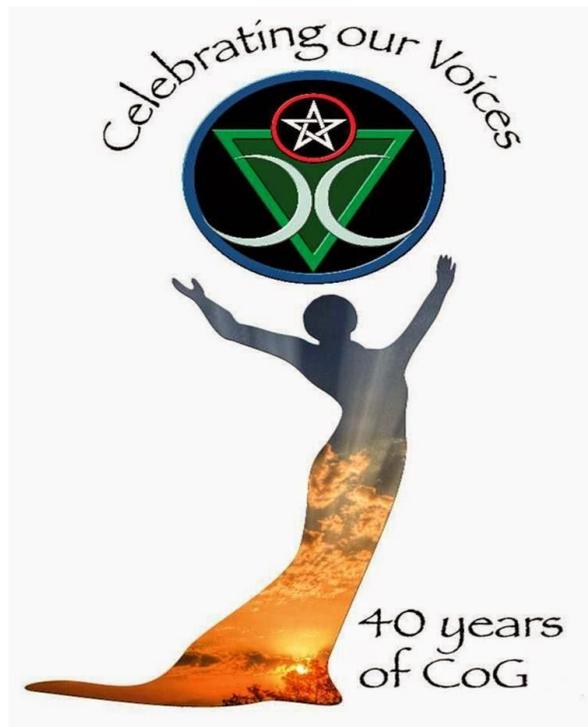




**Grand Council 2015 Agenda  
August 13-16, 2015  
Ontario, CA  
Hosted by Touchstone Local Council**



Arranged by Lady Magdalena of the Temple of the Rising Phoenix, Dogwood Local Council

COVENTINA

THOU WHO ART THE SACRED WELL, THE WOMB,  
THE GIVER OF THE WATERS OF LIFE,  
HEALTH AND PURIFICATION, OF NEW BEGINNINGS,  
OF THE EBB AND FLOW OF ALL EMOTIONS,  
INSPIRATION, WISHES AND PROPHECY,  
AND THE DESIRES BURIED DEEP WITHIN OUR HEARTS,  
WE WHO ARE THY CHILDREN CALL UNTO THEE!

YOU HAVE THROWN YOUR NET AMONGST THE STARS  
AND GATHERED IN YOUR PEOPLE TO CREATE YOUR COMMUNITY.  
WE COME TOGETHER TODAY  
IN COMMUNITY OF THINGS WE HAVE IN COMMON.  
WE COME TO COMMUNE, TO SHARE OUR THOUGHTS,  
FEELINGS, AND DESIRES.

WE LOOK AROUND HERE AND ASK  
WHO STANDS BY MY SIDE?  
WHO SPEAKS TRUTH TO ME?  
WHO LISTENS WHEN I SPEAK?  
WHO CHEERS ME WHEN I AM SAD?  
WHO HOLDS ME WHEN I AM WEARY?  
WHO SUPPORTS MY EFFORTS?  
WHO CELEBRATES MY VICTORIES?

WHO WORSHIPS THE GODS WITH ME IN THE SACRED CIRCLE?  
THE ANSWER IS HERE, THE PERSON BESIDE YOU AND ACROSS THE WAY.

AS WE SPEAK TODAY, LET US STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY  
MAY THE VOICE OF THE EARTH SPEAK THROUGH US  
MAY WE HAVE THE POWER TO SING NEW SONGS OF FORGIVENESS  
MAY WE HAVE THE POWER TO FORM NEW TOOLS OF UNDERSTANDING  
MAY WE HAVE THE POWER TO BRING STRENGTH AND RESOLUTION  
TO OUR COMMUNITY

AS WE SPEAK, LET US HEAL OURSELVES  
AS WE SPEAK, LET US HEAL THE WORLD  
AS WE SPEAK, LET OUR POWER COMBINE  
IN THY SERVICE FOR THE GREATEST GOOD OF ALL  
AS WE SPEAK, LET IT BE SO, AND SO MOTE IT BE!!!

## **Verification of Quorum**

Cat Perron, National Membership Officer

## **Invocation to Coventina**

Jack Prewett, First Officer, Touchstone Local Council

## **Welcome and Introduction of CoG National Officers and Assistants**

Kathy Lezon NFO 2014-2015

## **Agenda Review – Additions/Deletions**

## **Hart and Crescent & Over the Moon Awards**

## **Covenant of the Goddess Award of Honor Presentation**

Margot Adler

Allison Harlow

Judy Harrow

Selena Fox

Debra Ann Light

Katherine Fuller

Peter Soterberg “Sparky T Rabbit”

Don Frew

## **Cherry Hill Seminary**

Report to Covenant of the Goddess, July 2014

Cherry Hill Seminary is grateful for the ongoing support of Covenant of the Goddess members, making possible year-round distance education for leadership, ministry and personal growth, including open short courses called Insights (formerly Foundations), certificates and graduate degrees. Key activities in the past year:

- “Entering the Sacred Grove” was the 2014 Summer Intensive, held in Butler, Missouri, and hosted by Sacred Well Congregation. During the retreat, which used myths from Ovid’s Metamorphoses, Cherry Hill Seminary graduated our second Master of Divinity student, Carol Kirk, of Huntsville, Alabama.
- Launch of a 12-part curriculum for incarcerated Pagans, called “Pagan Life Academy.” We fill several orders and inquiries each week for this new resource.
- A new package of five insights courses called Rhizomes,\* selected for their critical role in building the health of community groups, makes possible a greatly-reduced price, if the courses

are purchased as a package. CHS encourages groups to raise the funds for Rhizomes, then consider sending a different person to each class. Rhizomes classes include:

- Pagan Public Relations
- Managing Conflict Creatively
- Leading Like Water
- Beyond Bake Sales to Real Fundraising
- Real World Pagan Ethics

Each course lasts four weeks. Individual four-week courses cost \$95 each; as a package, the entire Rhizomes group costs \$295.

*\* Rhizomes - horizontal underground stems that send out roots and shoots; a philosophy of culture having multiple lateral connections.*

- Through gifts received during our fall “Tie A Bow On It” fund drive we were able to award three Rhizomes scholarships, one master’s course scholarship, and three Pagan Life Academy full packages.
- Renowned British Pagan scholar Jo Pearson has joined our faculty as Chair of the Department of Theology & Religious Studies. One other notable faculty addition is Jenny Blain of Scotland, widely regarded as the leading authority on Heathenry.
- A new Artist-in-Residence began her residency in January 2014. Many know the lifelong work of visual artist Lauren Raine, best known for her breathtaking “Masks of the Goddess.”
- In response to growing concern about accountability in our communities, CHS released a free media presentation called “Don't Look Away: Recognizing & Responding to Abuse for non-professionals.” “Don't Look Away” was created to help individuals and small groups better understand the nature of sexual abuse and appropriate ways to respond, as well as what to do if you have been abused, yourself. An accompanying resource is a new web page on the main CHS site, called Special Resources. (found at <http://cherryhillseminary.org/students/forms-and-resources-for-students/special-resources/>) The page is a quick reference, not only on sexual abuse, but on domestic violence, addictions, child and elder abuse and neglect, mental health, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

For more information, contact us at [CHS@cherryhillseminary.org](mailto:CHS@cherryhillseminary.org) or visit [www.cherryhillseminary.org](http://www.cherryhillseminary.org)  
P.O. Box 5405, Columbia, S.C. 29250-5405

Cherry Hill Seminary is a 501(c)3 nonprofit. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent of the law.

## CoG Interfaith Representatives Annual Reports

### Don Frew

As in many recent years, my interfaith work is an ongoing series of weekly meetings and conference calls of committees & boards, punctuated by the higher-profile events that all those meetings make possible. I have been trying to cut back on interfaith commitments, due to health concerns around my arm & hand, but it seems like every time I am ready to say “No”, an organization will say that there is some particular problem or need that requires that I stay. It looks like I’ll just keep going ‘til I drop. ;-) BTW, I hope that the technical

glitches in the CoG Interfaith Blog will be resolved and result in more regular postings there.

As I usually do, I've arranged this annual summary starting with global organizations and proceeding through national to regional – with names of organizations in **bold**.

### **Global Interfaith Work**



Andras has kept the Pagan community informed about the progress towards the next **Parliament of the World's Religions** ([www.parliamentofreligions.org](http://www.parliamentofreligions.org)), in Salt Lake City, October 15 – 19, 2015 (<http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=35&sn=1>). There has been much discussion of this in the Pagan community and MANY people are planning to attend. In the beginning, the Witch groups sort of kept a united front in explaining ourselves to the rest of the religious community. Over time, we felt comfortable explaining our differences and getting them to understand that there are many kind of Witches. We have been telling them that there are many other kinds of Pagans, but until the others were there, it didn't sink in. In my opinion, in October the global community will be exposed to the wild and magnificent diversity that is the Pagan movement. I think they're ready. I hope we are.

On a positive note, I was called up out of the blue by the new Director of the Parliament, Dan Hostetler, to talk about Parliament history and interfaith in general. Paul Chaffee had told him that my reports to CoG (through [AIR] and the interfaith blog) were probably the most comprehensive history of the interfaith movement that exists. He is a Mennonite with a history of non-profit administration, but is new to interfaith and wanted my input. Now we talk often. He knows about us (Witches) and has no problems.

The **Lost & Endangered Religions Project** (LERP, [www.religionsproject.org](http://www.religionsproject.org)) continues its work. This is a group I founded as a Gift of Service at the 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions in Cape Town, South Africa. LERP works with marginalized religious communities around the world to help preserve religious traditions (texts, rituals, songs, dances, etc.) that are in danger of being lost, and to restore such aspects of these traditions as may have been lost in the community yet are preserved in academic archives. LERP's approach focuses on creating mutually beneficial & cooperative relationships between religious communities & scholars. These relationships are in service to the communities & sensitive to community needs. Since 1999, LERP has developed service projects with the Yezidi of southern Turkey and with archaeological efforts in southern & eastern Turkey, with the performative dance & ritual traditions of the *devadasis* and of the Araiyyar priests of southern India, and with new religious movements in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Our projects in India continued over the course of the past year, as well as some special projects in collaboration with the Adocentyn Research Library and the Spirituality & the Earth Cooperation Circle of the United Religions Initiative (see below). I was interviewed about the LERP at the 2009 Parliament in Melbourne:

<http://blogs.abc.net.au/religion/2010/01/have-ditchkins-heard-of-this.html>

Our newest project is very exciting. As many of you know, Maya elder Apolinario Chile “Tata” Pixtun died in April of 2014. He was the President (Spokesperson) of the **Mayan Confederation of Guatemala, Belize, and Honduras**. We met in 2000, at the signing of the URI Charter in Pittsburgh. Rowan Fairgrove and I attended. At that time, Lakota elder Gary Smith had come up to me and said that “whenever a great good enters the world, there are forces that try to prevent it.” Introducing us to Tata, Gary said that the indigenous people “had been working to protect the URI, but they needed help. Would the Witches lend our magical aid to theirs?” Of course, we said yes. This was the first time that indigenous people had reached out to us in this way in the URI. When Tata and I re-connected in 2011, he remembered his experience of Witches’ magic” and had no problem with blending our ceremonial traditions. I enjoyed a close relationship with him from that



time on based on shared interfaith work and his ongoing healing efforts dealing with my nerve damage. (His work was more effective than anything the doctors did! My neurologists ended up telling me to “do whatever this guy says”!)

(← This is Tata with one of Oberon’s Gaia statues.)

Over the course of our relationship, I had spent a week doing ceremonies in and around his town of Chimaltenango in Guatemala, he had come up to spend a week of ceremonies with me in Berkeley (spending part of this time staying at Rachael’s), and we had spent a week together in Mexico last November discussing indigenous interfaith networking and visiting sacred sites. (I wrote extensively about all this on the CoG Interfaith Blog.)

Tata, on his deathbed, left instructions for me to come down to Guatemala to record & copy his traditional teachings. He had written down “everything he was taught” in 14 books in Spanish and Mayan. Following his instructions, the Lost & Endangered Religions Project will preserve and store this material in digital form and make it available only according to the instructions he left. I know that some is intended for publication, but most will be under the authority of the Mayan Confederacy of Belize, Honduras, and Guatemala. This has taken some time to arrange. There has been a rift in the Mayan community over the succession and it has taken some time to heal. Tata also requested that I meet the members of the Confederation so that they will be comfortable with me copying their teachings. As a step towards building that trust, I worked with members of the Spirituality & the Earth CC and the Earth Wisdom MCC (see below) to raise money to acquire a place where many of the Mayan sacred objects that Tata had held in trust could be secured. (None of these folks had places that could be securely locked.)

The next step is to go down, meet the Confederation, and copy/scan the materials. Indigenous wheels turn slowly and with lurches and I don’t know when I might get a call or email saying “We’re expecting you day after tomorrow.”

The Lost & Endangered Religions Project is now a funded project of the Interfaith Center at the Presidio (see below). We have a proposal in to the Parliament, but have not heard if

it's been approved. Frankly, I will be stunned if it isn't, since the Parliament very publicly committed itself to support of LERP at the Cape Town Parliament.

With Tata's death, the organizing of a new interfaith, indigenous networking organization – the **Council of the People of Earth and Sky** – went on hold. I don't know if it will continue or if its efforts will be folded into existing interfaith work, such as the Earth Wisdom MCC.



Most of my international interfaith work continues to be with various entities connected with the **United Religions Initiative** (URI, [www.uri.org](http://www.uri.org)). The URI remains the largest grassroots interfaith organization on Earth, recently growing to over 700 Cooperation Circles (CCs) in 86 countries involving over 2.5 million people, with an annual operating budget of over \$3.25 million. There is a nice video about the URI at: [www.uri.org/about uri/say yes to the dream](http://www.uri.org/about_uri/say_yes_to_the_dream)

I continue to serve on the URI's **Global Council**, which is made up of 31 Trustees. Most of the Trustees were elected by the Regions, three each from 8 Regions. I am what is called a "Continuing Trustee", meaning I was selected by the previous Global Council to be one of two Trustees who would continue from one Global Council into the next to provide continuity. We just restructured to staggered elections – with half of the Regions holding elections every two years – so the position of Continuing Trustee will no longer be needed. This is the URI's fourth elected Global Council. Only the URI's founder – Bishop Bill Swing – and I have served on all four.



[2014 Global Council & Global Support Staff]

The Global Council meets by conference call several times a year. I know it's hard to believe, but somehow 31 Trustees (plus a few others) in 13 time zones always manage to get through a two-hour agenda on time. Some folks are on the call at 2:00 am (their time) while others are on at 11:00 pm. I'm usually at 8:00 am, so not too bad.

The Global Council also has one week-long, face-to-face meeting each year, in different parts of the world. This year, it will be held in Salt Lake City, for the week leading up to the Parliament of the World's Religions. We'll go straight from a week-long Board meeting

into the Parliament. What fun! There will be a number of URI programs at the Parliament, but I'm not sure yet which ones I'll be in.

In June, the URI and the **United Nations** both celebrated anniversaries – the URI's 15<sup>th</sup> and the UN's 70<sup>th</sup>. Since the UN Charter was signed in San Francisco, there was a day-long joint event for several hundred people held at SF's Grace Cathedral. The day started with a breakfast of about 50 dignitaries at the Fairmount Hotel. The breakfast opened with a blessing performed by me and URI Director Victor Kazanjian. We incorporated the Waters of the World into our blessing, since the Waters of the World collection and ceremony started at the UN 50<sup>th</sup> event in SF 20 years ago. The Waters now include water from 154 sacred water sources in 47 countries on all seven continents and from the Seven Seas, and they have been part of ceremonies all over the world. After our blessing, the collected dignitaries were addressed by URI-founder Bishop Bill Swing, the UN Under-Secretary General Cristina Gallach, and the India Ambassador to the UN Asoke Kumar Mukerji. The breakfast crew moved over to the public ceremony at the cathedral, where we were joined by Democratic House Leader Nancy Pelosi. There were speeches and musical performances throughout the day.

As a Continuing Trustee, I have focused on chairing the **URI's Bylaws Review Committee**. We had been going over the URI's Bylaws line by line for months. As so often happens, the Bylaws you write when you are dreaming up an organization don't end up accurately reflecting how the organization takes shape and grows. However, our report to the Global Council was basically that we should start over. The old Committee included a Director and an Assistant Director who are no longer part of the organization. It also had fewer Trustees than non-Trustees. The current URI was moving in a new direction and some of the work of the old Committee was no longer relevant. The remaining members felt that the Committee should be reconstituted, with more Trustees involved. We also felt that the Committee should frame questions for the Council and the membership to discuss. Fortunately, we were contacted by the **Stanford Religious Liberty Clinic** (<https://www.law.stanford.edu/organizations/clinics/religious-liberty-clinic>) who heard about what we were doing and offered their services. They work with groups like ours to do exactly what we are doing. Our Bylaws review will be part of a graduate program of international, non-profit religious administration. This will make our task much easier and more fun.

In recent years, I have served on the Global Council's **External Affairs Committee**. This group was created at the Global Council's meeting in Amman, Jordan, a few years back out of the Trustees' desire to respond with one voice to issues of common concern. I worked with Abraham Karickam (URI's Regional Coordinator for Asia, India, South Zone) to create an administrative structure for this group, based on an earlier policy I had created governing who could speak for the URI and under what circumstances. We wanted the EAC to be able to address urgent issues, but after thoughtful deliberation and examining the pertinent facts. What ended up happening was that with every issue brought to us, we had Trustees on opposite sides of the issue and couldn't come to agreement on a meaningful statement. In the end, after many meetings, the EAC was effectively dissolved and its function given over

to the Standing Committee (the subset of the Global Council that meets monthly to oversee the ongoing affairs of the URI).

I serve as part of the **Regional Leadership Team** (RLT) for the URI's **Multiregion** ([www.urimulti.org](http://www.urimulti.org), also

[http://www.uri.org/cooperation\\_circles/explore\\_cooperation\\_circles/region/multiregion](http://www.uri.org/cooperation_circles/explore_cooperation_circles/region/multiregion)).

The Multiregion includes all URI Cooperation Circles whose members are in more than one geographic Region or which have a focus that transcends Regional boundaries (like peace, women, the environment, etc.). CoG's Rachael Watcher is the Regional Coordinator of the Multiregion and leads the RLT. Much of the work has been contacting CCs that are spread all over the world and pulling them back together into a cohesive Region. Rachael and the RLT have done that, and in the process increased the size of the Multiregion from around 25 CCs to 43 CCs plus a couple of MCCs (Multiple Cooperation Circles, consisting of three or more CCs united around a single purpose).

While I am a member of several URI Cooperation Circles, the one with which I am most associated is the **Spirituality & the Earth CC** (S&ECC). The S&ECC is a Multiregion CC with 20 active members in five countries around the world. Our purpose is "to foster and facilitate communication and cooperation between all those who feel a spiritual connection with the Earth." The S&ECC includes many of CoG's interfaith folks, including Rowan Fairgrove, Deborah Ann Light, Catherine Starr, Glenn Turner, and Rachael Watcher. Over the course of the last year, S&ECC members continued to work with other Earth-religionists in the URI through the **Earth Wisdom MCC**, of which I am one of the Coordinators, along with Raul Mamani (indigenous Jujuy, Argentina). A few months ago, we raised money to help the Mayan Federation acquire a safe space to store sacred objects.

The Earth Wisdom MCC includes the S&ECC, two CC in India, three CCs in Latin America, and the **Hidden Seeds: Global Indigenous Network CC**. This CC grew out of the Global Indigenous Initiative meeting held last year. I am a member, but not a coordinator. It is becoming what is called a "resource CC", i.e. a CC whose purpose is to assist other CCs – in this case, around indigenous programs and projects. One of its Coordinators – Multiregion Trustee Audri Scott Williams – hosts a radio program called "Indigenous Voices". I was a guest on the show twice since last Grand Council.

This past year, I was invited to join the **Council on Foreign Relations** regular "Religion & Foreign Policy Conference Call series"

(<http://www.cfr.org/about/outreach/religioninitiative/audio.html>). This consist of about 100 listeners on a conference call, while a speaker (usually an academic or a journalist) addresses a topic like the recent Pew poll, or religion and politics under Modi in India, or the role of religion in the situation in the Ukraine. The talks are followed by questions from the listeners. I am identified as representing CoG in the rosters that go out with each call, and I have been called on in every call in which I've participated.

**Adocentyn**

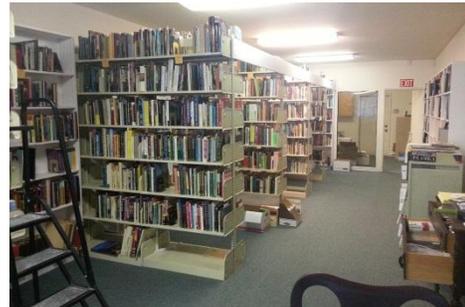
For a couple of years I have been working on a new private Pagan library for on-site use. The **Adocentyn Research Library** ([adocentyn.us](http://adocentyn.us), and we're on

Facebook) has a Board of six that includes several current or former CoG-members: myself, Gus diZerega, Rowan Fairgrove, Anna Korn, Diana Paxson, and Glenn Turner (actually, it includes four former CoG First Officers!). As of today – July 11, 2015 – we have over 7,700 books on the shelves and in our online database:

([www.librarything.com/catalog/AdocentynLibrary](http://www.librarything.com/catalog/AdocentynLibrary)). We are having volunteer parties where folks bring their laptops and sit and catalogue. We will include document archives, such as those of the Berkeley Area Interfaith Council and the CoG Archives (those that are not sealed for confidentiality reasons). Grand Council 2012 graciously approved adding a check-off donation box for ARL to the CoG Membership Renewal Form, once we had our non-profit status, which we received in October 2014. We are slogging through the paperwork with the city of Albany over a business permit, but should have that soon.



Entrance



Inside – the Stacks

I include this under “Global Interfaith Work” for two reasons:

1) We are in discussions with other Pagan libraries – the New Alexandrian Library in Maryland, the Open Hearth Foundation Library in D.C., Ardantane in New Mexico, and the Boscastle Museum of Witchcraft in Cornwall – about forming an international “Pagan Esoteric Library Association”.

2) We have been collaborating with other, global entities – such as the Lost & Endangered Religions Project and the Spirituality & the Earth CC of the URI – in making the ARL into the local node of their international “Wiccan History Project” network and the archive for their stored material.

And we are getting offers of books and personal papers from prominent Pagans and Professors from around the world! We will be looking for a larger location almost as soon as we open!



I continue to serve (as does Rachael) on the Editorial Board of **The Interfaith Observer** (TIO, [www.theinterfaithobserver.org](http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org)), which is has quickly become the premier online journal covering the interfaith movement. TIO’s Board of Advisors is a “Who’s Who” of the interfaith movement ([www.theinterfaithobserver.org/who-we-are/](http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org/who-we-are/)). I was recently made Vice President of the TIO Board. Starting with the first issue, I’ve had articles on interfaith work published in the September 2011, January 2012, March 2012, and June 2012 issues. A couple of these articles were picked up by The Wild Hunt. The February 2015 issue of TIO was focused on “Indigenous Traditions in the Modern World” (<http://theinterfaithobserver.org/journal/february-2015-1.html>) and included a profile of me

by editor Paul Chaffee, two articles by me, two articles by Rachael Watcher, and one by Gus diZerega.

## **Regional Interfaith Work**

At the regional level, *most* of my interfaith work has been focused on the **Interfaith Center at the Presidio** ([www.interfaith-presidio.org](http://www.interfaith-presidio.org)).<sup>1</sup> The ICP is a consortium of interfaith councils, seminaries, and interfaith programs in Northern California that work together to maintain a permanent site for ongoing interfaith work in the Main Post Chapel of San Francisco's Presidio. I have served on the ICP's Board since ([www.interfaith-presidio.org/board.htm](http://www.interfaith-presidio.org/board.htm)). I am currently serving as Board Secretary, which makes me part of the ICP's Executive Committee.



Much of our administrative time and effort has gone to raising the \$7 million needed for restoration and expansion of the Chapel that houses the ICP. It *looked* like the lawsuits that had held up *any* building or renovation on the Main Post had been resolved and we could finally move forward, but no such luck. We remain in a holding pattern. While we wait to move forward, we are at the design level where we are getting specific about our plans for an outdoor ritual circle oriented to the cardinal directions. While the ICP Board is gung-ho in favor of this, I'll still make sure to be in every meeting with the Presidio Trust where this comes up. NCLC-CoG is an "Affiliate" of the ICP.

Among other things:

- \* In April, I worked on behalf of the ICP to support a press conference on behalf of the Yezidi & Assyrian people in Syria, who are being exterminated by ISIL. Folks were recommended to go to <http://www.yeziditruth.org/> to learn more and support the cause.
- \* In May, I was a reader at our annual Memorial Day interfaith service.
- \* In June, we held a Pre-Parliament event, at which some people learned about the Parliament and others presented info about their proposals. The ICP Board Chair read about Macha's proposal, since she couldn't attend. I was asked to tell an inspiring story about each of the previous Parliaments: Chicago 1993, Cape Town 1999, Barcelona 2004, and Melbourne 2009

The ICP has several program proposals in at the Parliament and we are awaiting confirmation. We hope to be taking the McDonald Windows (<http://www.interfaith-presidio.org/mcdonald/index.htm>) to Salt Lake City to be installed there in an exhibit.

Footage of some ICP events can also be found on YouTube by searching under "Interfaith Center at the Presidio"

---

<sup>1</sup> BTW, I designed the ICP's logo. The use of primary & secondary colors ensures that we have at least one of the sacred colors of each religion. The design is a special geometric arrangement. Look closely... No two rings are linked together, yet the whole cannot be pulled apart. This represents maintaining the uniqueness of our traditions, while coming together in relationships supporting shared concerns.

([https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=interfaith+center+at+the+presidio](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=interfaith+center+at+the+presidio)). The ICP also puts out a Newsletter & calendar of interfaith events all around the Bay Area. Check it out at: <http://www.interspirit.net/icpnewsevents.cfm>

### **Local Interfaith Work**



Really, a lot of the work above is also local, since the San Francisco Bay Area is a nexus for global, national, and regional interfaith work. It's easy to stay "plugged in" living in the Bay Area. This is also true for most of the "local" interfaith groups – they usually have a larger component. In addition to the above interfaith organizations, I also serve on the Advisory board of **Ahimsa**, a local interfaith organization that does various programs relating to Peace Activism (<http://www.ahimsaberkeley.org/>). The Chairman of this Board is Henry Baer, who represents Ahimsa on the Board of the ICP. He takes great pleasure in being the "resident Atheist" on the ICP Board and trying to skewer the rest of us; and I take great pleasure in constantly confounding his sweeping generalizations about religions, what they do, and how they think.

I am asked to be a guest speaker at the local **Graduate Theological Union** and at **UC Berkeley** about twice a year. In the past year I have been asked to speak twice on possession, from a Craft perspective, to two different classes on South Indian Religion and twice on Lovecraft & the Necronomicon to different classes on Orientalism & Popular Culture.



I serve as Adjunct Faculty at the local **Chaplaincy Institute** in Berkeley CA ([www.chaplaincyinstitute.org](http://www.chaplaincyinstitute.org)), a regional center for interfaith training. Each semester, I teach modules on Earth Religions and on "the nuts & bolts of doing interfaith work". Most of the students at the Chaplaincy Institute are either clergypersons who recognize the need for interfaith education to greater address the growing diversity in their communities or individuals who are called to positions like prison or hospital chaplaincies.

### **Succession Planning**

I have said this before, but it is still true. We can collect interfaith resource material for the CoG website, but the real problem here is that the single best way – the only way, really – to help someone or "mentor" someone in interfaith is for the less experienced person to attend events with the more experienced person – tagging along right beside, attending the same talks, meeting the same people, participating in the same programs & conversations, etc. Since the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, interfaith work has been all about personal relationships. You can't build relationships with documents hosted on a website or classes at a MerryMeet. You can only build relationships with personal recommendations, face-to-face introductions, and sitting down to talk over tea or a meal. This person-to-person nature of contemporary interfaith work makes it very difficult to get involved beyond the local level if you aren't in a position to travel to interfaith conferences or don't already live in a center of interfaith activity – like San Francisco, New York, or Chicago.

In my opinion, this is a big part of what the interfaith annual budget and savings account are for... to help more of us get to such events and have the opportunities to build such relationships. CoG's Interfaith Budget and Savings Account are there to help **ALL** of us participate in interfaith work, not just the designated Interfaith Reps.

The website can still be a resource, but we need to re-create the interfaith section of the CoG website that went away when the interfaith blog was created. I brought a lot of material to Grand Council 2014, but there have been complications with getting an interfaith resources section back up. I hope this can get resolved soon. And we need to fix the problems with the CoG Interfaith Blog.

Local interfaith can start with nothing more than introducing yourself to a neighbor of another faith tradition. If there aren't local interfaith groups to join, you can start one. This is where interfaith resources on the CoG website and classes at MerryMeet may help.

### **Summary**

Just a few weeks ago, I did a series of six YouTube interviews with Lailoken Scathach, most of which concern interfaith work. So far, the responses have been good. You can see the first one here: <http://theinterfaithobserver.org/journal/february-2015-1.html> (BTW, from there you can also find several more interviews with me by other people and organizations.)

As the largest, most inclusive Wiccan religious organization on Earth, with a 40-year history of interfaith work, the Covenant of the Goddess is in a unique position to represent the Craft in the world of interfaith communication, organizing, and cooperation. We have led the way and it is gratifying to see more and more Pagan groups recognizing the unique opportunities that interfaith work offers. The support of the Covenant has made many significant gains possible.

As always, I am deeply grateful to the Covenant for entrusting me with this work.

Thank you and Blessed Be,  
Don Frew  
National Interfaith Representative

### **Oberon Osiris**

Technically, my year begins just before Merry Meet 2014, when I attended NAIN Connect, in Detroit at Wayne State University. Rachel Watcher, who was there as a Regional Officer of NAIN, and we attended at least one workshop together, encouraged me. From this event, I was introduced to the local Interfaith community, eventually becoming a member of DAIN, the Dearborn Area Interfaith Network. This group interfaces graciously in the large metro Detroit suburb, with participation from several mosques, and mostly other Christian denominations. I also have been invited to write several times for the Detroit Interfaith Leadership Council, who co-sponsored NAIN and serves as the overall main umbrella for the Metro Detroit area. In that larger networking body

more non-Abrahamic religions such as Hindu or Native Americans are represented but I appear to be the only Wiccan or Pagan in Detroit's Interfaith Community. I've been pleased to attend these events. One of the first things I learned was that Interfaith people seem to have better relationships in that community, than their own faith or spiritual community. As reassuring or not as that may be, my best advice was from Auntie R, who said, "just listen".

At the NAIN conference I attended a workshop about Faith dimensions in Healthcare hosted by several local women associated with the nursing and clerical professions in area hospitals. One of these was Beverly Beltramo who invited me to an Interfaith prayer service at Oakwood Hospital, in Dearborn which is not too far from me. Attending that about a week later in August was a pleasant and surprising experience. Along with the usual denominations of Christian and Muslim priests or spokespersons were a reader for Native Americans and also one for Hindu practitioners. Afterwards at a refreshment table, I spoke with the Hindu woman who gave us that prayer and her sister who in mentioning names and affiliations indicated that she knew Patrick McCollum from a recent UN event they were both at.

In October I attended the annual Leadership Council's award dinner and ceremony, along with several other members of DAIN. I reacquainted with several people I met at NAIN and also the Hindu woman who mentioned Patrick. The event was large, possibly several hundred people and was emceed by a local Detroit News columnist, Steven Henderson, who writes about Racial, Spiritual and other interests. The Interfaith community of Detroit is mostly monotheistic and to me seems to overlook the differences between their Christo-Judeo-Islamic traditions and the less represented ones. It's not disrespectful so much as maybe feeling very much a minority. I swear I could see no one I knew from any Pagan or Wiccan community I am aware of.

Even before my appointment to Interfaith Representative, shortly before 2015 began, I was attending DAIN's monthly meetings. We worked together on their annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, which was hosted for the first time at DAIN member Imam Elahi's House of Islamic Wisdom, a mosque in Dearborn Hts, adjacent to Dearborn. I won't totally recount that service, since it was posted in CoG's Interfaith blog earlier this year. Suffice it to say there were nearly 400 attendees and was followed by a nice simple Middle Eastern meal prepared by the House's staff.

In March of this year I was invited to and spoke at the Polish National Catholic Church of Dearborn's Lenten Season Bread and Soup talks. Father John Cramer is a member and the recording secretary of DAIN and hosts several gatherings during this season, where different faith/traditions will talk about themselves and explain any similarities or differences in regards to penance and penitentiary. The soup was good and so was the talk. Most people seemed to be upwards from 60 or so, though there were 2 or 3 persons in their 30s or 40s. Everyone was fairly polite but 1 lady was a little pointed in her criticism of Wicca, as I presented it. She felt the lack of our infrastructure/buildings or places of worship, was a sign that we were more of a trend than anything.

On April 19<sup>th</sup> I journeyed about 2 hours north of Detroit, to Saginaw, a somewhat larger city in Michigan, to be a part of the Mid-Michigan Interfaith Dialog Symposium, a first ever, 1-day program of workshops, prayer services, panel discussion and entertainment. The event was at a local Golf Resort, Apple Mountain. I am working on a separate report for CoG's Interfaith blog, but I will say it was a grand event. Wonderful meals and really great folks. I am grateful to CoG for the

reimbursement for my gas money expenses and night at the hotel. The event's fees were waived for my presentation, The Discovery of Witchcraft, an introduction to Modern Witchcraft. This was pretty well received, although the nearby presentation on Native Americans gathered a larger crowd. Again, everyone was very respectful, asked good questions and in some ways, a number were already acquainted with Wicca and or Goddess worship. The usual question of "Aren't you a Warlock?" came from 2 attendees who were either Hindu or Islamic.

Soon after this event, I made good use of my power point presentation to present a short lecture to the class of Jeanie O'Connor, who teaches a class on Comparative Religions, at Henry Ford Community College. I met her last August at NAIN and have done 3 of these lectures as a guest, 1 in May and 2 in June. Located in Dearborn, the college has a large number of Middle Eastern Muslim students and the women especially asked the most interesting questions. I found it refreshing that most of these students were aware of magic belief systems, fortune telling, Tarot and the like and did not have immediate negative connotations. Catholics acknowledged that scripture or teaching may frown on fortune telling or other practices, some worshippers look the other way and indulge in mystical practices and are more open minded about Wicca and other occult matters. One class had a young man who was very Christian and seemed to be challenged by my presentation. His views seemed paternalistic and not current and he later mentioned that his church pastor told him most of the things he believes about Wicca or Witchcraft.

Also in May the DAIN committee hosted their annual National Day of Prayer in the Council Chambers at Dearborn City Hall. Prayers are pre arranged and usually invoke safety and blessings for various functions of government, law enforcement, first responders etc. At DAIN's last meeting till September, shortly after this event, we decided to host an informal Interfaith Thanksgiving Potluck with the emphasis being more about sharing food and cultures and networking.

In June, since the Charleston killings, DAIN and other religious or Interfaith groups have been showing solidarity and helping raise money for African American churches that have also been vandalized, apparently by white supremacist groups or individuals. Details of these and other Interfaith activities will be reported in CoG's Interfaith blog too.

In Her Service,  
Oberon Osiris

## **Rachael Watcher**

*(compiled by Emrys, National Recorder)*

Rachael has reported on many of her Interfaith activities through the CoG Interfaith Blog, which can



be found at [covenantinterfaith.blogspot.com](http://covenantinterfaith.blogspot.com). Her activities this year have included attending the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) meeting in January and by the time of Grand Council, she will attend an additional NAIN meeting as well. She also travelled to Guadalajara, Mexico as the only Wiccan representative at Dialogo Multi-cultural Universal II. Later this year, she plans to represent CoG, NAIN, and the United

Religions Initiative at the Parliament of World Religions in Salt Lake City, UT.

## **CoG National Officer & Assistant Reports for Term 2014-2015**

**First Officer: Kathy Lezon/Kasha, Everglades Moon LC**

**Co-Second Officers: Zenah & Stachia Ravensdottir, Touchstone LC**

**Publications Officer: Jack Prewitt, Touchstone LC**

**Membership Officer: Cat Peron, Everglades Moon LC**

**Pursewarden: Viana Bastacky, Dogwood LC**

**PIO: Gordon Stone, Northern California LC**

**Correspondence: Lady Annabelle, Hills and Rivers LC**

**Recorder: Lady Emrys, Hills and Rivers LC**

## **Local Council Annual Reports**

**Calafia Local Council**

**Chamisa Local Council**

**Dogwood Local Council**

## **Everglades Moon Local Council**

In September EMLC hosted a craft and baked goodies table at Pagan Pride Day at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Ft. Lauderdale.

Also in September several EMLC members worked with local Pagans to host the first Treasure Coast Pagan Pride event, complete with an Asatru clown for the kids, not to be confused with a Jewish or atheist clown. There were wonderful vendors, a moving main ritual, and workshops.

After Grand Council 2014 and through the Samhain season members of Everglades Moon worked hard to host the 8th annual Turning the Tides Festival. This year main ritual was in honor of Hekate, with additional midnight observances for those who chose to stay up. Between Faery breathing with the spirit of the Oleta River and drum circle bonfires into the wee hours and feast in the Great Hall the organizers and volunteers did an exemplary job.

Things were quiet during the Yule holidays then we approached our annual EMLC retreat. We ran into a snag with reservations, then ran into snag after snag trying to adapt until finally we conceded defeat. So to make up for it a little we are planning our local council annual meeting at a nice waterside park.

In March, several of our members with others in our community organized the first Equinox in the Oaks Festival near the Ocala National Forest.

The EMLC podcast Reaching for the Moon, originally started by our own Sirona and now put together by Lady Bridget is still going strong. According to data from libsyn our most popular episode had over 400 downloads, with an average of about 275 each episode. The podcast can be reached at our website: [www.emlc.net](http://www.emlc.net) You can also find us at iTunes, Stitcher, and libsyn.

We have lost one coven member, Circle of the Moonlit Sea, and through their leaving we have gained two solitaires, Kasha and Raven. We have also welcome another solitary this year, Qabal.

Now we prepare to send our friends and delegates to Grand Council. May the will of gods and the will of the Covenant be in harmony.

Coyote Morningstar, EMLC FO  
Everglades Moon Assembly of Solitaires

## **Hills and Rivers Local Council**

## **Midwest Regional Local Council**

## **Northern California Local Council**

## **Northern Dawn Local Council**

## **Orange County Local Council**

## **Southern California Local Council**

SoCal held its annual meeting and election of Council officers on October 5th, 2014. The same day, SoCal presented a public ritual in honor of Oya, the Orisha of wind, lightning, fertility, fire, and magic at Pagan Pride Day Los Angeles. On April 26th, SoCal had its second meeting of the year. First Officer Morgana reported to the council about the COG business meeting at Pantheacon, as well other events of note that occurred at Pantheacon 2015. The meeting was followed by a “Salon”, a meeting where council members freely exchanged ideas about COG and its future in the pagan community, and more specifically discussed the concerns of pagans of color, the aging of the membership of the Covenant and attracting new members. On May 21st, council member Paula attended a meet and greet with the West Valley Division of the LAPD. The goal of the meeting was to start a dialog with the pagan community regarding their practice in general and the needs of the community. 25 members of the pagan community were also in attendance. SoCal plans to present another public ritual at Pagan Pride Day Los Angeles 2015.

Thanks.

Morgana RavenTree  
SoCal-COG First Officer

## **Texas Local Council**

The Texas Local Council has had a great year! We have eighteen covens and two solitaries. We network throughout the Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX area as we continue to conduct rituals in east Ft. Worth and classes in both the cities of Arlington and Richardson.

Midsummer marked our seventh year of successful public Sabbats. Attendance ranges from sixty to over hundred people with local council members managing waivers, raffles, and donations. Between four and eight pagan and pagan friendly vendors sell their wares at each event with a local member as Vending Coordinator. We have a

member who donates his time by caring for the land wherein we hold our Sabbats. Our rituals are conducted by members of the Local Council and invited guests. We've had a large number of new attendees this year who are interested in Wicca and solitaires seeking a place to worship the Sabbats with others. And every Samhain, we have a carnival for our local children, where our covens and other volunteers run booths and give prizes. It's a good fundraiser for us and great fun for the kids!

Our public classes are Wicca 101 level and are held both in Arlington and in Richardson. Each of the two series are held twice a month. The classes in Richardson have had a consistent average attendance of about a dozen for seven years now. Our classes in Arlington are in their fourth year with fewer attendees; however, we believe it will grow at our new location at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Arlington. We have council members coordinating the classes and scheduling teachers from among our council, providing a rich diversity of Wiccan information to our local community. This summer, we've been hosting a tarot class by our first officer, Gaelen, at the UU Church as well. The attendance has been approximately twenty-five people at this four class series and the students seem to be enjoying the course.

Our marketing and PIO efforts have included flyers of our rituals and classes at local pagan and pagan friendly shops as well as on our local yahoo groups (class and announcement lists), Facebook, and Twitter accounts. We also often share national COG information through our social media. We maintain our own website at [txcog.org](http://txcog.org) and answer any queries we receive.

We were a part of the DFW Pagan Pride Day in 2014. Our members volunteered for the event. We also had council members volunteer and run a Texas CoG information booth! It was a good day in our local community.

This summer, we also had a sociologist, Dr. Beth Fawcett, PhD. attend our June meeting and conduct a privilege walk with our council as well as facilitate a discussion and a short presentation after. It was a powerful experience for our council as were the discussions after. The end result was the question – what do we do now? So, we are currently looking to organize a greater event called Make a Difference. More details in future reports.

We have members who perform handfastings, Wiccanings, memorials, and other services to members of the Wiccan community both in and outside of our local council. This year, it was with great sorrow of our entire council, that we had one of our own cross the Veil. Johnny, priest of Amethyst Dragon, a tender hearted man, loving husband and father, and active member of our council is dancing in the Summerlands. We dearly miss him.

Our goals for the future continue to be to conduct Sabbat celebrations in Fort Worth, classes in Richardson and Arlington, and bring a greater understanding of those lacking in privilege and we can do to make a difference in the hearts and minds of our community.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Gaelen Ananat  
Circle of the Serpent, HPS  
Texas Local Council, First Officer

## **Touchstone Local Council**

## **National Covens**

## **CoG National Board 2015-2016 Candidate Statements**

### **First Officer Candidates**

### **Membership Officer Candidates**

### **PIO Officer Candidates**

#### **Greg Harder**

I hereby submit my candidacy for the position of National Public Information Officer for Covenant of the Goddess. I have served CoG in this position two times in the past. My last term ended I believe five years ago.

My qualifications for the position are as follows:

In the 1980's I worked as the Public Information Director for Peralta Colleges Television station - PCTV. During that time I co-produced a national award winning weekly talk show - "Town Hall 87" for PCTV's Oakland and Alameda County viewing areas. At the same time I also worked as volunteer reporter and news copy editor for KALX radio at U.C. Berkeley.

In my previous two terms as CoG's NPIO I initiated three projects that significantly contributed to CoG's positive contact with the greater Pagan and interfaith communities as well as the outside world in general. With the assistance of our National Interfaith Reps., I started the well received "CoG Interfaith Reports" blog. I also created the NPIO reports blog which I posted to in the beginning an average of twice weekly.

In my second term as NPIO I began the national CoG Facebook page. Finding that the Blog was not reaching many folks outside of our organization, I considered that this would help us reach a larger readership. I soon discovered that the keys to successful Facebook pages were numerous, consistent, varied, interesting, and quality postings. After my term as PIO expired I continued in the national social media position until January of this year. With persistence and daily posting over that period I was able to grow the COG Facebook page from 0 to 160,000 followers. I am especially proud that we were able to attract over 20,000 international followers from all over the world.

At the present time I supervise the Facebook pages for the...

[URI Multiregion](#)

[The Interfaith Observer](#)

[North American Interfaith Network \(NAIN\)](#)

[People of the Earth](#)

[Covenant of the Goddess Northern California Local Council](#)

I offer the Covenant my considerable experience, dedication, and consistency for the position of National Public Information Officer.

In Her service,  
Greg Harder

## **Recorder Officer Candidates**

## **Correspondence Officer Candidates**

## **Publications Officer Candidates**

## **Pursewarden Officer Candidates**

**Viana Bastacky**

To the members of the Covenant of the Goddess,

I put forth my offer of service and announce my candidacy for National Pursewarden for the 2015-2016 term.

In Service,  
Viana Bastacky  
Lady Mehurt

## Old Business

### Committee Reports

#### CR1. Vision Committee

After the presentation of the COG Vision Survey data at the 2014 Grand Council in Atlanta, the committee was charged with several tasks.

- 1) Polish the report pending wider distribution.

The report was finalized the day before Grand Council 2014, but the data was still pretty rough. Babbi, who is very skilled with surveys in her professional life, was able to do this following Grand Council 2014. Anna had a further request—that responses with less than 1% scores should be expanded to one or two decimal points, since they now register as a small bar reading “0” instead of (for instance) “0.5.” This was confusing when presenting the data to gatherings of members. Babbi agreed to make this minor change for future use of the data.

- 2) A press release was distributed shortly after Grand Council, alerting the public to the fact of the survey and thanking the respondents for their time and assistance.

- 3) Distribute the survey results to the membership.

Several members, some of them part of the Vision Survey committee, presented the survey data to various Local Councils. So far, we know the following Local Councils have seen the data: Calafia LC, Everglades Moon LC, Hills and Rivers LC, Northern California LC, Orange County LC, and Touchstone LC. If others have seen the survey data in their Local Councils, please let us know, so we can expand this listing. If other Local Councils wish to show the data, we can give you a copy. It is something which does stimulate a lot of discussion!

- 4) The Vision Survey showed that many of our respondents were ill-informed about COG and its activities. The final activity suggested at Grand Council 2014 was the request that the committee prepare materials to correct errors and misinterpretations. The Vision Survey Committee members produced a series of eight FAQs and short answers, which were posted on the COG Website, in the Imbolc newsletter and the COG National Facebook page. The Vision Committee will continue to develop more FAQs and other possible surveys to help grow the Covenant.

Here are the FAQs as posted (with a bit of fact checking....AK)

### **#1 - Is the Covenant just a Facebook organization?**

No. The Covenant of the Goddess formed in 1975 as a non-profit educational organization dedicated to securing for Witches the same rights and privileges enjoyed by other religious groups. We are open to all traditions of the Craft, including Eclectics and self-initiated Witches. We are a federation of covens and solitaries of many traditions, and have worked for Witches' civil and religious rights for many years. We are organized in 14 Local Councils throughout the United States, as well as National memberships for covens and solitaries from areas where there are no Local Councils. We have a small number of international members, mainly from English-speaking countries, such as Canada, the UK and Australia. At Samhain 2015, COG will celebrate its 40th anniversary.

The Covenant's Facebook presence is an outreach project begun in 2010 by Greg Harder who was then COG's Public Information Officer. Many people enjoy the mix of Pagan and Wiccan news, archeology, folklore, weird science, music, and other offerings that are circulated nearly every day on our Facebook page.

### **# 2 – Do you train Witches?**

No, the Covenant of the Goddess does not train Witches. Some local councils may provide public education as a service to their communities, but the Covenant of the Goddess as a National or Local organization does not train Witches. CoG is comprised of Elders and covens trained within their own spiritual traditions. If you are interested in finding a teacher in your area, please contact your local council for suggestions. CoG provides a component of study during Merry Meet / Grand Council to our membership, called Leadership Institute. It is typically a full day of in-depth, topic specific, classes to help deepen our knowledge and practices as leaders and elders.

### **#3 - Are there Solitaries or just covens in the Covenant?**

Both Covens and Solitary Witches may join the Covenant. It is mainly an organization of experienced clergy, but we are seeking to improve outreach to new Witches as well through our Associates' program. If an applicant (Coven or Solitary) lives in an area served by one of our Local Councils, they must apply through the Local Council. If there is no Local Council nearby, the applicant applies as a National member. National Solitaries must be eligible as Elders in their tradition.

To be eligible to apply as a Coven in COG, a group must have been meeting at least monthly for at least six months. It must have at least three members, at least one of whom is of Elder status—capable of teaching and passing on the group's tradition or way of working. Applicants fill out a membership application and submit a Statement of Practice, introducing themselves and their activities to the Covenant's membership. Both groups and individuals must state in the application that they consider themselves to be Witches, and that they practice an ethical standard consistent with the Wiccan Rede—"If it harm none, do what ye will."

### **#4 - What does it cost to join the Covenant?**

Because membership in the Covenant can be by coven or solitaries, the tithes vary depending on type of membership. In 2015, a coven's tithes are between \$110 and \$170 (sliding scale), and solitary members between \$50 and \$90, with a discount for two solitaries living in the same household are between \$75 and \$115. As a clergy organization there is an

additional minimal fee of \$25 per person for issuing clergy credentials (and \$10 per year renewal.)

#### **# 5 – What are the benefits of being a Covenant of the Goddess member?**

The Covenant of the Goddess was founded in 1975 by a diverse group of Craft traditions to secure for Witches the same legal rights as those enjoyed by followers of other religions. Since that time, the Covenant has worked on behalf of the Craft as a whole providing Networking opportunities, Legal Recognition, Clergy Credentials, Military and Prison Chaplains and Advocates, Law Enforcement and Media Education, Legislative Activism, Inter- and Intra-faith Education and relation building, and lastly, a wide variety of community services in the local communities where CoG members live and work. We work to make our world safer for generations of Witches while working together to improve our communities.

#### **#6 - Is the Covenant of the Goddess based on a certain Tradition? Is it open to all Traditions?**

As written in the charter of the Covenant of the Goddess, its members are not any certain tradition, but all Covenant members are in service to the Lady and the Lord, are willing to serve the needs of the lay members of our religion, to assist one another in the training of clergy, and in all other matters to improve communication. To be a member of the Covenant of the Goddess, you need to be willing to state that you are a Wiccan or a Witch, and beyond that, there are no tradition-specific requirements for membership. The Covenant has had members who also belonged to Asatru, Afro-Diasporic, or Druidic traditions, as long as they were willing to also define themselves as Witches.

#### **#7 – What does the Covenant do on a National level? Do they do anything at the Local level?**

At the National level, CoG works to make the world a safer place by securing legal rights and recognition for all Witches. Nationally, Covenant of the Goddess holds an annual business meeting known as Grand Council that provides networking for Witches and Wiccans from across the nation. After local Council vetting, Clergy credentials are provided by the National organization that enable and allow members to legally officiate meaningful life-passages in their communities. It is at the Local level that the Covenant of the Goddess provides community services through Local Councils' member covens and solitaires. There are Local Councils who hold events large and small to gather together for networking, education, and intra-faith working. Some Local Councils provide public education through regular Wicca 101 classes and present Sabbat rituals for the public for each Sabbat on the Wheel of the Year. Many Local Councils are active in local Pagan Pride Day celebrations, sponsoring and volunteering for entertainment, education, vending, and leading ritual. Local Councils perform community services such as food drives for local food banks or animal food drives for local no-kill animal shelters. Local Councils serve their local communities in whatever ways they can, with volunteer labor and charity for the needs of the community. Member covens of CoG are active in their communities in as many diverse ways as there are diverse covens, providing the public a positive face for Witches and for all people of the Craft.

## **#8 - Are there men and women in the Covenant? How about those who do not identify as any particular gender?**

Membership in the Covenant is open to anyone willing to identify themselves as a Wiccan or a Witch and who meet the other criteria for membership. Membership is not defined by gender role or sexual orientation. There are female, male, transgender, and gender-fluid members. There are heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and asexual members. There are members who choose not to use labels to represent themselves.

### **CR2. Abuse Advisory Committee**

Submitted by Lady Emrys

This small committee, comprised of individuals with varied professional experience in issues related to abuse, created the following goals for 2014/2015:

- Create an email for ease of communication between committee members as well as to simplify communication between members and the committee
- Create educational materials for CoG members
- Create a dedicated page on the website with educational materials, contact information, etc.
- Create a process for handling the questions and needs of members as it relates to issues of abuse

An email was created with the help of Ken Crater; the committee can be contacted via [aac@cog.org](mailto:aac@cog.org). We have also used this email to share articles with the membership that address issues relevant to abuse. We received requests for support and guidance for three separate issues this year. We began working on a process for handling future needs and questions of members, though this is an evolving process. We decided to put off working on a specific web page in anticipation of the new website being launched soon. Work on this goal will resume later this year. The committee created a draft for an educational brochure with the working title: "Abuse: What to do if it happens to you or someone you know." Feedback was generated from the National Board and revisions are in the works. We offer the current content (in draft form) for the membership here:

#### **Facts:**

Abuse happens in every religious community and among all levels of socioeconomic statuses. Identifying when it happens and knowing what to do when you see it is the best way to keep ourselves and our community safe. This brochure will introduce you to what to do if you are affected

#### **Types of Abuse:**

- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Domestic Violence

- Neglect

### **If You are a Victim of Abuse**

- Get yourself to safety
- Seek Medical attention and professional support if needed.
- Pay attention to your feelings and trust yourself.
- Share your confusion, fear or anxiety with someone you trust. Remember that you are not to blame
- Find out if your coven or community has a specific policy and procedure for dealing with concerns about clergy misconduct. Use that process to be heard and raise awareness to stop the behavior.
- Find an advocate who understands your community; rely on him or her for guidance and support.
- Remember that you might not be the only person to whom this has happened and that your action can help both yourself and others.

### **If the abuse occurred to someone you know**

- If a child has been sexually abused by someone, make an immediate report to a law enforcement agency in your community.
- Believe the victim and assist them in seeking professional support.
- If someone discloses abuse to you, your role is to listen and support them, not to investigate or determine truth. Asking questions can interfere with investigations.

### **Be Aware Of Mandating Reporting Laws**

All 50 States require Medical Personal, Mental Health Professional, Teachers, Law Enforcement and Ministers to report any and all suspected abuse of a child or vulnerable adult to the police or child protective services.

### **National Resource Websites:**

- National Sexual Violence Resource Center: [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)
- Stop It Now: [www.stopitnow.org](http://www.stopitnow.org)
- Rape Abuse, Incest National Network: [www.rain.org](http://www.rain.org)
- National Sex offender Resources: [www.sexoffenderresource.com](http://www.sexoffenderresource.com)
- Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers: [www.atsa.com](http://www.atsa.com)
- Center for Sex Offender Management: [www.csom.org](http://www.csom.org)
- FaithTrust Institute: [www.faitrustinstitute.org](http://www.faitrustinstitute.org)

## CR4. Path to Membership

The Path to Membership Committee met for several months between Grand Council 2014 and 2015. While there were initially 14 people on the committee, the final group ended up being about 7 working people. I had suggested that lurkers would be removed, but they really did drop off by themselves over the course of the year. While we began with looking how to make the Associate program more robust and a potential place to grow the Covenant, we quickly realized that the additional proposed issue of the ease of transfer to membership between coven to solitary became the core focus for the committee. This was identified as an issue as covens disband, coven leaders pass through the veil, and for other reasons, Transfer of Membership from coven to solitary became important to the members of the committee. Stachia wrote a proposal that was twinkled by all online at the time with plenty of time for objections, and so I posted it on air. At this time, we received an objection. Two committee members got together and crafted another proposal. With time running out, we feel that Deborah Bender's proposal for Transfer of Membership will be the only Path to Membership proposal for consideration at Grand Council. The main issue and concern was how to retain members through making all membership changes easy and not to include additional letters of support or statements of practice, as long as transferring members hold Elder Credentials and their intent to transfer will be listed in the CoG Newsletter and announced on AIR for any potential objections.

The proposals and ideas for the Associate program were not as successful but did have real potential, and included outreach, training, and support components so Associates could grow, be better known and be better included. The committee will likely work on those in detail next year, should they decide to do so. Unfortunately, I was out of town for work for three weeks, as well as gone on vacation for three weeks, during some discussions. The committee had great people on it who just kept working with each other.

It has been a privilege to serve on this committee to the best of my ability as co-chair with FaeLind, and all of the hard-working and excellent CoG people on it. I extend my thanks to all of the working members of the Path to Membership Committee.

Sincerely,

Lady Annabelle, HPS

Grove of Gaia

Pittsburgh, PA

Co-chair, Path to Membership committee

---

## Action Items/New Committee Proposals

### AI1. PROPOSAL FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR THE COVENANT

*Submitted by Amber K, Chamisa Local Council*

**WHEREAS:** The Covenant of the Goddess has operated for its entire history without paid staff, excepting a small stipend for mail pickup; and

**WHEREAS:** A large part of the Covenant's work can be, and has been, accomplished through unpaid officers and volunteers; but

**WHEREAS:** The Covenant has on several occasions suffered from lack of consistency, continuity, and effective service due to officers or volunteers who were unable to discharge their duties efficiently; and

**WHEREAS:** The work load of some National Officers is extremely large, and potentially a deterrent to many volunteers which wish to serve COG but cannot afford the heavy time commitment required of its officers; and

**WHEREAS:** An Administrative Assistant operating from an established physical office could accomplish much of the work currently done by National Officers, and accomplish it with greater consistency and continuity, and

**WHEREAS:** COG is a national church organization which requires consistency, continuity, and efficiency in order to accomplish its purposes and serve its members; and

**WHEREAS:** COG may have reached a plateau in its membership due to lack of administrative infrastructure and support; therefore be it

**RESOLVED:** That the National Board shall create a plan to establish for COG:

- A permanent office facility with necessary technology and office machinery, and space for paper archives, recognition materials, sales merchandise etc., ; and
- A detailed job description for a part-time Administrative Assistant; and
- An appointed, long-term, part-time Administrative Assistant, responsible to the National Board and under the supervision of the National First Officer; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That the membership of COG, no later than December 31, 2015, shall be invited to contribute ideas, expertise, resources, and information to help in creating a viable plan; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That the National First Officer shall present the research, plan, and corresponding budget to the Grand Council in 2016; and that the Grand Council shall indicate its support or nonsupport by its vote on the relevant budget line items.

## **AI2. PROPOSAL TO ADOPT THE STATEMENT ON #BLACKLIVESMATTER**

Members of the volunteer committee, who drafted the statement below, ask that the Covenant adopt the statement during Grand Council 2015 as CoG's official statement on #BlackLivesMatter. When a statement such as this is drafted, it is representative of events which had occurred or were occurring at that time.

We realize that many months have passed since this issue gained national importance, and that many additional similar incidents have occurred since that time. However, we feel that the statement is strong enough to be adopted as written.

The members of the committee feel that having this statement adopted will show that CoG has taken time to respond appropriately and acted in accordance with our Bylaws.

Black Lives Matter to the Covenant of the Goddess and this statement represents our effort to hear, see, and say this. CoG is appalled at the mistreatment and killings of Black Americans and others in extrajudicial actions, such as Eric Garner and 7 year-old Ayana Jones. Systemic racism in our justice system and an unmet need to see, hear, and respond to the experiences of People of Color in our country are resulting in non-indictments for even excessive use of force. For such males as Trayvon Martin and Mike Brown; women like Rekia Boyd, Shereese Francis, and Yvette Smith; and children like Tamir Rice, though their lives were lost their lives matter to us. These few represent the many other Black men, women and children who face and fear similar violence and outcomes everyday.

It is time to hear what Blacks are saying; that they are not treated the same as the majority. Blacks deserve due process under the law which everyone else takes for granted. Law enforcement officers who breach the public trust must be held accountable. More effective communication between communities of color and every part of our justice system is long overdue and necessary for real changes to manifest.

Witches and Wiccans of Color specifically deserve, and have, our support and respect, as CoG's members are Witches and Wiccans of every race, into whose purview fall issues of human justice. We are weavers of change and can choose a role in changing the experiences of People of Color in our communities and our country.

CoG urges our members and communities to take action. Ask People of Color about their experiences. Listen fully to what is being said. Write letters to elected officials, local law enforcement, state and US attorneys, and editors of local media to share your concerns. Stand in solidarity with CoG's Members of Color and our communities' Pagans of Color in peaceful demonstrations to end these inequities. At the same time, we decry actions which only serve further racism and injustice for anyone.

We all need to “Step up” to speak for the need for change, then “Step back” to hear Black and minority voices. Each person must follow her or his own heart in order for our society to peacefully evolve and right these wrongs.

One of the most powerful ways to help is to be informed. Below are a few links where you can deepen your knowledge and understanding of these issues, the challenges faced by those living Black in America, and discover creative ways to support the movement.

<http://blacklivesmatter.com>

<http://thisisthemovement.launchrock.com> - weekly newsletter

<http://blacklivesmatter.com/blog/>

<http://blacklivesmatter.tumblr.com>

CoG supports efforts to speak out for social justice, and we say, “Black Lives Matter.”

Respectfully Submitted,

Canu  
Kristin Iris Johnson  
Lisa Morgenstern  
Rowan  
Banshee ShadowWolf  
Lady Pythia/Marybeth Witt  
Gordon Stone

### **AI3. NEW ASSISTANT POSITION**

*Submitted by Link*

This proposal would form a new assistant position reporting to the National Second Officer, or another Officer the Board selects.

The role of this position would be to recruit a Guest Speaker to attend MM 2016, where Cog would pay airfare and hotel.

In addition to giving a 1-2 hour presentation, the Guest Speaker would have the opportunity to sell and sign books, discuss their own organization, broaden the awareness within the Pagan community of who they are and what they do. We would learn more about them, but they too would learn more about CoG.

The Guest Speaker should not be a current CoG member, ie we would seek "new blood."

Potential Examples Include:

- John Belham-Payne (Doreen Valiente's last High Priest) or another person from the Doreen Valiente Foundation could deliver a talk about Doreen's amazing life, with videos and a slide presentation. Samples of her altar tools and other interesting items may be available.
- Janet Farrar and Gavin Bone frequently travel and give talks.
- Someone from the Museum of Witchcraft and Folklore in England might be interested if invited, and perhaps could display some interesting museum items.
- Morgana of the Pagan Federation International actively travels worldwide and can discuss a wide variety of topics, including how Paganism is celebrated in many countries.
- Others? Authors, scholars and other "headliners" who might increase attendance?

I have had some experience in booking speakers for pagan events, and would be happy to help if needed.

### **AI4. AWARD OF HONOR**

Nominations:

## **M. Macha Nightmare (Aline O'Brien)**

I, **Anna Korn, of Coven Trismegiston, NCLC** do hereby nominate **M. Macha NightMare (Aline O'Brien)** of **NCLC AOS** for Covenant of the Goddess' Award of Honor for the reasons stated below:

- Many years of Witchen & Pagan Leadership
- National Interfaith Representative for COG, including representation to Marin Interfaith Council and American Academy of Religion
- COG Board Service
- Service on Cherry Hill seminary's Board, developing Pagan/ Witchen education

I, **Michelle Mueller, of Coven Trismegiston, NCLC** do hereby nominate **Aline O'Brien of NCLC AOS** for Covenant of the Goddess' Award of Honor for the reasons stated below:

- Years of leadership in Pagan/ Witchen community
- Work as NIR for COG
- Involvement with Marin Interfaith Council
- Service on Board of Cherry Hill Seminary
- Involvement with AAR (American Academy of Religion) and Paganism

## **Gregory Harder**

I, **Anna Korn of Coven Trismegiston, NCLC** do hereby nominate **Gregory Harder of Covens Silver Salamander and Dadouchos** for Covenant of the Goddess' Award of Honor for the reasons stated below:

- Many years of COG National Board Service as NPIO
- Developed Social Media presence for COG 2010 through 2015 with unprecedented success in publicizing COG

## **Michael Thorn**

I, **Link of NAoS** do hereby nominate **Michael Thorn**, past NFO and other leadership roles for Covenant of the Goddess' Award of Honor for the reasons stated below:

Michael is a former long-time member of CoG, serving in several leadership roles locally and nationally, including National First Officer. He is considered an elder in the Craft and Pagan communities, and is respected on "both sides of the Atlantic" for many years. Even Doreen Valiente agreed to meet with Michael before she died to give him a very insightful interview which today is still made available thanks to the Earth Spirit Community, some of which share membership in CoG. He also served as the US National Coordinator to the Pagan Federation International, serving as a bridge to connect and educate Pagans within the US with Pagans outside the US. He also worked to promote Gay rights, especially in the Craft, long before such beliefs were wide-spread.

On Beltane of 2014, Michael shared the devastating news that he is suffering from a terminal disease which at that time was expected to run its course within two years. While Michael has many accomplishments, his work in CoG was one of the things that truly meant something to him. I hope the Covenant can show Michael the same sentiment.

I invite others at Grand Council who knew Michael to also share their views and memories of him.

## **Anna Korn**

I, **Rachael Watcher**, of *The Covenant of the Goddess* do hereby nominate **Anna Korn of NCLC** CoG for Covenant of the Goddess' Award of Honor for the reasons stated below:

Anna Korn has for many years served the Covenant by reminding us of our bylaws and their state. She has rewritten and submitted changes/proposals that allowed us to maintain our 501c3 status. She has further reviewed them every year to make certain that new proposals and actions set in motion were not in conflict with current bylaws or policies.

As only two examples in others too numerous to name over the years, she worked tirelessly to bring our by-laws and policies into alignment when our new procedures on solitary caucuses were established, and recently reviewed all of our policies bringing them up to date and into alignment with decisions made over the years. She is the main reason we have order and continuity to our documents.

## **Amber K & Azrael Aryn K**

I, **Lord Soec / Jack Prewett, of Ecclasian Fellowship** do hereby nominate **Amber K and Azrael Arynn K of Chamisa LC** for Covenant of the Goddess' Award of Honor for the reasons stated below:

Amber K and Azrael Arynn K have been associated with Wicca and the Covenant of the Goddess for over 30 years. Always willing to lend a helping hand, either as a national officer or simply as an adviser, Amber and Azrael have been there for the Covenant and Wicca. Instrumental in the founding of Ardintane, both have helped to create a lasting regional, national, and international institution that is and will be serving the Wiccan and the Pagan community now and for many generations to come. Amber K and Azrael Arynn K helped with the defeat of the Helm's Amendment as well as assisting in various projects throughout the years. Whether it be giving guidance as an author, past or present office holder or teachers each has placed a lasting mark not only on the Covenant but on our world as well.

It is my honor and privilege to recommend these two for this award.

### **Tadhg Simmons**

I, **Catherine Duncan, of Circle Angkur** do hereby nominate **Tadhg Simmons of Circle Angkur** for Covenant of the Goddess' Award of Honor for the reasons stated below:

Tadhg served in the US Marine Corps in the original Desert Storm, and returned home changed forever. He suffered from PTSD, but has rebuilt his life to include a loving wife and 2 sons. He is an example of not being too proud to ask for the help needed to process trauma and live a full life. As his High Priestess, I have had the pleasure of watching that slow, and sometimes painful, transformation, and am so proud of our Tadhg!

## **Bylaw and Policy Proposals**

### **BPP.1 PROPOSAL FOR ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION IN GRAND COUNCIL**

*Submitted by Rowan, Chamisa Local Council*

**Whereas:** the Covenant of the Goddess (CoG) has had difficulty meeting its currently defined quorum (25% of the membership physically present) at its annual meeting (AKA Grand Council) in recent years; and

**Whereas:** platforms for electronic participation and meeting attendance have become increasingly reliable, cost effective, flexible, and accessible in recent years;

**Therefore, be it resolved:** that participation in Grand Council by CoG members, as covens or solitary caucuses, via electronic means be counted toward quorum at Grand Council; and

**Be it resolved:** that these online members shall have their voices heard in the consensus process and shall have a vote in budget and board elections; and

**Be it resolved:** that this proposal shall be implemented by 2016 Grand Council at the latest.

## **BPP.2 PROPOSAL FOR NATIONAL OFFICER TRAINING**

*Submitted by Amber K, Chamisa Local Council*

**WHEREAS,** members elected to National office in the Covenant of the Goddess (COG) do not currently receive any formal training; and

**WHEREAS,** such training, if well organized and presented, would assist COG National officers in performing their duties effectively, to the benefit of the entire membership; therefore be it

**RESOLVED:** that COG shall contract with one or more Pagan educational institutions to provide such training for new officers, and be it further

**RESOLVED:** that such training shall take place between the election of National officers and their installation at Samhain; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** that such training shall include information on the responsibilities of the National Board, the policies and bylaws of COG, and the processes by which the National Board operates; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** that this program shall include no less than twelve (12) hours of training, and be it further

**RESOLVED,** that participation in this training shall be mandatory for all new National officers; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** that the institution(s) presenting such training shall solicit comments and suggestions for the content of such training from the general membership; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** that COG shall award a monetary stipend to the institution(s) providing such training, the amount to be included in the national budget; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** that the current National First Officer be responsible, with the advice and consent of the National Board, for initiating the process to locate a suitable educational institution and schedule the pilot program for National officer training; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** that the institution(s) providing the training shall solicit feedback and evaluation from the participants regarding its effectiveness, so that the program may be revised and improved for subsequent years; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** that the pilot program for such training shall be inaugurated following the election of officers in 2015, and that the training shall continue every year until the Grand Council decides otherwise.

### **BP3. TRIAL MEMBERSHIP PROPOSAL**

*Submitted by Anna Korn, NCLC Membership Officer and Member of the Pathway to Membership and CoG Vision Committies*

As a member of this year's Pathway to Membership Committee, one issue we have been facing is potential applicants who are qualified and experienced Witches, who are so socially or geographically isolated that they do not know people who can write them Letters of Recommendation. (Persons who can write Letters of Recommendation do not need to be COG members, only persons "known to COG.")

**BACKGROUND:** Last year, at GC 2014 in Atlanta, we discontinued the long-standing means for helping to handle this problem, and I would like to bring it back with minor modification.

Since the founding of the organization in 1975, we had a membership status originally designated "provisional membership," by which a person could join COG with only one Letter of Recommendation (LOR), and over the course of their first year of membership, after meeting other COG members, could ask someone for a second LOR. Provisional members were full members for a year and a day, with all the rights and responsibilities of Regular or Solitary members, except that they were restricted from casting a veto in decision-making at either Grand Council or Local Council levels. Unfortunately, the term "provisional member" became confused with a later status used for punishing members for and infraction, mostly those who did not turn in an annual proxy-attendance form. After deleting the original type of membership status at GC 2014, the term "Provisional Member" now indicates a member under restriction due to punishment for an infraction.

I propose a new term, "Trial Member" for qualified Solitaries and Covens to join with only one Letter of Recommendation, which effectively will return us to a membership option the Covenant has had since 1975, which has proved to be useful in admitting people who are geographically or socially isolated, eases blocks to applicants, and which has been requested by respondents to COG's 2014 Vision Survey. It also relieves the confusion inherent in having two different kinds of membership status called by the same term, which understandably caused problems for Membership Officers.

Proposed Bylaws Changes:

### **Article 1. DEFINITIONS**

**Provisional Member**—A membership status restriction applied when a member does not file an annual Proxy-Attendance Form, or receives a restriction as punishment for an infraction. A Provisional Local Council is a Local Council that has dropped below the required membership, or has been restricted by action of Grand Council or the National Board.

**Trial Member**—A Coven or Solitary admitted with only one Letter of Recommendation. A Trial Member has a year and a day as a member of the Covenant to receive the second Letter of Recommendation. During that time, they have all the rights and responsibilities of a Regular or Solitary member, except that they may not cast a veto in Grand Council or Local Council decision-making.

### **Article 2. MEMBERSHIP and AFFILIATION**

#### **A. Classes of Membership**

There shall be ~~three~~ **four** classes of membership in the Covenant: Regular, **[add:] Trial**, Provisional, and members of Assemblies of Solitaries. These shall be conferred, and have associated rights as is provided for in this Article of these Bylaws. Once duly admitted, all Member Covens shall have equal rights, including voting, holding office, and on all other matters. The Council may also create classes of non-voting Associates of the Covenant.

#### **C. Application Procedure: National**

In areas where no Local Council exists, the procedures for application for Membership in the Covenant shall be as follows:

1. The Coven or Solitary practitioner shall submit an application and a signed statement of practice to the Membership Officer specifying that it meets the criteria in Section B of this Article and two letters of recommendation to the Membership Officer. The letters of recommendation shall be from members of two different Covens or Solitaries that are known to the Covenant.
2. If a Coven or Solitary practitioner has obtained only one recommendation, that Coven or solitary practitioner may apply as a **Trial Member**. **Trial Members** have one year and one day to complete the process of application for Regular Membership or membership in the Assembly of Solitaries. If that application process is not completed within one year and one day, the **Trial** membership shall lapse.
3. A copy of all pertinent documents, including the Membership Application, shall be forwarded to the Publications Officer by the Membership Officer. All statements of practice and recommendations shall be published in the next issue of the CoG Newsletter.
4. If, at the termination of a 90-day review period after publication of the documents as specified in Section C.3 above, no objections to the application have been received, the Membership Officer shall approve the application no longer than 15 days after the termination of the review period. If there are any objections, the Membership Officer shall take whatever action she or he deems in the best interest of the Covenant. Decisions of the Membership Officer may be appealed to the Council.

5. Final action on the application shall be announced to the Covenant in the next issue of the CoG Newsletter.

#### **D. Application Process: Local Council**

2. The Membership Officer or the Board of the Local Council shall act on each application for membership in the Covenant which is received. If the Membership Officer or the Board of the Local Council has doubts or reservations about the applicant they may recommend the applicant for **[add:] Trial Membership**, membership at the National Level, or take whatever action on the application they believe to be in the best interests of the Covenant and the Local Council.

#### **Article 4: Meetings**

##### **E. Requirement to Attend Meetings and Proxies**

b. A proxy for a Regular, **[add:] Trial**, or Provisional Member must be signed by that Coven's Contact. A proxy for a Solitary Caucus must be signed by all members of the Solitary Caucus. At least one member of the Solitary Caucus must be eligible for Elder (High Priest/ess) credentials.

##### **H. Voting Rights and Voting Members**

Each Regular Member, **[add:] Trial Member**, Provisional Member, and Solitary Caucus shall have one vote at the Annual Meeting. Only Regular Members and Solitary Caucuses may cast a veto.

1. For the Annual Meeting, the term Voting Members is hereby defined as representatives of Regular Members, **[add:] Trial Members**, Provisional Members, or Solitary Caucuses of the Covenant who are physically present at a Council meeting.

2. For meetings of a Local Council, the term Voting Members is hereby defined as representatives of Regular Members, **[add:] Trial Members**, Provisional Members, or Assembly of Solitaries of the Covenant who are physically present at a Council meeting.

3. When a quorum (as defined in Article 4, Section D, of these bylaws) of the Council is present, Members of the Covenant who are represented by proxy shall also be Voting Members.

BPP3. (Gordon Stone)

##### **Relevant to Article 5**

##### **Committees and Projects**

COMMITTEES consisting of each National officer plus all the corresponding Local Council officers [for example, all the Covenant's Pursewardens] may meet periodically via Adobe Connect to coordinate the work of their offices as deemed necessary by the National officer for each respective office. (2015).

##### **Relevant to Article 5**

##### **Interfaith** (*also see the Interfaith Fund under Fundraising*)

INTERFAITH REPRESENTATIVES: The National Board may appoint one or more National Interfaith Representatives. Any such appointments must be renewed each year. The National Board shall oversee the activities and expenses of any National Interfaith Representatives. (2015)

BPP4. (Gordon Stone)

From Article 3, Section A.2.e. of the National Bylaws, the duties for the NPIO are:

“The Public Information Officer shall develop and disseminate general information regarding the Covenant and Our Religion where appropriate, within the guidelines set by the Council and the Board. She or he shall work under the regular supervision of the First Officer, and shall coordinate her or his efforts with those performing the public information function in each Local Council.”

This information is from the GC 2013 minutes, and is contained in the Policy Manual:

“Social Media Policy Update

Proposed by: Miraselena, NPIO and Priestess, Temple of the Rising Phoenix, Dogwood Local Council

Proposal to add the following to the Policy Manual under the PIO Section:

1. S/he shall build, maintain and manage the National Covenant of the Goddesses Social Media presence. All National Social Media is considered to be a part of the public face of the Covenant as such all postings and statements should be made with great care and in line with the Covenant’s bylaws and policies.

“2. The NPIO can appoint a Social Media Assistant(s) to manage the various social media platforms used at the National Level.

“Action: Consensus Reached. Policy Approved.”

#### **Be it proposed:**

The sections from the Policy Manual should be added to the duties as listed in the Bylaws so the entire description under Article 3, Section A.2.e of the National Bylaws reads as follows:

*The Public Information Officer (NPIO) shall develop and disseminate general information regarding the Covenant and Our Religion where appropriate, within the guidelines set by ~~the Council and~~ the Board. She or he shall work under the regular supervision of the First Officer, and shall coordinate her or his efforts with those performing the public information function in each Local Council. ~~She or he~~ shall build, maintain and manage the National Covenant of the ~~Goddesses-Goddess's~~ Social Media presence. All National Social Media is considered to be a part of the public face of the Covenant as such all postings and statements should be made with great care and in line with the Covenant’s bylaws and policies. The NPIO can appoint a Social Media Assistant(s) to manage the various social media platforms used at the National Level. Any Social Media Assistant(s) appointed shall act under the regular supervision of the NPIO.*

#### **Rationale:**

This places all pertinent information regarding duties and rights of the National Public Information Officer in the Bylaws, so all this information is in one location and easily accessible to the NPIO. It also clarifies the NPIO acronym and provides minor grammar and content corrections.

## **BP4. CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP STATUS PROPOSAL**

*Submitted by Anna Korn, Path to Membership Committee*

### *Change of Membership Status Proposal*

**BACKGROUND:** This is a proposed addition to the Bylaws. Its purpose is to allow people eligible or possessing Elder credentials to retain their membership in CoG after leaving their coven or after the coven disbands, without having to reapply for membership and go through the full reapplication process. People will only be able to use the streamlined procedure if they are eligible for Elder Credentials and no one objects to their joining an Assembly of Solitaries.

A person who has been a member of a CoG member coven during the current membership year and currently holds, or is eligible to hold, Elder Priest/ess Credentials, or has previously held Elder Priest/ess credentials which lapsed without being revoked, may apply to leave the member coven and join a Local or National Assembly of Solitaries in the following way:

1. The applicant will send a form or statement to the NMO declaring that s/he has been a member of a CoG coven during all or part of the current membership year, proof that s/he is eligible to hold Elder Credentials, or currently holds Elder Credentials, in accordance with the provisions of Article 7, Section B.2., Elder Priest/ess Credentials of these Bylaws, and wishes to join the National Assembly of Solitaries, or the AoS of the Local Council to which her or his coven belongs. The applicant will provide the National Membership Officer with contact information, coven name and charter number, Local Council, if appropriate, current credential number, if held, or other information to verify that the Elder credential was issued, or the applicant is eligible for Elder credentials. If the applicant is eligible to join either a local or national Assembly of Solitaries, s/he will state her or his preference.

2. The NMO will verify the applicant's coven membership and eligibility for Elder Credentials, requesting additional information from the applicant, coven, or Local Council if necessary.
3. Once the coven membership and issuance or eligibility to hold Elder Credentials are verified, the National Membership Officer will forward the application for change of membership to an Assembly of Solitaries to the Newsletter for publication, \*and an announcement of intent of change of membership will also be sent to the AIR list.\* If no objections to the application are received within 90 days, the applicant will be admitted to CoG membership as a member of the AoS.
4. If the National Membership Officer cannot verify the applicant was a member of a CoG member coven during the current membership year, or cannot verify the applicant's eligibility to hold Elder Credentials, or receives any objection to the application, the applicant must reapply for membership in CoG in accordance with the criteria in Article 2. B.2. and the usual procedure in Article 2.C National Application Procedures or Article 2.D. Local Council Application Procedures
5. This change of membership status, if passed would be entered into the Bylaws under Article 2, Section F, Renewal of Membership as detailed below:

The first paragraph in Section F. will be renumbered as Article 2, Section F.1 Renewal of Coven Membership. The second and third paragraphs will be renumbered as Article 2, Section F.2 Renewal of Solitary Membership.

The wording passed as the Change of Membership Status Proposal will be entered as Article 2, Section F.3, Change of Membership Status from Coven to Solitary

## **Approval of GC2014 Minutes**

## **CoG Annual Budget Adoption Proposal**

Viana Bastacky, NPW

## **Elections and Voting for Grand Council 2015**