 2007. Hopefully these changes will help to get more people involved with the kids.

So far those changes include:

- Family meetings on Thursday, Friday and Saturday - This will be a requirement for the tween and teen families and a request for the Fairy Mound families. In these meetings we will discuss the rules, get waivers signed and share the schedule for the different areas. This is an opportunity for parents to meet other parents, meet the coordinators and for everyone to know and understand the rules. There will also be time for questions.
- Tween camp will go co-op – as with the Fairy Mound, the tween camp will also go co-op. If your tweens are going to participate in the tween camp activities, parents must sign up for 2 hours to help out. These 2 hours will be in addition to your community service time.

Look for more changes to come in the following months.

We are also going to implement the Rent a Teen program at Beltaine 2007. The logistics of it will be worked out and things will be posted to the lists and part of the festival guide for Beltaine. We are also adding a Junior Fire Crew and continuing with the Junior Guardians and Junior Medics.

Just a reminder of what Youth Services could use:

Fairy Mound is in need of:

- A tent that can be permanently theirs. Preferably a canvas tent, at least 20 x 20 and WITH WALLS
- New yard toys. What we have is great but due to wear and tear, weather and elements, they are beginning to fall apart. If you don't have any that your kids have outgrown, keep an eye out for garage sales.
- Small tables that children can sit at, for them to do crafts or snacks
- Dress up clothes for girls and boys
- Snacks and drinks – every festival we can always use snacks and drinks

Tweens are in need of:

- Games – not just board games but yard games
- Snacks and drinks
- Mentors – I think it would be great if we could implement a mentor program

Teens are in need of:

- Mentors – I think it would be great if we could implement a mentor program
- Games
- Pop up for shade

If you would like to discuss this further, volunteer for a position or do a workshop please contact RavenMae at rayvnwyth at yahoo dot com.

THE FRONT GATE , PARKING AREA AND VOLUNTEERS
By Tinkers, Beltaine 2007 Gatekeeper and Sage, Parking Fairy King.

Hi All, I am the Gatekeeper this festival and I wanted to take a few minutes to explain to some of our new volunteers how the front gate works; what you can expect if you volunteer.. ie., what you have to do!! In addition to the front gate, the parking area is in need of volunteers.. My husband, Sage, is the Parking Fairy King this year and also a rep for CMA, San Antonio area.

The Parking area is just that.. the front parking area..the Parking Fairy court and staff take care of traffic control, and parking the cars in an orderly manner in the lot! Sage is looking for more help!!! It is very easy work, but does require a lot of walking and standing. There are chairs available and shade!

The front gate has a Gatekeeper, formerly called the Front Gate Coordinator(that's me), A "Keymaster"(that's Arrick) formerly called front gate coordinator assistant and also, of course, our front gate leads and volunteers

In this New Year, I am happy to announce that two of our outstanding Front gate leads, Camille and Killina have been promoted!! They are going to share the position of Team Captain for the front gate leads. All of the leads from last fest did an amazing job and I am very happy to invite them back!

FRONT GATE LEADS: All front gate leads are picked from people who have front gate experience; ie they have to had worked at least two festivals as front gate volunteers. A lead is responsible for two 4 hour shifts.. (at least that), during which they train volunteers heyin current front gate procedures: Check-in, parking, banding, etc. The leads , during their shifts report to the new team captains, Killina and Camille

FRONT GATE VOLUNTEERS: If you volunteer for front gate, you will work a 2 hour shift.. our shifts start at 9am on Thursday,..9-11, 10:30-12:30, 12-2.. then overlap with the new shift half hour before the previous shift ends.. 1:30-3:30, 3-5pm, 4:30-6:30p, etc... The front gate is a great place to meet new people, renew old acquaintances and get lots of hugs... So.. if, you are outgoing, friendly and have an easy manner with people waiting in line(especially on Thursday and Friday)... come join us. It is basically a sitdown job,

Front gate volunteers are trained in Check-in procedures, parking procedures, banding (Pagan Tag and Release Program), etc

After Transition meeting on January 13th, we will be starting to setup our schedule for the front gate.. so.. we have **LIMITED** openings on Wednesday and Thursday am.. so contact me early if you are interested.. tinkersagain@yahoo.com. Volunteers who work with frontgate setup crew are allowed to come in early without paying early arrival fee. We also need volunteers for tear-down crew.. this allows you to stay til Monday after fest!

We look forward to seeing you all at festival .. Merry meet, Merry part and Merry Meet Again!
Tinkers and Sage

Temple of the Dancers Society
Valna Asterman, Coordinator

The Temple of the Dancers Society met on Friday during the CMA Samhain 2006. We discussed the Samhain Hafla – Fundraiser and made plans for dressing the stage and back stage assistance. We had small bells on the altar for our supporters to collect as a thank you for their generosity. We also made elastic bracelets/ankletes to wear as a visual link to the Temple.

We also began the preparation for the Beltaine hafla and discussed new themes. We usually discuss the next fundraiser and then wait to see if the Board will allow us to perform. The members who were in attendance, voted on the Hafla theme “Wild Abandon.”

The Hafla-fundraiser went well and everyone had a good time. With generous tips from our audience, we raised almost \$200.00!

Thank you, for all the encouragement from our wonderful fans and Special Hugs and

Smooches to our wonderful support staff:

- Nancy, the best “back stage mom” we could ask for
 - Dr. Steve, our wonderful announcer
And last but certainly not least...
- Gary Park, who provided our stage, set, lights and sound system and cued up our music.

Without all of you, we couldn't have danced!

Please remember, the Temple of the Dancers Society is open to anyone who supports dance. If you would like to be involved, please sign up by visiting our group page:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CMATemple_of_the_Dancers/

Or sending an email to:

CMATemple_of_the_Dancers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Happy Solstice to you all!

Valna A.
AKA
Amethyst Hala

Triple Goddess Society By Keyne

The Triple Goddess Society met, as always, at Samhain. We had several new faces join us, and new people signing up to join the email list. We discussed the possibility of having another retreat, and several people said they would work on ideas. The Grounding and Centering Temple was used a lot at Samhain, by the looks of things, and we will continue to sponsor that at every festival.

Nothing else to report, really. If you are interested in joining the Triple Goddess Society, you certainly may - the membership is open to everyone. You may also join the Yahoo group by going here - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cmatriplegoddess/join>

See you all at Beltaine!

Keyne, Triple Goddess Society Coordinator

Polyamory Society By Gryphon

Lets Get this Polyamory Party Rolling!

Lets start posting people, anything

We added about 32 new people to this list, from people attending the society meeting. On a side note about 4/5 of the people who were at the meeting were from the Houston Area.

We had a good meeting and have some good ideas for Beltain, such as Kissing Booth, Hug Patrol, Human Carcass Wash, Book Reviews, A Poly 101 workshop.

Book Reviews- Please post Book Reviews- Post to either the files section or the list, I will gather all reviews to a/some master review file/files (keeping review authors name with reviews).

Book List- Please post Book Lists- Post to either the files section or the list, I will gather all Book Lists to a/some master Book Lists file/files.

Link List- Please post Link Lists- Post to either the files section or the list, I will gather all Link Lists to a/some master Link Lists file/files.

Kissing Booth- If you worked a kissing booth, would you volunteer to coordinate this one?

Hug Patrol- I want to have badges made, I need to know how many badges we will need.

Human Carcass Wash- I have talked to the person who handled the Wash for Burningman and I need to find what I did with the files, more info to come.

A Poly 101 workshop- Would anyone like to assist me with this?

Gryphon Mazer
Polyamory Society Coordinator
CMA South East Texas Rep
CMA_theVillage Moderator

Amethyst Camp Report
By Stephanie Canada

Amethyst Camp is a place to meet and get to know other folks who are Pagans in Recovery. Our camping area is not reserved at present, but the suggested spot to camp is over by the flagpole, first camping area on the right after you cross the bridge. We are seeking donations for reserved camp fees, contact Stephanie below if you are interested in supporting this work.

If you can't camp with us, come by in the evenings and ask around for us. We'd love to meet and chat with you. We are often at Spriti Camp (the old revel fire location) on Friday evenings.

I look forward to meeting you and hearing your thoughts on what Amethyst Camp can become as we evolve and grow. See our Yahoo group at: http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/CMA_Amethyst_Camp/.

Stephanie, Amethyst/Recovery Camp Coordinator
thunderhoof@austin.rr.com

P.S. If you have any concerns/suggestions about Amethyst Camp. We are very interested in your input.

North Texas Area Report

We here in the North Texas area would like to say Hi! We have changed the date of our CMA Social. We are going to be meeting on January 14th, 7pm at Lusaj's. If you live in the North Texas area or you will be around this area that weekend, we would love it if you joined us! We had a great turn out at our last event! It's very encouraging. If you would like to be a part of the North Texas yahoo group, you can find us at cma-nt-subscribe@yahoogroups.com Hope you had a great holiday!

Outlands Area Report

Hello Outlands,

Well winter is upon us and we have a new year starting in CMA. I am honored to be the new CMA Outlands Lead Rep for 2007. Your elected reps are:

Sky Ladywolf (Dee) ladywolf_tx@yahoo.com (Lead)

Killina killina42@yahoo.com

Alchemy alchemy@flyingpig.net

Rhonda rjwatson59@yahoo.com

Now we are all over the country. I am in the Phoenix Arizona area. Alchemy is in the Killeen Texas area, Rhonda is in New Mexico and Killina is in the Baltimore, Mass area. So as you can see, we truly represent the Outlands for CMA.

If you have any questions we are all available to help you and hope you will not hesitate to do so. We also have a Yahoo group that I hope will be come more active and will keep you posted on what is going on in CMA.

CMA-OutlandsVillage-subscribe@yahogroups.com

One of the things I hope to do on the list and in future issues of the Accord is bring you events around the country that are Pagan or Pagan friendly so you know what is going on and can maybe try something new.

In the Phoenix area we have 3 events coming up.

Arizona Renaissance Faire February 10 to April 1st.

<http://www.royalfaires.com/ARIZONA/>

Feast of Fools - March 24th

Feast of Fools: <http://www.feastoffools-phxaz.com/>

Phoenix Faerie Festival April 2007

The Phoenix Faerie Festival:

<http://www.westerngatesfaiererealm.com/PhoenixFaerieFestival.htm>

If you know of any other events in your areas, please contact me and I will see that it gets posted.

We are here to serve you the membership. We are honored to do so.

Peace and Light,

Sky Ladywolf (for all of the Outlands Reps)
CMA Outlands Lead Rep 2007

Instant Runoff Voting (IRV)
By Judy Kay Craft, Director of Records

IRV is an election method that allows voters to rank candidates by preference so that if no candidate achieves over 50% of the vote, the voters' preferences for 2nd and 3rd choices may be used to determine a majority winner without the time and expense of a second election. The preferences are used to determine which candidate is actually preferred by a majority of voters.

Whenever there are more than two candidates or a large number of write in votes it is possible for no candidate to earn more than 50% of the votes cast. With IRV no candidate should be viewed as a spoiler, and no voter should feel that a vote was "wasted" because the second preference can be counted.

For example, say we have three candidates, Alice, Bob, and Carol. We send out 100 ballots and get 37 ballots returned.

Table 1

Candidates	Votes
Alice	19
Bob	10
Carol	6
Ted (Write In)	1
Blank ballot	1

Under our current bylaws, we would have to have a runoff, because at least 50% + 1 vote means a winner would need at least 19.5 votes, and Alice has only 19 votes. At the very least we should amend the bylaws to define majority as greater than 50% of votes cast rather than 50% + 1 vote. But what if the vote tally was closer?

Table 2

Candidates	Votes
Alice	17
Bob	8
Carol	8
Ted (Write In)	2
Mary (Write In)	1
Blank ballot	1

No one has greater than 50% (18.5 votes), so a runoff is needed between the top two candidates. But, Bob & Carol are tied for second place, and a runoff is between two candidates so that a majority is assured. Under our current bylaws, we have no method to decide whether Bob or Carol proceeds to the runoff. Preferential voting can determine the candidate preferred by the majority of voters without second ballot because it eliminates the candidates with the least first place votes and redistributes those votes based on the secondary rankings..

I am proposing that CMA use optional preferential ballots with ranked choice voting, or what statisticians call a Ware count, after the MIT professor who proposed this method. This is the method now used in Vermont for gubernatorial elections, and in San Francisco, Oakland, and Davis California for city elections, and in Minneapolis for city elections.

For the voter IRV is “as easy as 1, 2, 3.” Rather than mark a check or an X to vote only for a single candidate, a voter ranks the candidates for a race with 1 for first choice, 2 for second as needed. Everything is done with one ballot; “runoffs” are decided by checking the second and tertiary preferences.

IRV is more work for the polling committee, *if and only if* no candidate has greater than 50% of the total votes, but re-tallying is not nearly as much work as running another election. If the initial tally is recorded in a spreadsheet, no recounting is necessary, but if doing a hand count, one only recounts the ballots of the last place candidate until a majority is achieved either by a candidate or none of the above.

Figure 1 is a sample ballot with three candidates: The voter's entries are in red.

Please rank all or none of the following candidates as 1 for first choice, 2 for second, 3 for third as needed. You may write in a candidate or select none of the candidates. Not ranking a candidate is equivalent to ranking that candidate below "none of the above."

Candidate	Ranking
Alice	99
Bob	2
Carol	3
None of Above	
Write In: Ted	1

Figure 1

Note that this ballot has a write-in vote for Ted, and ranks Alice 99, which is equivalent to ranking Alice after "none of the above." . Omitting a ranking for a candidate is also equivalent to ranking that candidate

below "none of the above." The ballot no is a control check that helps with verification and tallying.

The polling committee enters the ballots into a tallying spreadsheet like Figure 2 which has ballot control numbers as row labels and candidate names as column labels. As write-ins occur, new columns are inserted. The data in Figure 2 corresponds to the results noted in Table 2. The data from Figure1 is the highlighted row.

Figure 2

Ballot	Alice	Bob	Carol	WI - Ted	WI-Mary	None of Above	Returned
1001001		3	2	1			1
1001002		3	1	2			1
1001003			2	1			1
1001004	1		2	3			1
1001005	3		1	2			1
1001006	2		3	1			1
1001007	1			2			1
1001008	1						1
1001009			3	2		1	1
1001010	1						1
1001011			2	1			1

1001012	1						1
1001013	2	1	3				1
1001014	1	3	2				1
1001015	1		2				1
1001016		1	2				1
1001017	1						1
1001019	1						1
1001020	1	2	3				1
1001021	1						1
1001023	1	3	2				1
1001024	1		2				1
1001025	1						1
1001026	2	1	3				1
1001027	3	1	2				1
1001028	3	2	1				1
1001029	3	2	1				1
1001031	9	1	2				1
1001032	4	3	2	1			1
1001033		2	1			3	1
1001034	99	2	3	1			1
1001035		1	2				1
1001036	1						1
1001037	3	2	1				1
1001038	1						1
1001039	1						1
1001040						1	1
1st Choice	17	8	8	2	1	1	37
2nd Choice	3	10	13				
3rd Choice	8	5	4				

Total Votes 37

Since no candidate has 19 first choice votes, the polling committee evaluates the second choices for the write in candidates first. Figure 3 shows that ballot 1001009 gets redistributed from Mary to Carol, the second choice.

Figure 3

Ballot	Alice	Bob	Carol	WI - Ted	WI-Mary	None of Above	Returned
1001009			3	2		1	1

Figure 4 shows that ballot 1001032 gets redistributed from Ted to Carol, while ballot 1001034 goes to Bob

Figure 4

Ballot	Alice	Bob	Carol	WI - Ted	WI-Mary	None of Above	Returned
1001032		4	3	2	1		1
1001034		99	2	3	1		1

Figure 5 shows the totals after re-distributing the write-in ballots:

Figure 5

	<i>Alice</i>	<i>Bob</i>	<i>Carol</i>	<i>None</i>
1st Choice	17	8	8	1
From Mary			1	
From Ted		1	1	
New Total	17	9	10	1

We now see that Carol has more support than Bob, which we could also see from her having more second place votes than Bob did. Neither Alice nor Carol have 19 votes, so we now do a second round of re-tallying.

We re-tally Bob's votes which are shown in figure 6. Six of Bob's votes go to Carol, 2 to Alice and 1 goes to none of the above.

Figure 6

Ballot	Alice	Bob	Carol	WI - Ted	WI-Mary	None of Above	Returned
1001002		3	1	2			1
1001005		3	1	2			1
1001013		2	1	3			1
1001016			1	2			1

1001026	2	1	3		1
1001027	3	1	2		1
1001031	9	1	2		1
1001034	99	2	3	1	1
1001035		1	2		1

Alice wins!

The two votes redistributed from Bob’s ballots give Alice a majority, as seen in Figure 7

Figure 7

	<i>Alice</i>	<i>Bob</i>	<i>Carol</i>	<i>None</i>
1st Choice	17	8	8	1
From Mary			1	
From Ted		1	1	
2nd Round	17	9	10	1
from Bob	2		6	1
3rd Round	19		16	2

Here is the text of my proposed bylaw change:

Proposed bylaw amendment to paragraph 6 of section 2.04, CMA bylaws:

Change from :

"...Members of Board of Directors shall be conducted by paper ballot mailed to each voting member of the Corporation."

Change to:

...Members of Board of Directors shall be conducted by paper preferential ballot mailed to each voting member of the corporation, with results determined by the instant runoff method. Each eligible member has one vote, and ranks candidates in order of choice (1, 2, 3, etc., with 1 being the highest) on the ballot. At the conclusion of the voting period, all first choices are counted, and if no candidate wins a greater than 50% of the total first choice votes, then the last place candidate (the candidate with the fewest first choices) is eliminated. Ballots of voters who ranked the eliminated candidate first then are redistributed to their next-choice candidates, as indicated on each voter's ballot. Last place candidates are successively eliminated and ballots are redistributed to next choices until one candidate remains or a candidate gains over 50% of the votes cast. Voters have

the option to rank as many or as few candidates as they wish. If the elimination of candidates results in all ranked candidates on a ballot being eliminated, the ballot is then counted as "None of the Above". If an election results with "None of the Above" receiving over 50% of the votes cast, the election is halted and a new election called, allowing for new candidates to apply for the office."

Note: <http://www.fairvote.org/irv> and <http://www.instantrunoff.com> are both good resources for learning more about IRV. There are some multi-media presentations written by professional writers, rather than by a programmer analyst. I urge people to check out these resources.

Sample of IRV [accord_winter2007/sample irv.xls](#)

“Voice of the Singer”
Past-Life Meditation
Submitted by Mary “Wolf” Grey

Find a comfortable position...Relax and breathe...In and Out...In and Out...In, Out...Close your eyes and continue breathing...In, Out...In, Out...In, Out...Relax and breathe...In, Out...In, Out...In, Out.....

You are sitting in a mountain grove of trees, verdant and peaceful. A boulder, still warm from the sun, supports your back. A brook flows to your left and a soft breeze blows...You are comfortable and safe. No one and nothing can harm you here...Nothing with adverse purpose can come here; these mountains are a sacred place, a place of dreaming, a place of insight. It is twilight...

As the day gives over to night, you see with perfect clarity and you are in wonder of your new perceptions. In your heart you feel kinship to all that is around you. You are safe and comfortable and you relax...

As you relax, you become more aware of the sounds around you. The brook murmurs over its stone bed and has laughter in its voice, a celebration of freedom. Insects whir to themselves as they settle in for sleep. The breeze whispers through the leaves and

needles of the trees, promising secrets to be revealed. Your own heart beats with the rhythm of the earth beneath you. Faintly, in the distance, you hear the voice of a wolf singing in solitude, but singing in joy and you feel no fear for you know that wolves are teachers that lead through the dreaming. You wonder if the singer is singing for you, so you pause in your reverie and listen as the song rises and falls...

The voice grows closer and more compelling. You are drawn to it and rise to follow the song to its source, moving upstream along the course of the brook, climbing easily up the mountain. As you climb, you become, at once, both grounded, and yet, light as the breezes caressing your skin. The song strikes an inner cord that resonates to the depth of your being. Somehow, you know that magic is being made...a hidden history will be revealed to you and you are glad. You continue climbing...

The trees and brush give way to more rock as you continue upwards, still moving easily. As you move closer to the source of the song, the feeling you have of magic increases and a sense of anticipation begins to arise. This is something you have waited for...a welcome experience and lesson that you have sought.

Turning a corner around a large mass of stone, up ahead you see a rocky shelf slightly higher than you are tall. A small waterfall cascades from the height; its music harmonizing with the wolf that sings at the shelf's edge. Climbing closer, you are able to see that the shelf that the wolf is sitting on is the extended entrance to a cave and the brook you have been following upstream appears to emanate from it. This, you perceive, is the haven for your dreaming....

The wolf completes his song, ending on a note of what has all the semblance of being satisfaction. You feel that you have passed some sort of test, as he gazes at you through compellingly intelligent blue eyes. You know what you see before you is an ancient soul and, here, form does not matter. He rises and turns towards the cave, looking over his shoulder to see that you are following...

Entering the cave, you pause a moment, awestruck by your surroundings...The cave glows crystalline in myriad colors and infinite patterns, almost hypnotic in its variety. Near the rear wall is a stone rimmed pool, the source of the brook and a focus for your dreaming. At the pool's edge, a well-worn indentation, moss-lined, soft and inviting. Your companion leads you to it, lies down beside you as you sit and gazes with you into the pool...

The images you see are diverse, yet underlyingly similar as the wolf searches you face and you search his in the mirror of the water. Drops fall from the ceiling, creating ripples which ebb and flow from the center to the rim and back again as your reflection disperses and coalesces. The pool is your portal to view the past and now is the time to see. You will observe but not interact, perceive but not effect—or be effected. This is your vision and not your current life. You may stop the vision by your own choice. You are comfortable and safe. The droplets are your cues to open the door of your perception. Count them as they fall...

One...your reflection disperses into points of light. Two...the pool darkens and one point of light remains in the center. Three...the light expands. Four...images from a past life path form. Five...the images are there with perfect clarity for you to view. Observe closely, this is who you were, what helped shape your current being, what you wish to know. Knowing that you are safe, in control and will remember what you see, so you let the vision begin....(5 MINUTE HOLD)

The images that you have been watching begin to disperse and you again see your own reflection and that of the wolf at your side. He rises, turns and walks to the entrance of the cave. You also rise and go to the cave's entrance, pausing to look once more at this haven of past knowledge. The wolf walks with you as you exit the cave and begin your journey down the mountain, back to the grove where your journey began,

Traveling downstream, you again feel grounded, and, as you continue, the associations that you have with your current path begin to re-emerge. Before you reach the grove, your guide and guard turns back up the mountain and you enter the grove alone—ending your journey as you began. You return to your resting-place and sit—holding in you memory what you have seen and learned. Faintly, in the distance, you again hear the voice of the singer calling to you with a promise, that, if you choose, you may return here and again walk the trails of your lives.

As the song slowly fades, your heart beats with a harmonious counterpoint and you follow the course of the song full circle back to yourself and the life that you currently live. When you are ready, stretch, ground yourself in this reality and open your eyes....Welcome back.

Positive Living In A Negative World

Submitted By Alexandria

Gloom. Doom. Death. Destruction.
Words and actions we see and hear everyday.
News shows and politicians scream about corruption and moral decline.
Neighbors. Co-workers. Friends. Family. They all perpetuate these negative images.

It's up to us to stop it.
Right here. Right now.
Impossible you say?
Not only possible, but highly probable.

In small, everyday ways,
Simple changes in attitude.
Uncomplicated way of living . . .
Positive Living in a Negative World.

We all make resolutions this time of year. Lose weight. Get in shape. Eat better.
Get a better job. Make more money. Go back to school. Finish school.

Have you ever noticed how most resolutions are about ourselves? What if we all resolved to turn some of that attention to others? What if we put just as much energy into making the world a better place that we put into making ourselves better people?

I'm going to make a few suggestions in the following pages that seem simple enough. As the old commercial used to say; "Try it! You'll like it!"

Manners & Courtesy

What happened to manners? I'm not talking about which fork to use or how to word an invitation to your second wedding. I'm talking about simple, everyday manners and courtesy.

We, as a society, have gotten so caught up in the rat race that we often feel like we don't have time for even the smallest courtesies. For example, I was calmly walking to my gate in the airport when I was literally run over by a man dragging a suitcase on wheels. I almost fell, yet he didn't take the time to say a simple "excuse me." Inside, I forgave him for his discourtesy because I assumed he was late for his flight. I continued

on, and when I arrived at my gate - a full half hour before my flight was to leave - lo and behold, who was there? None other than the man who had bowled me over. He was sitting quietly, talking on his cell phone while we waited for the same flight.

I sat down, amazed.

I intended to confront him on his behavior, but he never finished his call. He was still talking as we boarded the plane. Is this really necessary? Have we gotten so intent on making money that we've lost the ability to take two seconds to say "excuse me?"

Positive Living is taking time to be nice.

Say "please" when asking for something, from a hamburger to a promotion.

Say "thank you" to the receptionist who takes your name. Or the cashier who takes your order.

Say "excuse me" when you bump into someone or accidentally cut someone off in the grocery store aisle.

Say "good-bye" before you hang up the phone.

"Please"

"Thank You"

"Excuse Me"

"Hello"

"Good-bye"

"No Problem"

"You're Welcome"

"My Pleasure"

So many niceties... so little time. Or so we think. Does it really take so much time to be nice? Try it, you'll like it! So will those around you. Even if they don't return it immediately, they will remember you as being a kind and courteous person. And who knows? Maybe some day they'll return the favor.

Compliment

How many of you complain when something is wrong with your meal?

OK. Now, how many of you compliment when your meal is perfect?

Talk about a difference !!!

It is so easy to complain when we feel we've been wronged or not gotten our money's worth. We display a self-righteous air and demand satisfaction. Of course, we should say something when it's warranted, don't get me wrong. *Constructive* criticism is how negative issues get changed to positive ones, and I'll cover that a little later. For now, let's talk about compliments.

When did it start being trendy to complain about every little thing? Whatever happened to compliments?

I was in a well-known fast food chain the other day and things were running like clockwork. It was the lunch rush, yet the crew took time to be polite by saying "thank you" and "please" and "you're welcome." They all had smiles on their faces and seemed to be enjoying what they were doing, even though it was very hectic.

I ate my entire lunch in silence while watching them. When it came time for me to leave, the rush was over so I took the time to talk to the manager. I complimented her on her crew, their work and their attitudes.

She was amazed! It was obvious from her reaction that a compliment was something that rarely, if ever, happened. She thanked me profusely for the compliment and I went on about my business. The whole conversation took about two minutes. Well worth the time to bring a little sunshine into someone's day, especially someone who is doing a very good job.

Positive Living is complimenting someone on a job well done, a new hairdo or a nice outfit.

Try to open conversations with a compliment. It's a treat to watch the other person light up, and then they pass on the treat to someone else who deserves it. Before you know it, the world will be filled with compliments instead of complaints.

Be Aware of Your Surroundings

When I moved to New York City, I was told by a native how to act on the streets. "Always keep your eyes focused inward and walk with purpose towards your goal. Don't look around, or else people will think you're a tourist or a criminal." Hmmm, a tourist or a criminal. I know I've always considered those two to be the same.

She went on to say, "While waiting for the subway, a bus, a table in a restaurant or a Broadway show - whatever you do - DON'T talk to anyone in line; they might be a criminal or they'll think you're crazy." Well, I've always suspected that small talk led to crime and craziness! Now, granted, there are a lot of weirdo's and criminals in New York City (as well as everywhere else), but to completely isolate yourself in a city of twelve million people on the off-chance that you might meet one of these individuals seems odd to me.

She also told me that doing these things was the only way to have any privacy in a city that large. Privacy. On the street. With millions of other people. What a concept!

And all this time, I thought privacy was something you sought out at home. You know, when you close the door you close out the world. Oh well, the greater fool I.

I recommend a different approach. Positive Living means being aware of your surroundings and acknowledging that you're not the only person alive on the planet. Look around you. Make eye contact and smile at the next person you see. You'll be amazed at how quickly most of them smile back and nod. Unless, of course, they studied under my friend in New York.

Small talk. Talk to someone standing next to you in line. If, as some critics say, the art of conversation is dead, then we killed it. Give conversation some "mouth to mouth" and revive small talk. It's friendly.

Be aware and stay ready to lend a helping hand. Positive Living is being a part of the community around you. Hand someone a dropped package. Hold open the door behind you until the next person grabs it. If someone looks lost, offer directions.

These simple actions take only a few seconds, but they brighten everyone's day by making this place in which we live a more positive one.

Patience

Aaaaarrrrgggggg!!! I'm SO upset. I have to stand in line. What a waste of time!!!! Sound like someone you know?

Standing in line is a part of everyday life, yet we seem so shocked when we see one. This is NOT the end of the world. It's one of the prices we pay for "civilization." It might seem worse when you live in the big city... and it is. But small towns have their share of lines, too.

How about waiting for a bus or train or airplane that's late? We think we have to be doing something every minute of every day. We have been so completely brainwashed by society that we're convinced we're lazy if we are not productive 100% of the time. We feel guilty for taking time for ourselves. When was the last time you had a daydream or just people watched? WOW! Especially in airports!

This is one of those things that you can't do much about, so why bitch?

Positive Living is taking the time to sit back. Relax. Enjoy a little free time. Talk to the person sitting next to you. Daydream. Plan your next vacation or design your dream home.

Don't get upset at the clerk or counter personnel. They typically did not cause the situation nor can they do anything to change it. And be kind to people in training, be it wait staff or a new receptionist. None of us learned everything all at once. Try to show a

little sympathy and a little patience. You'll make their day. And, not so coincidentally, yours as well.

The Bitch Session

How many times has this happened to you? You wake up in a great mood, get dressed and go into work. The first person that you see is a co-worker who woke up in a lousy mood. Who's mood do you think will prevail? The good one, right? Wrong! Why, you may ask? Because it has become part of our nature to bitch about every little thing. The co-worker says, "My car broke down on the way to work today" ...or... "I couldn't get a cab"... or... "I got a run in my last pair of pantyhose"... etc. and you say, "You think that's bad, last week (fill in the blank) happened to me".

We perpetuate it, try to top it and then everybody is in a bad mood. No good.

Try this:

Co-worker: "My car broke down...."

You: "I'm sorry to hear that. I've got a great mechanic if you need the number"... or... "But you made it in time for the big meeting"... or... "At least you missed the morning bitch session."

Positive Living is trying to find something positive either in the situation itself, "You've been saying you wanted a new car, here's your excuse", or in something that is happening now, "Look, here comes your favorite client, that should cheer you up".

Whatever you do, DON'T get in the habit of sharing miseries. It's a downward spiral that is almost impossible to stop. Before you know it, the whole office will be bitching about something. Don't let it get past you.

Be Kind - Rewind

The title of this section hit me one day when I put in a video (pre-DVD days) and found that it had not been completely rewound. I found myself in the middle of a movie and was reminded of the sign on the tape itself "Be Kind – Rewind."

This simple phrase applies to so many things that happen in life besides movies. It means showing a little consideration for others by going just slightly out of your way. It makes things more convenient for someone else.

I sat in the grocery store conducting my own non-scientific survey the other day (as I am prone to do). By positioning myself in the coffee area I had a clear view of the

bread aisle. I chose this position because there was a loaf of bread that had fallen onto the floor. As I sat there, waiting to see how long the bread stayed on the floor before someone picked it up, I was amazed at the number of people who went out of their way to avoid it, but who wouldn't bend down and pick it up. One woman actually bent down to move it out from in front of her wheels, but left it on the floor! After nearly 30 minutes I couldn't stand it anymore, so I got up, picked up the bread and returned it to the shelf. During that time, at least three dozen people passed that lonely loaf of bread on the floor. Five seconds was all it took to replace it on the shelf. (I know, I counted)

Positive Living is putting the bread back on the shelf. Rehanging clothes that you are not going to buy instead of leaving them on the dressing room floor.

Be considerate of the next person, some day it may be you.

Tippling

"Tippling is NOT a town in China!" That was a button I wore during my stint as a cocktail waitress. Most of the time it got grins, sometimes it got comments and, occasionally, it got blank stares.

There are still people out there (you know who you are) who don't tip or don't tip well. Societal standard is 15%. My standard is 20%. For one thing it's easier to figure and for another it represents only a minuscule portion of my income but it makes a big difference to a wait-person. A few extra dollars is really no big deal for me or for most people. And, most importantly, it leaves people smiling.

If I get bad service, I typically leave 5% – 10% and mention something to management or the wait person as to the reason. If they don't know there's a problem, that problem remains unfixed. Make sure that you don't mistake the kitchen's problems for the wait person's problem. For example: if the food is cold, that is typically a wait person's mistake for leaving it sitting too long. If your food arrives hot, but it took a long time to get it, that's a problem with the kitchen. Only management can do something about kitchen problems. Please don't skimp on the tip because of kitchen problems.

I never, repeat NEVER, skip the tip. I always leave something. Even if the service was bad, I still managed to get my food or drink or whatever. Which is the primary reason for being waited on to begin with.

Tippling can also be done in other ways. I consider clearing my table at a fast food restaurant a tip. It takes only a few moments and it frees up personnel, so they can

deliver faster service. It is also considerate to other patrons who may not otherwise have a clean table during a lunch or dinner rush.

For jobs that don't allow monetary tipping, you can tip by giving compliments. Tell your bank teller that you are impressed with her speed and efficiency. Let your cleaners know that they did a nice job getting that stain out of your favorite silk shirt. Seek out management at the grocery store and inform them of a particularly courteous checker. Kid around with the clerk of a department store during a busy Saturday.

Positive Living is showing your appreciation for a job well done by tipping.

Be creative about your tipping, but don't skimp when it comes to the green stuff. The livelihood of people in those types of jobs depend on you. Be generous!

Smile

I know it's a cliché', but it's true. Laugh and the world laughs with you. Frown and people avoid you. OK, so it's paraphrased, but the sentiment is the same.

Smile. It makes you feel better.

Smile. It lifts other people's spirits and they pass it on.

Smile. It's contagious.

Smile. Create happy lines instead of sad lines. (Hey, we're gonna get wrinkles anyway, might as well put 'em where you want 'em.)

Smile. It makes people wonder what you've been up to.

Smile. Just for the hell of it.

Okay, I'm done... for now. A lot of people may call me a fluffy bunny for making the suggestions that I have in this article. To them I smile and say; "this is bad, how?" I like being covered in nice warm fur. It gets me lots of hugs.

On Conflict Resolution

Submitted by Meredith

What is conflict? Conflict arises when our needs, desires or opinions differ. Every individual has their own viewpoints and motivations. When these viewpoints don't mesh, we get conflict. Conflict, in and of itself, is not a bad thing. How we deal with conflict is far more important than the conflict itself. There are many ways of dealing with conflict

in our community, but before we discuss that, we will discuss the various types of conflict common in our community.

There are many types of conflict:

- Constructive/Creative Conflict
- Destructive Conflict
- Personal Conflict
- Pointless Conflict

Constructive or creative conflicts can be beneficial to the group. Conflict often centers around change, making a decision on a course of action. In this sort of conflict, many ideas can arise, one or more of which could be a beneficial action for the group. When we debate over choosing method A over method B, we are able to see Pros and Cons, Costs and Benefits, potential Outcomes and Pitfalls for both methods from many different outlooks.

Destructive Conflict tends to come with a crisis or clash. It could be a clash of personalities or methods (ie: “We need to stick to our budget and save” vs “We need to spend money to make money.”). It could be a crisis; a member is thought to have done something illegal, unethical or against the will of the group. These kind of conflicts can rapidly spiral out of control, leading to drama, schisms, loss of membership or even the potential loss of the organization as a whole.

Personal Conflicts arise from difficulties between individuals. John Moonbeam may not get along well with Jane Wiccanopholis. These conflicts tend to only involve the individuals and possibly their immediate circle of friends, but all too often, they are dragged into the public sphere and begin to affect the rest of the community.

Pointless conflicts occur when people just want to fight. Unfortunately, there will always be people who like to play devils advocate, lack good communication skills or have toxic personalities. They may not intend to cause conflict, but the end result remains the same. This kind of conflict does not result in any benefit for the group, does not deal with a real issue (ie, a board member behaving in an unfair manner or an individual member harassing others at festival, etc) and merely causes trouble. This sort of conflict is best shut down quickly.

Methods of Dealing with Conflict

Dealing with conflict revolves around your communication skills. There are many

ways of communicating that will help avoid or diffuse potential conflict. Most of these methods involve yourself, being aware of your own words, thoughts and actions. Conflicts may take two (or more) people to get started, but you can only control your own actions. Conflict resolution takes a level of self knowledge and empathy. Even if this does not come naturally, it can be learned. So, let's go over the rules.

Rule # 1 – when dealing with any kind of conflict, separate the problem from the person!

How many times have we seen an issue turn into a series of personal attacks? How many times have we seen a criticism of an idea turned into a criticism of the idea's creator? In my own discussion groups and in my personal dealings, I have a general rule: Argue the Idea, Not the Person. Don't let things get personal. If you insult the person instead of the idea, they feel insulted or threatened and react defensively. Often, they'll turn the insults back and nothing productive will be achieved. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to view a criticism of an idea as a criticism of yourself. This is a human trait, but one that can be overcome. By thinking about your words and the other parties' perceptions, we can avoid this problem. By being conscious of our own issues and buttons, we can move beyond them.

Rule # 2 – Think fast, speak slow.

When dealing with conflict, you need to remember two things: 1) what do you want and 2) what can you say to get what you want? What is your goal in this conflict? Are you trying to convince others of a particular course of action or point of view? Are you trying to calm people down or stir things up (which is not always bad – stirring up passion or inspiration, for example)? Is your goal damage control? Are you on the offense or defense? Are you looking for more information or do you already know all you need? If you don't know what you want, your communication will be aimless and less effective.

With all forms of communication, it's important to think about the impact of your words. This is even more important when communicating online, where body language, tone of voice and facial expressions are unavailable. Are they going to further your goal? Are they going to improve things, get or give information that could help the situation, soothe wounds or provide a solution? Or are they going to make things worse, spread slander, hurt feelings or muddy the waters? Words have power and, in times of conflict, should be treated with the same caution we give a loaded gun.

Rule # 3 – Don't get mad, get even (nicer).

Getting angry doesn't help anyone. Rule #1 discussed not getting personal. As we've already mentioned, you can't control other people, only yourself. Sometimes,

people are going to get personal. They may insult you, they may twist your words, they may try to get you angry. When you're angry, you aren't thinking clearly, you're more likely to retaliate or drop to their level, and you're not likely to get anywhere.

So what do you do when the other side tries to make things personal?

- *Ignore it* – sticks and stones, etc. Let it slide and focus on the issue.
- *Reinterpret it* – if they're attacking you, treat it as an attack on the idea.
- *Call them on it* – if they're persistent about attacking you after you've tried the first 2 steps, call them on it. This can be very effective in a public setting, but it can blow up in your face. Be tactful and don't turn it into your own counter-attack. An example might be "I feel like we're getting a little personal here. Could we focus on the real issue at hand instead of personal issues?"

Rule # 4 – Play the Devil's Advocate

In addition to understanding your own motivations and desires, it's very helpful to understand your opponent's viewpoint. If you know what they want and why they want it, you can use that information to find acceptable compromises or alternate solutions. Understanding their outlook can also make it easier to explain your position. You may even realize that you agree with them or that your underlying motives or goals are the same.

Understanding their point of view not only gives you additional information, but it can make communicating easier. If you know where they're coming from, you can empathize. If you empathize, you're less likely to get angry or engage in attacks. If you don't get angry, it's that much easier to resolve a conflict.

Communication Tips and Tricks

The following ideas are useful when deal with any sort of conflict. Most of these center around effective communication skills. The next time you find yourself in a conflict, try a few of these. You may be surprised at how much it helps.

- 1) *Practice Active Listening* – This involves really paying attention to what the other party says, not just waiting for them to stop so you can speak again. Really listen to what they say and paraphrase back what you heard. You might also include some clarification questions if you need more info. This shows the other side that you are really listening (no one likes to be ignored) and it gives you the opportunity to get more information about their viewpoint.
- 2) *Use I Statements* – Think about the difference between these two statements: "All you ever do is complain! You never help with anything!" or "I feel frustrated when people

complain about a problem without offering a solution.” I statements express the problem. You statements blame the problem on someone. When you blame someone, they will get defensive and make communication harder.

3) *Ask “Why?”* – Sometimes the toddler approach is best. Part of conflict resolution is understanding the underlying issues. Joe Ravenclaw is upset about a proposed change to the bylaws. Is he upset about the new rule or is he upset with the person proposing it? If so, why does he think the new rule is problematic? Does he think it gives loopholes that could be exploited or is too strict or unnecessary? Ask why. Once you understand where someone is coming from, it’s much easier to work with them.

4) *Take a break!* – When conflicts have been going on for an extended period of time, especially if feelings are starting to run high, it’s time to take a break. Take an hour to grab a bite to eat, a quick nap, a nice walk and cool down. Take some time to review the issue and reevaluate where needed. You’ll come back to the meeting with a second wind and sometimes a different outlook.

5) *Expand* – As much as we like duality, the world is not black and white. During conflicts, we tend to get boxed into an either/or, us/them mentality. It’s important to get outside the box. Ask open ended questions; they’re likely to draw a wider range of answers than a Yes/No question.

6) *Presentation counts* – How we say something is just as important as what we say. Pay attention to your tone of voice, posture, body language, eye contact, etc. Talking rapidly makes you seem nervous. Not making eye contact makes people doubt your honesty. Folded arms and frowns are confrontational. Are you sitting up, looking alert, or are you slouched in your seat like you’re about to pass out?

7) *Just the facts, ma’am* – Opinions always have their place, but they have more of an impact if they’re backed up by facts. “I don’t like the idea of building a cob med building because it’s too labor intensive; the clay material takes so long to harden and build up” is more informative and constructive than just “I don’t like cob buildings.”

Conflict is an issue that will always be with us. Since the beginning of the organization in 1980, there have always been people who disagreed. Sometimes those disagreements got out of hand and caused major problems for CMA. By taking an active stand in conflict resolution, we can prevent this sort of ‘witch war.’ If each of us, individually, makes the decision to use the rules and tips listed here, we could make a huge difference in our community. We can make our conflicts productive and our communications effective. To a certain extent, I believe we really can all just get along.

If you are interested in more information about conflict resolution or in being a Community Mediator, please contact the Assistant Director.

How Can We Heal? Conflicts within Paganism.

By Stephanie N. Canada

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I spend a lot of time doing interfaith work, thinking about the most effective way for Pagans to reach out to other faiths and achieve acceptance in the wider world. But in the process it has become uncomfortably clear that there is major work to be done on an **intrafaith** level, within the Pagan community.

It takes a strong personality to birth a group, and attract enough members to make it viable. Whoever that person is, s/he feels a sense of ownership, this – after all – is his or her baby. They have worked and planned and nurtured it, and they treasure it. But as the group grows, it is inevitable that there will be differences between how some members of the group view the direction the group is going vs. other members and/or the group leader(s). I'm not talking solely about covens here, I'm talking any Pagan group; large or small, one tradition or multi-tradition. I think the birthing and nurturing process is fairly well understood among Pagans, but when a group reaches a certain size, or a certain level of discord, then we are at sea.

Pagan leaders do a shockingly poor job of delegating their work, which is why so many of them burn out. Yes, sometimes it is hard to find a volunteer, but when volunteers step up we don't mentor them particularly well. There seems to be two extremes, with no middle. Either the work is thrust upon the unwitting victim – I mean volunteer – with little or no guidance, or the leader just can't seem to let go of control enough to let the volunteer begin to make the job his/her own and implement new ideas into the organization. When a second strong personality appears in a group, the original leader(s) must decide; are we comfortable enough with sharing power to work with this person and accept a different point of view? Or should we be training them to hive off and start a

group of their own? I often see leaders start with the first; when they aren't truly ready to share, and end up with the second when the other person storms off to create a group of their own without being micromanaged. Bad vibes, angry gossip, and ill will all around are the result. Another Witch War has started.

I have been thinking quite a bit about what Forgiveness means in Pagan terms. Like so many others; I was raised a Christian, but the concept of turning the other cheek seems irrelevant and cowardly to me now. I'm not much inclined to submissive gestures. Still, I understand that there is a healing, transformative experience associated with letting go of anger and old hurts. Does this mean forgiving someone who is unrepentant of their deeds and has not asked for forgiveness? I struggle with this one, and haven't come up with a satisfying answer. But I think it's a question we all need to consider seriously. Do we forgive to heal ourselves, or is forgiveness the reward paid to the transgressor for their remorse at what they have done? Is the attitude of the transgressor irrelevant, or an integral part of the process?

We have seen these same forces split CMA, and they threaten to split it further at a time we can ill afford it. More and more newbies show up at every campout, and that is true for other organizations as well as our own. These people have no emotional investment in past conflicts, but are "educated" as quickly as possible, Pax Templi notwithstanding. Are we seen as "the good guys", or does this process show us at our worst and most vindictive? Is it right to hold a grudge against all the members of an organization when our quarrel is with a few?

In another vein, has the conflicts between members of our leadership opened the divide between the members and the leadership to the point where we are essentially two different organizations? How long can we continue to function like this?

I don't have all the answers, but I know that I would like to see some sort of formal healing process; with forgiveness on both an individual and an organizational level, begin. I firmly believe that our money problems would resolve themselves if we aligned our magickal energies with acceptance, forgiveness, and love as key notes. After all, it's hard to feel good about giving money when you don't feel like you are a part of the whole; when you feel distant from your leadership; when if you are not "in", you're "out".

If anyone thinks this is a good idea, I'd love to hear from you. I'm getting handfasted at Beltane and so may miss this festival, but would love to work on this with an eye to doing something for Samhain. If my words have been blunt, they've been said in the hope of making things better and bringing us together.