

Who are the Reformed Druids?

Brief History

Reformed Druidism has its beginning at Carleton College in the spring of 1963 as a protest to the college's requirement that all students attend a certain number of religious services or meetings. One of the ways of fulfilling the requirement was by attending services of one's own religion. The Reformed Druids of North America proposed to test the degree of freedom permitted under this clause.

Druidism was ideal for this attack. It had a perfect combination of exotic ritual plus some relevance to the so-called Judeo-Christian tradition. If religious credit were granted, the religious requirement could be exposed as totally ineffective. If, on the other hand, credit were denied, the college could be charged with bigotry. The initial attitude of the college was, "If we ignore them, they'll go away". But the RDNA not only refused to go away, it grew, acquiring an advisor, and becoming a registered college organization.

In June, 1964, the religious requirement was repealed. Even though the Druids rejoiced at this triumph, they recognized that their job was not over. For many members the movement had come to represent a valuable part of their spiritual lives. So there was the importance of continuing the RDNA as a protest against all coerced religion.

Purpose

"On a superficial level, it might now seem that the purpose of Reformed Druidism is merely to delve into the strange customs and rituals of the ancient Celts, and to have some fun doing it, and also to serve as a new and different type of protest movement." -1996

2000

We still have a definite interest in the Celts, we celebrate the old holidays and full moons, but we've branched out a bit. We experiment with strange customs from a whole lot of different religions. We hold sweatlodges which are conducted in a manner similar to some Native American traditions, have an interest in meditations of all sorts and are always open to new ideas. We tend to focus on discussion of spiritual matters these days rather than protesting organized religion (many of us are members of some organized religion) but who knows what changes the future will bring.

On deeper examination of the RDNA, it might be said to have two important purposes:

- (1) It offers a reasonable alternative for the person who cannot stomach organized religion, or who feels that it is somehow deficient.
- (2) In communing with Nature, it seeks to promote a spirit of meditation and introspection, aimed ultimately at awareness of religious truth.