



Do You Want An Accord?
Online Issue #5 - Fall 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from The Accord staff	Page 2
<hr/>	
Reports & Updates	
<hr/>	
• Executive Director	2 - 3
• Assistant Executive Director	3
• Director of Communications	3 - 4
• Director of Records	4 - 5
Societies & Camps	
<hr/>	
• Amethyst Camp	5
• Temple of the Dancers Society	5 - 6
Articles	
<hr/>	
<i>Candidate Information for Elections</i>	
• Executive Director	6 - 7
• Assistant Executive Director	7
• Director of Communications	7
• Director of Finance	8
• Director of Records	8 - 9
Paganism & Thoreau <i>By Stephanie Canada</i>	9 - 12
The Need to be Educated on the Changing Non Profit World <i>By Dawn D. Shanklin, BSOE. AAS Acct.</i>	12 - 18
Concerns in Pagan Leadership <i>By Stephanie Canada</i>	18 - 21

Do You Want An Accord?

Online Issue #5 - Fall 2006

Yes, this issue, we ask the membership, "Do you want an Accord?". We ask, because there has consistently been low content submission to the Accord from membership, and what appears to be a general lack of member interest, since it went online. This general apathy continues in spite of the constant begging and harping of the Accord staff for anything to go into the Accord. For those who have sent us submissions, we thank you.

The print version moved to the Internet format primarily to save on the cost of printing, which has greatly increased over the past few years. In spite of the large number of people who cheered the idea of an e-zine, the Accord experiences a continual decline in member interest.

The articles you see here, and in the previous online editions, are all we have to show. We may be missing some as our editor has been out sick. Regardless, there is a shortage of not only articles, but even officer reports. This issue, as in previous ones, if you see no officer report, assume that the Accord Staff never received one.

So ask yourself:

- Is the Accord still serving a useful purpose?
- Is it using CMA staff and resources that should be redirected elsewhere?
- Should we keep this when there is no interest in it?

And at Samhain, perhaps it's time to visit changing the CMA Bylaws to no longer require a quarterly newsletter.

Executive Director Report

By Bran

Merry Meet Everyone!

We're moving into the last three months of 2006, and our Samhain Festival is only weeks away! We're working hard to bring you the Samhain Festival, and expect everyone who attends to have a rewarding experience. We are always trying to make your festivals more user friendly, and I hope for as much feedback as you will give. A festival that has what you want is better for everyone.

To this end, you can expect a bit more market research. It's how we build better festivals. We're going to expand our activities to give CMA a local presence, and we're going to have a calendar (some of the proofs will be visible in a few weeks). We'll be introducing a program to reduce our impact on the landfills and programs to make us more self sufficient.

We have new programs to build some additional permanent structures on the Land.

There will be new things at the Festival as well. There will be Bylaw changes for your consideration, and a proposal to permit permanent camp sites to give our Village some fixed landmarks.

Lots going on, and it's all good!

BB,
Bran

**Assistant Executive Director Report
By Blaze Johnson**

Beltaine was GREAT! I cannot thank the board, staff and members enough. It was a wonderful experience for me; and that is due to the great effort made by the members.

Going forward... We have continued to organize and put policies in place so that those who come after us will not have to keep re-inventing the wheel.

I am excited about the new Leave No Trace policy. This has been a long time overdue. I am really proud of us for doing this.

This festival I hope to meet with all the group leaders, so that we can continue the conversation we started last Samhain. As I look out to the future, I see how important it is for to talk and share and learn from each other. It is my hope that we can come together and take the opportunity of being all together in one place and focus more on the spiritual.

The Land Crew under the wonderful leadership of Matt, has worked hard all summer. I think the membership will be quite impressed with the newly painted bathhouse. And the Labyrinth project looks great.

See you all at Samhain.

**Director of Communications Rant (report)
By Bruce**

There are two items I want to rant about in this Accord.

The first is Communications. We try to communicate information to membership. We publish an Accord four times a year (more on that later). We have an announce list. We have the Website. We have the CMA_Village. Most of the areas have lists. We communicate to membership though the Announce list and then it propagates though the other CMA lists. We place information on the website. In spite of this we often hear people trying to tell us that they do not get information they need. What more can we do? We are all adults. As individuals each of us has to be responsible for making sure we get CMA information. If you refuse to put your name on the Announce List and do not subscribe to any of the Village lists and do not visit the website

(I know you are reading this on the website) then don't complain if you don't know what is going on.

If you have not bothered to make sure your mailing and membership information in CMA's database is not correct then don't complain if you don't get CMA mail outs or election ballots.

We do not try to hide this type of information from membership but it is YOUR responsibility to make sure you are "In The Loop". We are not going to chase you down.

Second Rant..

I want to second The Web Mistress editorial. Do you really want an Accord?
For years people have been begging us to produce an online version of our magazine. We hesitated to do so. There were always those who worried about members without online access. There were also concerns about advertising and copyright issues.

Now we have no choice. Printing expenses went though the roof. Many pagan and non-pagan small print magazines have been driven out of business by those expenses. Since we are required by the bylaws to produce a quarterly publication we had no choice but to go online.

In effect necessity forced us to do what many have been telling us they wanted. So what has happened? There has been a complete drop off of apparent interest in the Accord.

The members of CMA have to decide for themselves what they want to do.

If you want an Accord then you, the membership, need to step up and put your submissions where your mouth is. If you want an Accord you can be proud of then YOU need to step up and produce the needed material. The CMA staffs are volunteers with lives outside of CMA. You need to remember we don't get paid for this. We do not have the time, or the energy to chase people down and force you to submit copy.

If you are not willing to support the Accord then YOU as membership need to change the Bylaws so we can proceed to spend time in issues that are important to you. Spinning our wheels on an Accord no one cares about does nothing for anyone's self esteem.

You need to choose.

Bruce Denney
Director of Communications 2006

Director of Records Report

By Mary "Wolf" Gray

Review, collating and consolidation of CMA Records continues to be an ongoing process. But, the process is a slow one. Some documents must be transcribed and with faded lettering it does take time. I still have hopes of being able to complete the process by the end of the calendar year, however and fulfill the promise I made.

Third Appeal:

I have, as yet, received no contact on the items listed below. So, I am asking you, as a member, to search your own memories, old newsletters and old Accords to assist me in recovering what we have lost. Listed here is what I have not been able to find. All are minutes of Great Works meetings over the years. If you have or know where I can go to obtain them, I would be grateful.

Beltane 1981	Beltane and Samhain 1983-1986
Samhain 1987	Samhain 1988
Beltane and Samhain 1989-1990	Beltane 1991

If you have copies of any of these documents, either paper or electronic, please contact me at scribe@magickal-arts.org

May Spirit hold you and yours.

In Service,
Mary "Wolf" Gray
Director of Records 2006

**CMA Amethyst Camp
Stephanie Canada, Coordinator**

Amethyst Camp is a place to meet and get to know other folks who are Pagans in Recovery. Our camping area is not reserved, but the suggested spot to camp is over by the flagpole, first camping area on the right after you cross the bridge.

If you can't camp with us, come by in the evenings and ask around for us. We'd love to meet and chat with you.

I look forward to meeting you and hearing your thoughts on what Amethyst Camp can become as we evolve and grow. See our Yahoo group at:

http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/CMA_Amethyst_Camp/.

**Temple of the Dancers Society
Valna Asterman, Coordinator**

It seems the veils are thinning a bit early this year. The seasons have roared past, like a train at full speed. Alban Efed is already here and Samhain is not far behind.

The Temple of the Dancers Society is not just for Dancers. Anyone who supports dance in our community is welcome. So that means all you dance drummers, costumers, and folks who love to watch dancing should check out our yahoo e-list.

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

Our society meeting will be at lunch on Saturday. If you would like to join us, bring your meal and meet us at the Temple space.

The Temple of the Dancers has been planning for the CMA Samhain event since Beltaine. We are maintaining the Temple space as usual, near CMA One and our Fundraiser/Hafla will be Saturday evening, during the dinner schedule. Our Hafla theme is “Dark Fae ~ Unseelie” and some of the music and dance choices may surprise you. Please remember to bring a little cash for tipping to the Hafla. All tips are donated to the CMA fund.

During the event, we will dress our Temple space and have a small altar. The dancers are bringing little bells or other small objects to place on our altar to connect us. If you would like to bring little bells to dress the altar, please do so. I only ask that you don't bring anything irreplaceable or valuable, as we cannot guarantee these things being returned to you.

We hope to see everyone there!!!
Namaste!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

Bran/Jim Langley

I should like to announce myself as a candidate for the position of Executive Director of CMA.

I, Bran (yclept Jim Langley) have been a member of CMA since Beltaine 1992.

I ran for position of Area Representative from Houston and served in that capacity for seven years, serving as Lead Rep for most of that time.

I helped raise the money to purchase Spirit Haven and have freely given of my time and energy to benefit the organization.

I attended work weekends and have wielded an axe, shovel, lawnmower, weed eater, hammer and screwdriver to make the site and Festivals work.

When the difficulties came, I stood up for you all. I was there at the bridge, and stood up to serve as Assistant Executive Director.

I've worked with the Bylaw Committee to make changes that would prevent further abuses. I have run Newbie's Workshops for over seven years to help make your first festival less

bewildering, and wrote the "First Festival" guide that has been a fixture on the CMA website for years.

I have decades of experience in other 501(c)3 organizations that I have brought to CMA. Again, I stand before you and ask that I be allowed to give more to this organization.

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

Merideth Chaffin

rainyday81@yahoo.com

I have been a CMA member for 6 years this October. During those 6 years, I have served as Lead Area Rep for the Brazos Valley, helped in the Coffee & Tea Room as well as Medstaff. Outside of CMA, I have served as Social Coordinator and Webmistress for the Texas A&M PSA, ran an FM Pagan radio show for 2 years and spent many hours volunteering at Betwixt and Between.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

(James) Bruce Denney

I do not want this job. I have easier things to do. But no one else declared. I do not want someone elected simply because they got 5 write-in votes from friends who thought it would be funny.

I have been the Director of Communications for three years. I am not going to go any further into whom I am. If you know me then you have already made up your mind. If you don't then ask people you trust. Some people think I am a teddy bear and others think I am a jerk. Ask around, get both sides and make up your own mind.

If you complain about the Accord my first question will be "Where is your submission?"

If you don't like the way I do the job I will ask, "Why did you not run for office?"

If you whine about the way things are done then I am going to ask, "What is your solution - that you can get past membership - and when are you going to get started?"

If you want someone to be a rubber stamp for the rest of the Board then find someone else.

If you don't want me to run unopposed then get together and support a write-in candidate. Who knows - I may support them.

I am signing and supporting the use of the Election Code of Ethics. If you support me then talk about me, don't cut down anyone opposing me. I will cut you off at the knees.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE CANDIDATES

Susanne 'DragonWolfe' Ambühl

s.dragon.wolfe@gmail.com

Qualifications:

- have consistently been on the Staff of CMA since 2004, and am currently the Managing Director of Community Service, as well as one of San Antonio's Area Reps.
- I have over 25 years of managerial experience in business and finance, and have been both the Bookkeeper and Treasurer for 501c3 organizations before.
- I have had extensive training in Team work and management and practice Consensus as a daily part of my life, so I know I can work harmoniously with the rest of the BoD. In case anyone is curious, the reason I am willing to enlarge the bulls-eye on my back is because I [still] believe that our organization and the land we jointly own is worth fighting for, not over.

I am a firm believer in the tenants of GAP and fully intend to follow in the footsteps and practices of my mentor Gary and our esteemed and past DoF, Merrick, who are advocates of this system.

I would like to see the 'Magickal' put back in CMA, and am willing to do the work necessary to make it happen. I believe we can provide a current and future home of positive energy and hope for the pagan community in general and our spiritual and blood families in particular.

DIRECTOR OF RECORDS CANDIDATES

Judy Kay Craft

I, Judy Kay Craft, am announcing my candidacy for Director of Records of the Council of Magical Arts. I have been a member of the CMA since 1996 and I have served on the bylaws committee since April 2003.

CMA bylaws state that the Director of Records performs the duties customarily carried out by a corporate secretary. Explicitly stated duties include keeping official records, including minutes of membership and board meetings, supervising the election committee, supervising the administrator, managing the membership rolls, supervising the registrar and election committee, and issuing official notifications of meetings. All of these duties were included in my elected post as corporate Secretary of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, Inc, (CUUPS) from 2001 to 2005.

I have run elections at many levels; not only for CUUPS and regional role playing game organizations, but also for the Harris County Democratic Party, where I was subject to state and federal regulations. I also have experience in managing confidentiality and access to data in both my volunteer work and my profession. CUUPS bylaws mandated a three-tier confidentiality level, with requirements stricter than CMA bylaws currently require. I am a database analyst for

the South Texas College of Law, where I authored the data access policy for staff, student, and alumni databases, and am responsible for meeting confidentiality regulations for those databases.

I would like to use my experience in these other organizations to maintain and promote CMA's future.

Paganism and Thoreau **By Stephanie Canada**

Introduction

A movement is growing within Paganism to reach out and do interfaith work with people of other religious backgrounds. Instead of hiding in the shadows; more and more Pagans have decided to practice their faith openly, and to work for tolerance and acceptance in the mundane world.

The sermon below was presented at First Unitarian Universalist Church in Austin, TX on 7-30-06. Thoreau was a Unitarian, and this work is intended to speak to the religious hodge podge typical which makes up the typical UU church. In order to be accepted by non-Pagans, we must speak to them in ways they can relate to. This often means simplifying concepts, and avoiding the esoteric language used in many magickal system. They do not have our frame of reference, we need to communicate within theirs.

Even so, I have slipped in a code word or phrase here and there, just to make the Pagans smile. I hope they make you smile, too. This sermon was well received and helped bring us all together. I hope it inspires you to do similar work of your own.

Stephanie Canada
yewgrovecuups@austinuu.org

Yew Grove CUUPS
(Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)
http://www.thunderhoofdesigns.com/yew_cuups.html

Paganism and Thoreau

So much of what I feel about Paganism cannot be put into words. If I had to strip Paganism down to its core, I would call it the direct experience of the Divine through Nature. How do you describe an epiphany? I have a quote which expresses this difficulty:

*“The story I have told, although a tale,
Can represent the witching spell so many of us use*

when at our craft of transmuting our life into words...

The Essence is always lost.

This is the one law of every word about inspiration, nor will this summary of mine avoid it."

This is from Jorge Luis Borges' poem, "The Moon" (in the collection, Dreamtigers). One of my sources describes "Transcendentalism" as "a philosophy emphasizing the intuitive and spiritual above the empirical". In some ways Paganism is tied to objective reality, in that Nature is perhaps our greatest inspiration. But this reverence is inextricably tied to the intuitive and spiritual realms, for Pagans there is both a physical and spiritual aspect to Nature, and this understanding is reached through intuition. There are innumerable tools and techniques for achieving this state of awareness of the immanence of the Spirit in Nature. If you are around Pagans any length of time you will hear talk of the Kabbalah, or Tarot, or Trance Dancing, or Shamanic Drumming, or Runes, or any number of other tools and practices that help us to reach this state of union with the Life Force. But this state can be reached spontaneously sometimes, as well. Whatever way they come, when we have these moments, they transform us in ways both subtle and powerful. We grasp; however briefly, a vivid understanding of our place in the Universe and our connection to all that is and all that will be. The Seventh Principle of Unitarian Universalism states that we UU's affirm our "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part". This dovetails nicely with the dictionary definition of "Transcendent", which is something "universally applicable or significant". To me, feeling deeply connected to the Life Force is "universally applicable or significant". When we realize that we are connected to all the Beauty around us and within us, that we are part of the Divine and it is part of us, we can truly feel our responsibility to the world around us, and take hold of the joy within us.

Paganism is not tied to a book, there is no sacred text. This frees us to discover spiritual meaning on our own terms. We can build our theology based on our personal experience of existence. We are not tied to words, but to our senses. If it is true – as some have said – that we are the sensory organs of the Deity, then our primary duty is to experience this world in all the fullness we are capable of. Thoreau said:

"Live each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and surrender yourself to the influences of each."

So much of our society today conspires in the process of separating us from the world around us. I found Existentialism described as being "...opposed to rationalism and empiricism, stressing the individual's unique position as a self-determining agent responsible for the authenticity of his or her choices". The pressure is certainly there to be rational and empirical, and they have their place. But we have talked a great deal in this church about being authentic in our spiritual choices, and for Pagans part of that is honoring the powerful pull of the spiritual we sense in the Natural World. For us Science leads us down a useful and practical road, but beyond the "Dead End" sign and the fences we see meadows beyond of wonderful things that Science can't explain. Indeed; Science denies their existence, but our hearts tell us the wisdom of a tree is sacred and real, even if it can't be measured or seen. The wind sings it's mysteries to us, and the hawk is our brother. The dictionary definition of "Existential" is "grounded in existence or the experience of existence". Our feet are rooted in the Earth, but our hearts reach out to encompass

the Universe. We seek to experience existence to the fullest of our abilities, and from that draw the strength to explore every door that opens to us, whether it has a rational explanation or not. I don't believe that Paganism is necessarily opposed to rationalism, I'd like to think that rationalism is an important part of the process of spiritual development, but not an exclusive part. The logical mind can coexist with the intuitive, they can compliment each other.

There is also no concept of original sin in Paganism. We each contain some measure of the Godhead, to be reunited in wholeness with it again at some later point. Thoreau said,

"Men are born to succeed, not fail."

That makes complete sense to Pagans. As being born without sin, we are worthy of whatever insights and mercies that the Gods give us. The Life Force is like a mother a few steps away, encouraging us to stumble into welcoming arms. It is a father who puts his arm around our shoulders and tells us to follow our dreams. We are meant to succeed! We are worthy and nurtured and beloved of our Gods. And just as we are part of the Life Force, we are also part of all things.

I know talking of Gods and Goddesses is a little discomfiting for UU's, but it may make more sense if I put it in these terms. Whether you believe in a God or not, a big daddy in the sky or a universe moving along unpredictable lines of quantum mechanics, you must know that the Life Force is something far beyond our ability to comprehend. Even though we *are* a part of it, we are limited beings in our present, manifest form. Remember the dictionary says that Transcendent is something "universally applicable or significant". Even though we cannot grasp the Life Force in its fullness, I believe there is a universal yearning to define it, to limit that fullness to a form we can comprehend, commune with, and enfold within us. *Let me share with you this rather surprising quote from Thoreau:*

"In my Pantheon, Pan still reigns in his pristine glory, with his ruddy face, his flowing beard, and his shaggy body, his pipe and his crook...for the great god Pan is not dead, as was rumored. No god ever dies. Perhaps of all the gods of New England and of ancient Greece, I am most constant at his shrine...I was born to be a pantheist – if that be the name of me." (Pg 19, Introduction, Letters to a Spiritual Seeker)

At Walden, Thoreau felt what many Pagans feel, that there is truth within myths, that all God-forms have their place, the Life Force is embodied in the form that speaks to you most intensely. Chose the mask that speaks to you. Respond to it as your own personal patron. Seek its wisdom and feel it in your heart. Whatever "God" is (or isn't), *we are that, too*. We are makers and shapers – and sometimes destroyers. We are Spider Woman weaving the Web of the World, Kali the Destroyer, or Pan resting against a tree enjoying the sunlight splashing through the green leaves. We'll be sharing a prayer with you shortly, called the "Charge of the Goddess". Part of it reads,

"...if that which you seek, you find not within yourself, you will never find it without."
(Starhawk, #517 in the hymnal)

This may remind some of you who grew up in the sixties (as I did) of “Thou art God” from “Stranger in a Strange Land” by that notable heretic, Robert Heinlein. Or try this one from a heretic even more renowned,

“The Kingdom of God is within you”.

The point is that this reality is something we create together; whether we take an active, conscious role in that process or not. Remember that “Transcendentalism” is “a philosophy emphasizing the intuitive and spiritual above the empirical”. I cannot prove that we are one with the Life Force, but I share with other Pagans the belief that my intuition gives me spiritual insights which are valid and that therefore feeling at one with the Life Force *is* true. And then we can look back and recall that “Existentialism” is “...opposed to rationalism and empiricism, stressing the individual's unique position as a self-determining agent responsible for the authenticity of his or her choices”. Our choices interweave to make this world what it is. Look out at the world and consider what you want it to be, think about what you believe would make it a more beautiful, more powerful, more radiant place. I'm not saying that this world doesn't have these virtues already, but we all know that there is a long list of things which could be better. Then turn inward and strive to manifest the qualities you envision within yourself. From that you can begin to put forth the effort to make these changes echo out into the World. Does this sound simplistic? Perhaps in some ways it is. And yet it works. Look within for compassion; look within for justice, for responsibility and tolerance and all those things we know are in short supply. Let there be Hope! And there was Hope. It's uncanny, the way we talk ourselves into believing that we have no say in molding our reality. Let us take hold of our Power; embrace it and make it our own, feel it quivering through us wild and wonderful. This is our time, this is our place. Let's make it *enchanting*.

Copyright retained by the author for any other use beyond online publication of this issue of “The Accord”. Please contact the author for prior permission for any other use in any medium.

"The statements herein contained are the opinion of the author only and do not reflect the opinion of the Board of Directors, staff or officers of the Council of the Magickal Arts, Inc. All statements regarding legality have not been verified by the CMA attorney."

-- CMA Board of Directors

**The Need to be Educated on the Changing Non Profit World
By Dawn D. Shanklin, BSOE. AAS Acct.**

The theme for this Accord is “Do you want an Accord?. My article will ask a bigger question, "do you want a CMA?". CMA needs to start getting educated. If the leadership does not stay on top of the current and ever-changing nonprofit regulations, CMA may not be here.

The membership also needs to be educated so they can understand what they are voting on when bylaws need to change to stay current with the change of regulations. After the exposure of Enron, WorldCom and Tyco the government put into place a regulatory act called the Sarbanes-

Oxley Act of 2002. This act gives clear instructions on how both profit and not-for-profit corporations should be handling day-to-day business operations. At the same time, the government is now taking a more serious look at how both profit and nonprofit corporations are being run and whether these corporations are following the proper procedures in accordance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. (Balog, 2006)

It is no secret that the interest in running for leadership of CMA is waning. Over the last few years the election of the Board of Directors (BoD) has not generated many volunteers. The BoD is responsible for running the business side of CMA, as well as making sure the festivals are planned, and a quarterly magazine is published. However, the membership controls how the BoD runs the organization. The membership votes on the bylaws that govern the BoD's conduct.

How can the membership vote on such bylaws when many of them have no idea what is required to run the organization? This means our leadership needs to be trained and educated in the changing laws and requirements of nonprofit organizations. Then that leadership needs to educate the membership. An even better idea is the membership taking interest and educating them selves to keep the BoD on top of what is going on in the real world.

Like it or not, CMA is a legally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. With this status comes much responsibility for both the leadership as well as the members. The membership is responsible for electing the BoD, the leadership. If the leadership is weak and fails to follow the letter of the law, then it is the fault of the membership for electing a BoD that is unqualified to run CMA.

In the not so recent past, there were no guidelines or requirements other than being a member in good standing of CMA to run for a BoD position. The only requirement for membership was to be over 18. So in that sense any one 18 years or older could run this organization. Does this mean anyone 18 or older could run a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization? Really think about this one. An 18 year-old can not even legally drink in the state of Texas. Did we really want an 18 year old running the CMA organization? The 2004 BoD thought about this question and put into place a few general guide lines and requirements for seeking a Board position.

The guidelines were added to the CMA bylaws by a membership vote. Many of the members thought about the seriousness of the situation and wanted a change in how CMA was being run. Meanwhile, other members complained that the requirements are too hard to complete, and therefore no one is truly qualified to run for a Board position, which is why the interest in running for these positions has dropped. Here are the requirements from our most current bylaws:

4.14

Candidacy for Directorship:

To serve on the Board of Director, a member must:

A. Be a current member, in good standing.

B. Have been a member for a minimum of one year and one day in the calendar year and one day in the calendar year immediately preceding candidacy.

C. Serve as any of the following: Lead Area Representative for one year, Area Representative for a minimum of two years, Senior Festival Staff for a minimum of one festival, or service or experience commensurate with the position for which they are seeking election (i.e.: C.P.A.)

D. If a candidate is seeking election as a Fiduciary Officer (President, Secretary or Treasurer), said candidate must provide the Board of Directors any and all information necessary to be bonded by the State of Texas as Fiduciary Officers of a 501(c)(3) Corporation.

E. If a candidate is seeking election as any other Director, said candidate must sign an Affidavit of Disclosure regarding any Felony convictions. Conviction of a felony does not preclude candidacy or service on the Board of Directors. The Affidavit of Disclosure will be held by the Directors of Records and will be held in confidence by the Board of Directors. All Affidavits of Disclosure shall be held in the official archives of the Corporation by the Director of Records. ([CMA bylaws](#), 2006)

Nowhere in the current bylaws do they require or even ask our leadership to keep up with current regulations before or after being elected. In the light of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 it is alarmingly clear that the US government is taking a more radical stance of requiring nonprofit organizations to be run or operated by professionally trained Board of Directors. Because of our status as a 501(c)(3), we fall into this government expectation.

CMA needs strong leaders for CMA to continue and be a successful business organization in the eyes of the government. In a recent article in Nonprofit World in titled "O Leader, Where Art Thou", by Chris Keeshan, he discusses the five Steps to Becoming a Leader. They are listed as following:

1. "Read literature on leadership, including biographies of great leaders, theories of leadership, and current research in nonprofit leadership
2. Seek out successful leaders in you community and study their habits.
3. Assess your leadership capabilities and develop a self- improvement plan with specific goals.
4. Set aside time in your schedule for self-reflection.
5. If you're reluctant to take chances, set some risk-taking goals. Do one new thing each day until you become comfortable with taking risks and creating change."

Another article from Nonprofit World titled "35 Questions That Will Transform Your Board", (author unk.) suggests using these questions as an organizational assessment tool to improve the organization. The CMA leadership and membership together could use this assessment tool to work towards turning CMA into a more successful business organization.

Internal Procedures

1. Does everyone in the organization have a clear sense of the kinds of people they want on the board?
2. Has the organization completed a formal review of the current board and identified areas that need strengthening?
3. Has the organization identified people with the characteristics that are lacking on the board and developed a strategy to recruit them onto the board?
4. Does the board have a nominating committee in place?
5. Has the board reviewed the organization's mission? Have board members discussed whether there are any changes in the mission that might require changing the make-up of the board?
6. Have board and staff members spent time talking together about the advantages of having a diverse board?
7. Does your organization cooperate with other nonprofits in your community to develop and maintain a board bank, which you can use to recruit new board members?
8. Do you recruit new board members from within your organization (volunteers, past employees, etc.) as well as outside your organization?
9. Have the board chair and staff developed tools that keep board meetings interesting, fun, and productive? Are meetings evaluated for productivity at least occasionally?
10. Do board members serve without payment unless the organization has a policy identifying reimbursable, out-of-pocket expenses?
11. Are board members accessible to stakeholders and to staff (volunteer and paid)?
12. Does the board play an active role in developing and reviewing a strategic plan for the organization?

Operational Procedures

13. Are the roles of the board clearly stated and communicated? Do board members commit to those responsibilities by signing a board commitment letter?
14. Are board meetings well attended?
15. When board members miss a meeting without giving a reason, does a board member or the executive director call them?

16. Are potential board members interviewed before they are asked to serve?
17. Do board members receive orientation and training, including information on the organization's mission, bylaws, policies, practices, and programs, as well as the board's governance roles and responsibilities?
18. Is there a nominating process to ensure that the board remains appropriately diverse with respect to ethnicity, gender, economic status, culture, disabilities, age, skills, and expertise?
19. Does each board member receive an operations manual that includes the organization's bylaws, a description of board members' responsibilities (including job descriptions for board officers), and a summary of operations procedures?
20. Is the number of board members consistent with what is required in the organization's bylaws and state statutes?
21. Does the board review the organization's bylaws at least once a year? Do bylaws clearly state the organization's purpose, service area, power structure, board limits, number of officers and committees, financial and legal procedures, and guidelines for holding meetings, amending bylaws, and dissolving the organization?
22. Does the board have an annual meeting calendar specifying tasks that routinely need to be done at certain board meetings (for example, review bylaws in November, prepare for audit in August, prepare slate of nominations in July)?
23. Does the board have a policy for handling urgent matters between regularly scheduled meetings?
24. Does the organization maintain a conflict-of-interest policy, which all board and staff members review and sign?
25. Does the board have a written policy prohibiting employees and members of their immediate families from serving as board chair or treasurer?
26. Do board members receive a written agenda and related materials in advance of each board meeting? Are board minutes recorded and action taken on the issues raised in each board meeting?

Fiscal Management

27. Have all board members made a strong financial commitment to the organization?
28. Does the board take the leadership role in fundraising and financial management?
29. Does the board oversee the annual audit and use it to strengthen the organization's financial policies?

30. Is the board doing a good job of insuring that the organization fulfills its regulatory and financial requirements?
31. Does the board prepare an annual budget (based on a recommendation? From the executive director), which allocates funds to the major priorities identified in the organization's strategic plan? Do all board members understand the budget?
32. When preparing the budget, does the board seek advice from staff members who are knowledgeable about each program and activity being budgeted?
33. Has a financial plan been developed to ensure financial stability for three to five years? Is this plan consistent with the organization's strategic plan?
34. Do board members review monthly reports of the organization's expenditures and revenues? Do they compare actual revenues and expenditures to budgeted revenues and expenditures on a monthly basis?
35. Does the board approve all adjustments made to the budget during the year?

This assessment tool focuses on the concepts presented during the educational programs produced by the learning Institute for nonprofit organizations, a program of the Society for Nonprofit Organizations. (www.snpo.org)

Now is the time for CMA to start cleaning up how the organization runs. The best way to do this is through leadership training and membership education programs. If CMA does not start to change how the organization is run then the likely hood of CMA failing to comply with the government regulations could happen. If CMA fails to comply then the 501(c)(3) status could be lost and the entire organization could come under Federal and State investigation. If this happens then CMA could be shut down.

The last few years have been hard on both the Members and the Board of CMA. The members and leadership need to start taking a more educated interest into CMA and looking for qualified members to run for the positions that make the board of Directors. With qualified people on the board then keeping up with the changing non profit world and staying on top of the governmental regulations could assure that CMA as a 501(c)(3) organization could be around for another 25 years.

References:

- Author unknown. *35 Questions That Will Transform Your Board*. Nonprofit World, May/Jun2006, Vol. 24 Issue 3, p12-13, 2p
- Keeshan, Chris. *O Leader, Where Art Thou?* Nonprofit World, Jul/Aug2006, Vol. 24 Issue 4, p14-15, 2p.
- Balog, Ibolya. CPA. *Oath of Office: The Ethics Responsibilities of the Board* Pennsylvania CPA Journal, Fall2006, Vol. 77 Issue 3, p10-13, 4p.

- THE COUNCIL OF MAGICKAL ARTS BYLAWS. Amended and Restated as of April 16, 2006. <http://www.magickal-arts.org/aboutcma-bylaws.html>
-

Concerns in Pagan Leadership **By Stephanie Canada**

[This]....ties into questions about power and authority and groups and leadership that I've been pondering for years and could talk and write about forever. Almost twenty years ago I wrote Truth or Dare, Encounters With Power, Authority and Mystery, that came out of very similar issues in the movement of the 'eighties. It came out of my recognition that there was a sort of power that was not power-over or formal, structural power, and not power-from-within, or empowerment, but a more slippery, elusive power-with or influence, the differential of weight certain voices carry in a group of equals. And how we handle that kind of power in a group that aims to be non-hierarchical or anti-authoritarian or directly democratic, how we keep it accountable and still support people who do take on roles of responsibility, whether we succumb to the tyranny of structurelessness or get mired in the rigidity of structure, are never easy questions.

---Starhawk www.starhawk.org

There are no easy; and perhaps no complete answers, to the questions that Starhawk poses in the quote above concerning power; and the wielding of it, in Pagan organizations. Like many in the Pagan community, I have an innate unease with hierarchy. And again; like many, I have been more than frustrated with attempts at consensus.

Paganism is truly on the threshold of many amazing and potentially powerful changes, many of which revolve around our desire to be recognized in the greater world of religious/spiritual thought, and in the mainstream of the various mundane cultures we live in day to day. Pagan interfaith and outreach efforts are blossoming, which is tremendously affirming to me; we've stayed isolated and insular for too long. But – like any minority culture – we now face the questions of how we can retain our unique identity, while stressing the areas of commonality with the “mundane world”. We must also recognize too that influences from that outside world have begun to infiltrate and impact who we are and what we do in a more forceful and subtle way than perhaps ever before.

Let's talk about hierarchy for a bit. There is some evidence in the medieval witch trial documents of a power structure. There often seems to be the basic structure of a coven, and a High Priest or High Priestess (what the inquisitors called a “devil”) with a leader at the top. You can decide for yourself how much or how little of these transcripts is accurate, and how much the hyperbole and hysteria of the inquisitors. But I personally believe that the evidence of groups with leaders appears and reappears with enough regularity all over Europe as to be more than sufficient evidence to support this loose structure. If we substitute High Priest (or more rarely in those times, High Priestess) for the more common designation “devil” (such a derogatory term!) for the leader, we see a structure that is the basis of most covens and groves today. And this is also

the structure of most Pagan organizations, where there is a small group of leaders (or a single leader) and a much larger group of followers who are the regular members of the organization.

The problem inherent in all this is that a hierarchy is not the only model available to us. Probably the much more widespread system of wielding power and passing on wisdom was mother to daughter, father to son, or elder to apprentice. There is a lot to be said for the one-on-one situation; it allows you to tailor the knowledge to the strengths and weaknesses of the learner, to create essentially a tutorial environment. For leading large groups though, it simply doesn't work very well. There isn't an effective way to have that sort of intimacy when working with large numbers. And the other danger is that of the self-appointed leader, which is fraught with all the problems inherent with individual ego, charisma, and control issues.

In either case, I don't see the need to slavishly follow past traditions when they no longer serve us well. The democratic model, where an elder or leader is chosen by majority vote, seems to me to avoid the pitfalls of these prior systems, however historically interesting they may be.

For now, I have only worked in volunteer organizations, where I have either been elected or simply offered to help. It would be an interesting exercise to contrast this environment where self-appointed leaders such as a High Priest and/or Priestess have the final authority. But this is a subject for another essay. I have always been answerable to someone else, either above or along side me. I hesitate to say I've been answerable to people "below" me as I feel strongly that as an officer; these are the people I represent, who are counting on me to speak and act in their stead. I am their voice, and I take that seriously. Even so, there is a natural process of an "inner circle" which develops over time, a process which has serious potential drawbacks even while it seems inevitable.

Some of the problems of the "inner circle" mentality are double-edged swords. There are issues of confidentiality when it is absolutely necessary to keep information within the knowledge of a very few. This includes some legal decision-making, and most often keeping the names and personal information of members private. We are all aware of the dangers to livelihood and child custody which make some Pagans choose to remain "in the broom closet". Also, there are times when meetings and or discussions require the ability for people to brainstorm, vent, and debate heatedly, without worrying too much about decorum. There's a lot to be said for freedom of speech and letting your hair down.

On the other hand, serious problems arise when the "movers and shakers" create an atmosphere of isolation, when the rank and file of an organization feel that their leaders can't be bothered, or wouldn't listen if you did get in touch with them. Even worse, there are times when the leadership begins to see themselves as the "real members" of the group, because they are the ones who "do everything". One needs to remember that they also serve who simply show up for the potluck. Decision-making is important, but it can't happen in a vacuum, and the decisions have to be followed with action. We all love the members who come and say, "Just tell me what needs to be done and I'll do it." But the point is to create opportunities for each person who wants to participate to do so in a way that is comfortable for them.

And remember that any person has the right to pass, and not pitch in this time. Stepping aside (or back) is an important option for a leader to exercise, as well. We all have times when we have to say, "I can't take something like that on right now." There will always be lurkers on lists, and those who show up intermittently. What we need to keep in mind is the far ranging potential of our words and deeds. We never know who is watching, judging, and spreading the word about what we do. We never know from whence our future helpmeets and leaders will come. Our life lessons revolve around being a force for good in the world, about looking at what we've done and feeling like we gave back and sent out positive energy. We may not always see directly the impact of what we do, but it is so satisfying to feel as though what you have done has been done with strong ethics and grace.

I suppose; like anyone else who has put their shoulder to the work of building an organization or group, I dream of a meritocracy. In a perfect world; the most capable, inspired, and energetic would also be the ones who would step up and offer to do the work. But then I have to remember that I have been fundamentally changed by the generosity of spirit of those who eagerly accepted my offer of service, with absolutely no idea of whether I was qualified or not, and even little or no knowledge of me as a person. In doing this, I was given opportunities to grow and expand far beyond what I would have most likely ever been able to achieve on my own.

Stepping into service – when done for the right reasons – will push your boundaries (and sometimes your buttons) in surprising ways. I have found that whatever my preconceptions were about what needed to be done, my time in service was a process of letting those go, in order to do what really needed to be done. And letting go is an ongoing challenge in my life. Understanding change; and how beautiful and inevitable change is, is one of many realizations thrust upon me to my greater good. Learning to listen and listen fully even when I strongly disagree, learning to choose my words carefully and be diplomatic, learning to prioritize effectively, learning when to walk away, when to let go and when to fight for what I know as right when all around me feel I am wrong, these are only a handful of the challenges I've faced. And the awareness that challenges are truly opportunities for growth and strengthening my core values, is a realization that I struggle to hold close to me each day.

So in that vein, let me list a few things that a leader of a Pagan organization, or someone who is thinking about stepping up to the plate to help in a Pagan organization might want to keep in mind:

1. A leader or elder is someone who leads by example. It doesn't matter what degrees you have attained, what matters is how you apply your wisdom day by day. In other words; be humble, and retain your openness to learning new things. If you are planning to lead to show off what a swell person you are, or because you are the oldest/most degreed/best known and feel that you *ought* to have a place at the table, I hope you will step back and rethink where you are coming from. If personal aggrandizement, the desire for praise (or notoriety) are your motivators, please do something else!

2. Begin with Balance, and return to it often. If you are already burned out and overextended, have the strength to say no and pass the obligation. If you are in a good place to take on new responsibility, be sure to give yourself permission to recharge and regroup often. If you feel

strongly and passionately about an issue, this is a good signal that you need to spend at least a little time in contemplation, considering why you feel so strongly. If your need to further your point relates back to showing someone else up or other ego issues, have the wisdom to drop it. Return to your center, and move from there. Leadership will give you many opportunities to learn to prioritize. Don't forget to take them, especially in the heat of the moment. If you approach an issue after careful consideration, you can be more certain that your limited energy is being extended pursuing something that truly merits the struggle.

3. Camaraderie is fine, but be wary of the tendency to isolate a core group from the needs of the larger organization. Provide opportunities for membership to speak their will, and touch base with them often to get a reading on how you are doing.

4. Remember to give others the opportunity to serve in whatever way feel comfortable to them. This will spread the responsibility, ease your burden, and give others the chance to learn, grow, and invest in the organization. Delegate when appropriate, don't try to do it all. You had to start somewhere, give others the grace of that option to devote themselves to something they believe in.

Stephanie Canada

yewgrovecuups@austinuu.org

Yew Grove CUUPS

(Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)

http://www.thunderhoofdesigns.com/yew_cuups.html

Copyright retained by the author for any other use beyond online publication of this issue of "The Accord". Please contact the author for prior permission for any other use in any medium.