Protests and Tribulations

Draft, Tuition, and ... Druids?
Reformed Druids of North America

• Founded Spring of 1963, at Carleton College, in response to their religious requirement
• If you can tell whether I’m serious, I’m not living up to the RDNA culture
• A friend of mine at Carleton was one of the founders of the RDNA, and kept bugging me to join.
• I joined in 1964.
Reformed Druids at Purdue

• I arrived at Purdue in January, 1967, to work on an MS in Mathematics.

• At first, I spent all my time on math.

• By 1968, I was not only hanging out in the CS department, but spending more time outside, including concerts at Slayter Center.

• That fall, I started holding Reformed Druid services.
Vietnam-era Draft

• Young men (ages 18 – 25) were drafted and sent into war.
• The main escape was deferment: being in college, or being in graduate school or an occupation in a scientific or technological area.
• Hey! That’s us!
• The escape clause was gradually tightened.
Lesser-known Draft Exemptions

- In addition to deferments, there were exemptions.
- One of the grounds for exemption was being a minister (or equivalent, in other sects).
Samhain

• In the RDNA version of Celtic history, one of the main holidays is “Samhain”, the ancestor of Halloween.

• This seemed to be a good time to really publicize the Druids at Purdue.
Samhain Celebration at Purdue

- On the evening of October 31 (Halloween), the 10-15 congregants met in the wind tunnel, then trooped down the stairs to the hall outside the Machine Room.
- We all stood looking toward the little-known, little-used graphics console.
Graphics console
Druid symbol

- After suitable incantations, I drew the Druid symbol in the air,

while facing the graphics console:
Magic!

- My accomplice, watching my reflection in the nearby controller’s cabinet face, started the console’s drawing program by pressing the button on the controller.
Graphics console with sign
Post-magic

• There was a satisfying gasp from the crowd.
• We then trooped back up the stairs, and drove to the banks of the Wabash, where we had a religious-themed ceremony and bonfire.
Bonfire at the Wabash
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