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## *Annual Report to the Stakeholders and Supporters of the Pantheon Foundation*

It is accepted practice and an obligation for organizations such as the Pantheon Foundation to produce an annual report for its officers, supporters, stakeholders, and donors, as well as to other interested parties and the larger community. This is the first such report, and for a time we thought it might be the last. Clearly, we need to regroup around the Foundation's purpose and strategy. We have therefore titled it:

### *Foundation's End*

*From the Executive Director and Chair of the Board, Sam Webster:*

For years I've contemplated the best way to serve the Pagan community, applying the lessons from seminary and more than thirty years of work, teaching, and experimentation. I have formed so many groups and been a part of so many efforts that I literally can't count them. Back in 2012 I discovered the idea of fiscal sponsorship and began formulating the design for an organization to bring the benefits of 501c3 status to Pagan organizations without all of the effort and expense for each group to acquire it. On November 17th, 2014, one year to the day of starting the paperwork, the Pantheon Foundation achieved this status.

Central to the Foundation's strategy was the presence of three core organizations who needed the services and legal coverage that a fiscal sponsorship organization can offer, as well as providing the initial staff and population to serve. For the Foundation, these were the Open Source Order of the Golden Dawn (OSOGD), the Come As You Are coven (CAYA) and the Wild Hunt Pagan news blog. The latter two are twenty thousand dollars per year organizations, ones with solid purpose and cash flow, and worth together four thousand dollars per year to the Foundation in management fees. The goal has always been to make the Foundation work on the basis of fees for services rendered and for revenue generated by operations like teaching, publications, events and other products and services. We want the Foundation to stand on its own, and not be dependent on donations. We launched successfully at PantheaCon 2014 raising over a thousand dollars in donations at the opening reception. We clearly had the ear and the support of the community.

The Foundation began its journey of development, and in its first year accomplished several key goals and projects. The Foundation responded to a call for more diversity and inclusiveness in its operations, and appointed a Board of Diversity Advisors to provide

input to the Foundation. It established the Diotima Prize, a scholarship for master of divinity students at accredited seminaries, collected over one thousand dollars for it, and awarded the prize to Ms. Tiffany Andes. The Foundation hosted the Pagan Activism Conference Online (PACO) featuring a keynote speech by Starhawk, and presentations by T. Thorn Coyle, Cara Schulz, Alley Valkyrie, and LaSara Firefox Allen, to name but a few. This low-cost online conference, requiring no travel for participants and with a very low carbon footprint, raised almost fifteen hundred dollars, all of which was distributed to the speakers, except for the 10% management fee for the Foundation. The Foundation produced a quarterly online newsletter to keep constituents and donors informed of our accomplishments. It also began to build its infrastructure: website, email lists, donor information and other tracking databases, bank accounts, and crucially, put into place its accounting systems. For this the Foundation arranged for oversight from Jitasa, an accountancy firm specializing in non-profits.

All this success was reversed at the January 2015 Board meeting. After irrational and unfounded accusations of racism, the Diversity Committee resigned en masse, then CAYA and in February The Wild Hunt each abandoned the Foundation. We lost three of our Board members in the process. Mainly this demonstrated the destructiveness of ideological blindness and the inability to deal with conflict, particularly when rooted in prejudice, so prevalent in the Pagan community. Sadly, we keep hurting ourselves. Anyone who wishes further details of this ugly story may contact me directly, but they are inappropriate for this communication.

Without two of the three anchor organizations the Foundation has been crippled. They were to provide the economic basis for action and without that fuel, we have been reduced to station keeping. Since the events of January and February, our steady stream of fiscal sponsorship inquiries has dried up. After the long and intense investment of time and preparation, the thousands of dollars invested, the untold hours spent in building consensus, filing paperwork, the many meetings, we are nearly at a standstill. We are maintaining, but just. Yet the project is a good one. For those that need the legal protection that a 501c3 gives, we have that to offer, with the only caveat that those we help are Pagan and that they are willing to manage their money properly.

The Foundation was planned to be financially self-sustaining by this point in its development. We knew we could not do the work we intended without professional accounting services, but coming out of the gate we lacked the resources to pay for this service. I solved this problem by personally funding the costs for Jitasa's accounting services, to date costing approximately \$2440. I cannot sustain this, but I am also not willing to reimburse myself from funds donated to the Foundation. Because of this, and because of the current low level of financial transactions, after we close our first fiscal year, we will suspend our services with Jitasa. As conditions improve and we have sufficient activity to warrant it, we will restart our work with Jitasa. In addition to these measures, we have returned a substantial sum from our treasury to the supporters who donated it, since we felt it was not ethical to retain it under the current circumstances.

Speaking for myself, I know our means and our intentions are good. There are other groups out there who could use our services. If we can identify some anchor groups that are committed to the project and our Pagan community, we could restart the economic engine that was to be the Foundation's main driver. Otherwise, we may just have to do a slow build. Since there is little point of abandoning the investment of sweat and coin, we

will proceed. But unless we are able to serve the needs of the community, this will be of little value. My hope is that you will contribute your good thoughts, prayers, and ideas on how we can go forward from here. Please contact us at [info@pantheonfoundation.org](mailto:info@pantheonfoundation.org) if you would like to help, learn more about our current projects, or share your ideas and feedback.

The Pantheon Foundation will continue to provide coverage for its current projects, but the future is as yet undetermined. And so we turn to you. Is the Foundation worthwhile to you? This is not a pitch for money. We need to know if our community, once so generous and supportive, wants us to continue in our service to you. To what end shall this Foundation continue? Or should the Foundation simply close its doors?

*What do you say?*

*From the Treasurer, Barbara Cormack:*

As Treasurer for the Pantheon Foundation it is my duty to report on the financial standing and health of the organization. It was my earnest hope to be able to share a glowing report of a growing organization, well on its way to becoming self-sufficient and thriving. Instead I will be reporting on losses rather than gains made in the past year.

This fiscal year began with a strong lead building on our successful launch at PantheaCon 2014. We started creating our accounting infrastructure with Jitasa and established accounts for the Wild Hunt, our first and very substantial FSO. We gathered and distributed funds for the Diotima Prize and the Pagan Activism Conference Online (PACO), and we continued to receive a steady stream of donations both large and modest. However, the start of 2015 brought sudden and unexpected nonfeasance and infighting among some board members and advisors, and then the departure of three board members and a group of advisors. These events had an extremely negative impact on the Foundation's reputation and endeavors. As direct consequences, The Wild Hunt withdrew from the Foundation as an FSO, and CAYA Coven withdrew its application, taking with them the greater part of the financial base we had planned on from the Foundation's inception. Donations dropped off, and development has slowed significantly. These events are discussed elsewhere in this Annual Report and so are not dwelt upon here. Instead, I share my contemplations stemming from these events, as I look to the future with its potential and its uncertainties.

Some of the Foundation's detractors have objected to our approach of using fiscal sponsorship and the related ability to wield financial power. It's something of a paradox in the community we wish to serve: on the one hand there are many Pagans who have successful careers or professions, and likewise many Pagans who own or run successful businesses, including retail establishments, high-quality artisan handcrafts, publishing companies, and the like, and who enjoy the financial benefits and security resulting therefrom. On the other hand, and it is a very large and full hand, there are many, many Pagans who are marginally employed, who regularly fail to make ends meet, who have few to no resources for health care or retirement. There are some who are also virulently 'anti-Capitalist', even though this 'anti-establishment' stance, which is often adopted and promulgated with great pride, provides few to no benefits. Where does this discomfort with and distaste for the tools and mechanisms of current law and society come from? Shouldn't we be lauding those Pagans with good and ethical business acumen, who are

willing to dive into the intricacies of our society's legal and business structures and wield them to our community's advantage? Would it not serve us better to set aside some of our ideological differences to pull together rather than engaging in fractious and distracting grandstanding? Are we too immature as a group, as a religion, to avoid damaging infighting? I don't have clear answers to these questions.

For the present, the Foundation will move forward in the wake of these challenges with its mission, which is:

*To provide organizational support for the practice of Pagan religion and the fostering of Pagan Ministry. To study the history, promote the culture, and advance the social welfare of Pagans and the Pagan community.*

We will continue with work and projects which match the Foundation's mission. We will seek out Pagan groups and businesses who can benefit from and contribute to the financial and organizational health and wellbeing of the Foundation, and who have the vision, energy and know-how to value and obtain the advantages we can offer. Would you like to join us?

*From the Secretary, Tim Williams:*

This has been both an inspiring and frustrating year for me as the newest board member of the Pantheon Foundation. I have been involved in the Pagan community through my participation in various groups for quite a few years now, working extensively in both ceremonial magick and the Craft. I am an Adept, as well as one of the Officers of the Open Source Order of the Golden Dawn. I am also an initiated witch of a couple of Craft traditions, most notably Anderson Feri. Through my participation with the leadership of the OSOGD, I was aware of the initial vision for the Pantheon Foundation and had hoped that I could be a part of it making it a reality. I was so inspired by Sam's hope of creating an organization that would help our Pagan community gain a better foothold in today's society so that we could not only continue doing our present work, but build an infrastructure that can be available for the Pagans of the future. It was indeed an inspiration, and I was truly honored to be selected as the OSOGD's representative to the board. This has been a great and exciting opportunity for me to help build towards a vibrant Pagan future.

Ironically, however, I came on to the board only a few months before we made the decision to reduce our operations in order to recover after a very unexpected setback in what was once a very enthusiastic community of supporters. It has been incredibly frustrating to me that this happened. Organizational challenges were to be expected and are part of the playing field in which we've agreed to participate. Admittedly, while the disagreement that ensued was unexpected, nevertheless it was truly reflective of what we have been facing as a Pagan community for quite some time. The number of people joining our community continues to grow and along with that growth comes the stark reality of differing opinions and the rise of cross purposes among the various participants and groups—all of whom are passionately committed to maintaining the unique qualities that each of them provide to this burgeoning community. That is why it is important to me that the Pantheon Foundation remain extant, and stays committed to its purpose of help-

ing those unique participating groups that seek to obtain the financial, administrative and legal support they need to continue—or begin!—doing their respective Great Work. That's why, despite the frustration of what occurred here in this first year of operation, I remain inspired by what we will do here at the Pantheon Foundation and intend to focus even greater efforts on fulfilling the goals set forth at its inception.

## *Strategy and the Future: An Opportunity to Move Forward*

Paganism has always had a dimension of protest and activism in it, as well as a deep engagement with culture building to create a happy, ecologically responsible, economically fair, spiritually free society. Lately this has manifested with the focus of anti-capitalism. With this focus come the usual debates about strategy, some of which have taken place with all the courtesy for which the internet is famous.

A long time ago I learned from the Tao never to oppose force with force. Not being a particularly powerful person, not having access to brute force to accomplish any of my ends, I've gotten good at finding the points of leverage that get the work done. Contrary to the common misinterpretation of the Audre Lorde quote, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house," I have found that only the makers' tools will dismantle the machine they made.

Dismantling is important. We can crash the system relatively easily. The problem is then, what's next. Revolution only rarely results in better governance. Mostly it exchanges one problem for another. Crashing our economic system is even worse than crashing the political one. Most of the world is so dependant on the global supply chain that disrupting it will bring about massive starvation and intensive violence as a result.

After reading this report, please take a moment to read a very helpful article in the journal *Jacobin* about "How to be an Anticapitalist Today".<sup>1</sup> It sorts through the various options like *escaping* capitalism, the strategy common to Pagans in the 1960s, 70s, 80s, and *smashing* capitalism, which is common in the rhetoric of Pagan anticapitalists today. It also looks at the problems and failures of these methods. I'm too old to do things I know will fail, and too pragmatic to trust ideology to fill hungry bellies when distribution collapses in revolution. So, I found the other suggestions in this article more to the point: *taming* and *eroding* capitalism. Only by using appropriate counter measures (like returning to pre-Reagan tax structures) and building enterprises that use non-autocratic governance structures are we likely to transform our society into an equitable and sustainable culture.

Which brings me to the Pantheon Foundation. Since we will not succeed though violence<sup>2</sup>, we tried a hedonic revolution (1960-70s) and it only partly but insufficiently changed society, and we don't have access to the halls of government in any appreciable

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<sup>1</sup> Erik Olin Wright, "How to Be and Anticapitalist Today," *Jacobin Magazine*.

<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/12/erik-olin-wright-real-utopias-anticapitalism-democracy/>

<sup>2</sup> Please see Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, a powerful work of realpolitik, explaining why violence fails and the alternatives for successful societal transformation.

<http://www.aeinstein.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/FDTD.pdf>

manner, at least at this time, there is only one kind of power we really have available to us. This is the fourth of the great Tools, the one most Pagans run from and mismanage: the Coin. This is not about the Foundation accruing wealth, but functioning as a lens to focus the use of that variety of stored power we call money to achieve worthy ends. By using the ability to aggregate our power by means of the right use of money and the legal structures in place around money, we have a real possibility of causing the changes we seek. This is the strategy of the Foundation.

The Foundation is a 501c3 religious nonprofit corporation so that it can provide legal coverage for Pagan religious, cultural, and economic, projects. This has three powerful advantages. By giving Caesar his due, in this case by filing the paperwork and getting the 501c3 status, we have created an entity that the state will not interfere with regarding economics (we are not taxed for our operations), nor governance (corporate law permits us and those under our umbrella to set up whatever kind of structure we want). This last is vital, in that we can create any kind of organization under our aegis, and the law must respect our rules of self-operation. This lets us set up cooperatives and collectives, or other kinds of self-governing groups, with all the advantages that the law usually provides for the rest of society, except on our own terms, not theirs. This also points to the third advantage, besides being able aggregate our economic power to fund initiatives which a corporate structure provides, by having an entity like the Foundation, we also can aggregate our social and political power to advocate for our agenda as Pagans at the level of the institutions that shape our world. No longer being just individuals, as the Foundation we can approach, communicate with, or simply face down the institutional powers that we wish to change or resist. Individuals are ignored or exploited.

The Foundation was built on democratic principles and is designed to expand its base of governance as it grows. The bye-laws established twenty-seven seats for the Board of Directors, which means we have room for everyone. The plan is to broadly involve all of the participants in setting strategy and agenda, once the core organization is stabilized. Our purpose is to build a Pagan future, a world in which our culture and religion thrives. Our method is to use the available tools and structures of the larger society to aggregate our power in order to change the world into what we want it to be, sustainable, just, peaceful and happy. It will take a lot of work by a lot of hands. Will you help?

*Please contact us at [info@pantheonfoundation.org](mailto:info@pantheonfoundation.org) if you would like to help, learn more about our current projects, or share your ideas and feedback.*