

# Steering Committee Video Call

Saturday March 25, 2017

10:00 am

## Minutes/Summary:

- Prep:
  - Facilitator: Nancy
  - Note-Taker: Ealasaid
  - Present: Jenn, Ealasaid, Nancy, John, Ari, Ryan; Starr (late)
- Facilitator leads everyone in breath and prayer
- Updates on action items from previous meeting:
  - Ari: Temple & Tech is dealing with upheaval from Thorn's announcement. Will have meeting and proposal to Steering as soon as is feasible.
  - Ealasaid: Bob's Rules rewrite for pillars
    - Done. Ryan raised an issue about the quorum description and requested an edit.
    - Ealasaid will edit and redistribute Bob's Rules
  - Jenn:
    - Everything is up in the air, wants to wait until after the school chat to see where people are with regard to joining pillars, research projects, etc.
  - Ryan: Teaching & Curriculum Pillar has a meeting next week, will get the teacher requirements to Steering by the next steering meeting.
    - Additionally: the pillar needs to take direction from the school about where we are going after the transition. Things are pretty up in the air for now.
  - Retreat
    - Jenn has places in mind, needs to collect down payments and reserve a spot. Wants to have a place sorted by the end of April.
- Pillar Reports were covered already, and so skipped.
- New Business
  - Starr discussed Morningstar material from a tradition standpoint. General discussion.
  - Ryan discussed the legal/financial connection with Solar Cross; will add it as a standing agenda item.
  - Discussion about the all-school chat 3/26. Nancy to facilitate, Ealasaid to send Nancy summary of material to discuss in the chat.
- Action Items
  - Ryan: Teaching & Curriculum Pillar has a meeting next week, will get the teacher requirements to Steering by the next steering meeting.
  - Jenn: Research projects and call for pillar participation materials

- Ealasaid will edit and redistribute Bob's Rules
- Ari: Temple & Tech is dealing with upheaval from Thorn's announcement. Will have meeting and proposal to Steering as soon as is feasible.
- Facilitator leads everyone in breath and prayer to close

## Full Notes

**Facilitator:** Nancy

**Present:** Jenn, Ealasaïd, Nancy, John, Ari, Ryan; Starr was late

**Note-Taker:** Ealasaïd

- Facilitator leads everyone in a breath and prayer
- Check-in: up to three words
- Updates on action items from previous meeting
  - Ari: Proposal by 3/11 for hosting
    - held off on having a meeting – need to have one now that the info about Thorn is out
    - Meeting and proposal
  - Ealasaïd: Bob's Rules rewrite for pillars
    - Done! But Ryan wants a rewrite about the quorum issue from last time, will do
  - Jenn:
    - Send moodle doc to everybody
    - Write up invite to join pillars, send to Steering before posting
    - Start thread on Moodle about research projects
    - Everything is in the air because of the shift, wanted to wait until after school chat to see where people are. Will post Monday
  - Ryan: Schedule meeting with teaching pillar, get reqs to steering by next meeting
    - Meeting scheduled for Thursday
    - Trouble getting enough people together to meet – Nikolai has stepped back to make it easier to get quorum. Will help.
    - With the school and the shift, need more people on the teaching pillar, is hoping the call (from Jenn) will get people to join up
    - side note: teaching pillar has the most people on it. Wow
    - teaching pillar needs to take direction from the school about where we're going. If we decide to remain a support group for existing people, then aren't teaching elements anymore, presumably. Things are pretty up in the air after this sudden and significant shift. Need to figure out who we are and where we're going.
- Nancy: Looks like we've basically gotten the pillar reports, anything else?
  - Jenn: retreat! (Starr will be calling in shortly) has places in mind, needs to collect down payments and get the numbers right – some folks who weren't coming are now planning to come. Wants to get a house picked by end of April
  - Ryan: might the numbers be there for the house from last time?
    - Jenn: hoping so! But we gotta get a bunch of folks to commit
  - Jenn: we need to be sure we have the numbers. Last time some folks dropped out but we had their deposits so it was okay.
- Starr joined

- Retreat comm is talking about starting with Thorn there, then having her leave after transitional ritual so we have time for the group to gel before we leave. Planting the seed for the new form of the school.
- Pillar Reports – covered above
- New business: Future of the school, All-School Chat, etc
  - contrast/similarity between tradition and school
    - Starr: for a long time, has felt like this is a tradition. Hallmarks include: shared sense of theology (Feri stuff), cosmology, we work with God Himself and Lux, we have a sense of belonging to one another. This is like family, belonging is an important part. The cords, Thorn never really cleared up what the deal is there – why do we have the cords if there are no initiations? She claimed a braided cord but didn't have a full sense of what that means. Calling this a tradition is more a recognition of what's already there, permission to call it what it is. There's a particular taste to Mstar that doesn't exist elsewhere, and there's a relationship to that current with herself. Doesn't need to be either/or with school/trad. School is more transitory, people learn and move on; for some folks that's what they need – we're teaching the Work, and that's the mandate, the work is for the good of humanity. But some people will come and feel like this is home. How does that line up with us being a school rather than a trad?
    - Ari: agrees trad/teaching not mutually exclusive. Knows folks in traditions where part of the tradition is teaching. When a school is your home, you become faculty, staff, admins. That plays into some of her own mythology. We need to see what all we have in common, there's a lot of value in looking at approaches, other theology, etc that we bring to this. That has value and belongs more under a school than under a tradition. Is part of a trad where they barely have a community, so her vocab around tradition is different. Agrees that we are like family, we are peers.
    - John: indicators of belonging, accomplishment, etc. something is really resisting the idea of initiatory levels, but doesn't have words for why. We do hve commonalities, but there's room for different points of view, if people practice Qabala or Haitian Vodoun, etc. Thorn used to say she never asked us to believe anything.
    - Ryan: thorn seems to be very big on the idea of this being a toolbox, which sets us apart from Feri, where it's adamantly not a toolbox, it's initiatory. Thorn calls that bs, we have tools necessary for humanity's liberation, can't be holding those back. Like, take a University – they have their own egregores, so if you meet someone who graduated from a particular Uni, that tells you something about them, but you don't know what their political beliefs are, what their work is, etc. All these different kinds of people will show up for the reunion of the school, there's a community there.
    - Jenn: something about being hesitant with the cording/init side – agrees doesn't

want it to be a status thing, like people with cords have more access/knowledge/whatever than those without. Sticky road to go down. At the same time, there are people in the school who aren't going to teach but are practitioners. At its base, is part of a stream of knowledge, which is Morningstar. For her, "tradition" is just saying that – flavor of stream of knowledge/community. Acknowledging that doesn't mean we can't bring our own stuff to it. When you walk into a reclaiming ritual, or Feri ritual, they feel different. Not bad, just different. That's the tradition part of what we're doing. Also we work with Lux.

- Ealasaid: what everybody else said. :)
- Starr: already doesn't like the feel if initiatory stuff. Cords aren't clear – is it a celebration of doing the work? We need to have these conversations, and it's good for the SC to have them first. Stream of knowledge as tradition: there are things here that are uniquely Morningstar. When trying to explain what it is, feels like she's in Hogwarts trying to explain to non-witches. Part of the work of her god is to do interfaith. Tends to say "tradition" as a shorthand. The current of the tradition is liberation, and part of the current is to share these important tools with humanity. It can be a trad shared and influenced by folks. We have shared words for opening and closing ritual, we have a specific way to call in the Guardians, we have Lux, etc. That's all tradition stuff, it's beyond the tools. The school is about sharing the tools, but there's also all this tradition stuff.
- Nancy: thinks it's important to say it's both-and, not either-or (which itself is part of the tradition :)). one of the central issues becomes, if it's more than a teaching group, then how does one become part of that other arm of the same organization/other organization of two (school and trad). Been thinking about names, which are a way to delineate. Morningstar Fellowship, for example. Morningstar Associates = teachers (you can def come through without becoming a teacher). If you have to become a teacher in order to move into larger arenas in the tradition, we'll be looking for people to be students, and that doesn't work. The idea of research is an important part of who we are, we need to encourage that branch as we encourage people to expand into wider arenas. Colleagues of Morningstar, something that says "hey, these people teach Morningstar, and they are teaching it under the umbrella of [name]." It's both-and. We have to figure out how we do that.
- Jenn: Join the research pillar! Totally agrees about the teaching thing. Likes the idea of researchan dalumni because even the definition of teaching needs to be widened. Probably won't teach a class, but is doing art that's influenced by Mstar and that's a kind of teaching. Fears getting in the Reclaiming thing of having to teach to have any status in the group, that'll be the death of it. For her, tradition idea is important because we're family, there's something painful about not having that acknowledged for so long and just calling us a teaching group

or associates or something. We have a greater connection than that. It's painful to not acknowledge that.

- Nancy: Take a breath
- Starr: someone brought up if we acknowledge both trad and school, how do we know someone has come through? We'll know when they tell us. If you've done the core classes and you've come to experience the group as family, you'll know, you'll experience it. It's like a discussion about trans women she's having in another part of her life, you know someone is a woman because they tell you. We don't have to have a secret handshake code to get the next teaching or whatever. We wouldn't want to be part of a group where you have to establish yourself as a grand poobah to get the next level of teaching.
- Ari: if we go with that, we need to make it very explicit. What people assume or don't varies tremendously. We need to put it out there so people know.
- Legal/Financial stuff
  - Ryan: we need to find out what's up with Solar Cross, this needs to be an ongoing agenda item so we keep up with it
  - Nancy: talked w/partner who knows about nonprofit stuff, he thinks we're on the right track.
  - Ryan: It will be way simpler if we can be under SC's umbrella or if they hand it over to us and we keep it as an umbrella.
  - Nancy: the other legal/ethical issues for teachers is something we need to look at, assuming we are all gonna be ethical, assumes we are all ethical, but in case someone says we aren't, we need to have something to say. If someone accuses a teacher of sexual/financial misconduct we have to have a way to deal with this. How are we covered? Or are we naked? :)
  - John: conversation about code of ethics, etc.
  - Jenn: Sandra wrote something up, but Nancy's talking about the legal stuff like if someone sues us
  - John: yeah, it's all part of the same important bit.
  - Nancy: those of us on the board are liable. They can't get blood out of a turnip, but yeah
  - John: For now, SC is the board, but that's changing.
  - General consensus: yes
  - John: we have all these ideas. We're the steering committee, not the dictators, we should ask about this at the end of the school chat tomorrow.
  - Nancy: hearing that there are a lot of things on hold, at what point do we begin to make some decisions? Are we going to hold off until after the retreat? We need to figure that out. Where are we in the process of hearing and deciding
  - Starr: other retreat thing, the comm want to present Thorn with the braided cord. (general approval)
  - Ryan: is there a discussion around replacing the existing cords so they all match?

- Jenn: is talking to Lyssa who does weaving and spinning, she has this cool cordmaking device she's experimenting with. Need to see how many we need her to do, If she has time. Want to replace the craft store cords with artiginal ones :)
- Ryan: doesn't necessarily think teaching pillar needs to be on hold; have marching orders already for gearing up toward teaching stuff. The likelihood that we'll shut down the teaching pillar is pretty small. Is thinking we should continue the teaching pillar process, while keeping in mind that we might shift things later. For traditions, teaching is a way to bring people up to the shared framework so they can integrate; very diff from teaching people skills and they can stay or leave. But either way, still teaching, so wants to keep up with the existing marching orders.
- Nancy: only issue with that – has canceled a class. We need to be very careful about what we say, how we advertise, what impression we give. Need to leave some wide open doors. What does Steering want to do, what caveats do we want to give the teaching pillar.
- Jenn: would want from the teaching pillar: a report on which classes are going on and what's happening with them, who is currently teaching, who is wanting to teach.
- Ryan: elements (Tony and Sandra) ongoing, but otherwise not sure about what has been done so far. The current marching orders are a spring triple soul class, summer daily practice, leading into fall-starting 2-year elements. Now thinking of pushing things out a season. Trying to define process for how someone becomes a teacher. Understanding is, process would happen for each class. Like, person would get approval to teach triple soul in summer 2017; doesn't mean they can keep teaching it. This way we can keep track of what's happening and how things go. But all of this was set down before Thorn's announcement.
- Jenn: we just need to make sure the people currently in elements get to finish the course and then have the option of joining the school. Everything else might have to wait until after the retreat. We've talked with ourselves but we need to check in with the school at large.
- Starr: thnks we should move forward. Triple soul is important -we talked about doing it in three parts of the country so we could build local community and tie it in with the online school. But regardless of where it goes, it's good work that needs to be taught! There are a lot of people in the school who can teach Triple Soul. Some folks are teaching in their communities and have been for a long time (Starr has, with Thorn's blessing). Pillar should probably check in with the people currently teaching to see how the process should work. This is good work
- Ari: The change has been happening. Thorn announced she was leaving Feri in the middle of a two-year class. It's okay for things to change.

- Ryan: obviously we know folks, the per-class approval is going to be a rubber-stamp in many cases. But we're trying to bring people in, and Thorn would teach anybody. Because we're open and let anybody learn, we need to have a way to stop people who fuck up. We need accountability, but not onerous requirements. Also, it's just for classes being taught under the Mstar banner.
- Nancy: this is an awkward transition from Thorn picking people out to do stuff to having to figure out the standards and practice them. Nancy is the test case! Has applied to teach and is being the first one to go through the process.
- All school chat tomorrow
  - who's facilitating? Nancy is thinking about volunteering
  - Jenn: that would be good. Has been on calls in the past that were mostly run by Tony, he shouldn't have to do tomorrow's. Was going to volunteer, but is at a conference and will be calling in by phone.
  - Nancy: open to feedback on how she's doing with this call
  - Jenn: sometimes in larger group consensus meetings, there's a facilitator and then also an energy-watch, someone keeping an eye on the vibe. We need someone to do that, there will be a lot of people on the phone and it'll be hard.
  - Ari volunteered to do that.
  - Starr: do we want to pose specific questions to the school?
  - Ryan: what do we want to DO? Thorn's options are one dimension, but the school/tradition thing is another dimension, we have a lot of moving parts.
  - Ealasaid – pull those options and send to Nancy for tomorrow
  - Starr: our response to Thorn's letter says we will do a series of zoom calls with a few SC members on each call to have the same conversation several times in smaller groups. No decisions until after the retreat. Keeps reminding self that even though she's feeling "done" processing some emotions around this, that ritual with Thorn is going to be big, can't anticipate own reactions to that.
  - Nancy: would like Ryan to talk about legal stuff, Ari to talk about tech.
  - Starr: what are we going to do about the astral temple? Thorn has asked people who leave to sever connection. Are we giving up that temple and building a new one? Are we cutting Thorn off? What does her leaving mean for the temple?
  - Nancy: imaging tomorrow – checkin, then a listing of some concerns we know are there ad want to discuss, are there others, then go through 'em.
  - Starr: plz reiterate that the retreat is on, it is important, that Thorn will be there for the first half of the retreat.
  - Ryan: feeling better that she's stepping back on the name change. We need to let her know we're talking about it
  - Nancy: nope, we'll figure it out. She doesn't need to know, even Thorn has said her opinion on this doesn't matter. Nancy will keep Thorn out of stuff she has no status/weight on. :)
  - Ryan: Nancy is our honeybadger on this. :D



- General laughter
- John: gonna have to play tomorrow by ear, we can't know for sure how it'll go.
- Nancy: notice how we all just laughed together. That's good and important.
- Next meeting is 4/8
- Action items for next time
- Facilitator leads everyone in breath and prayer to close