

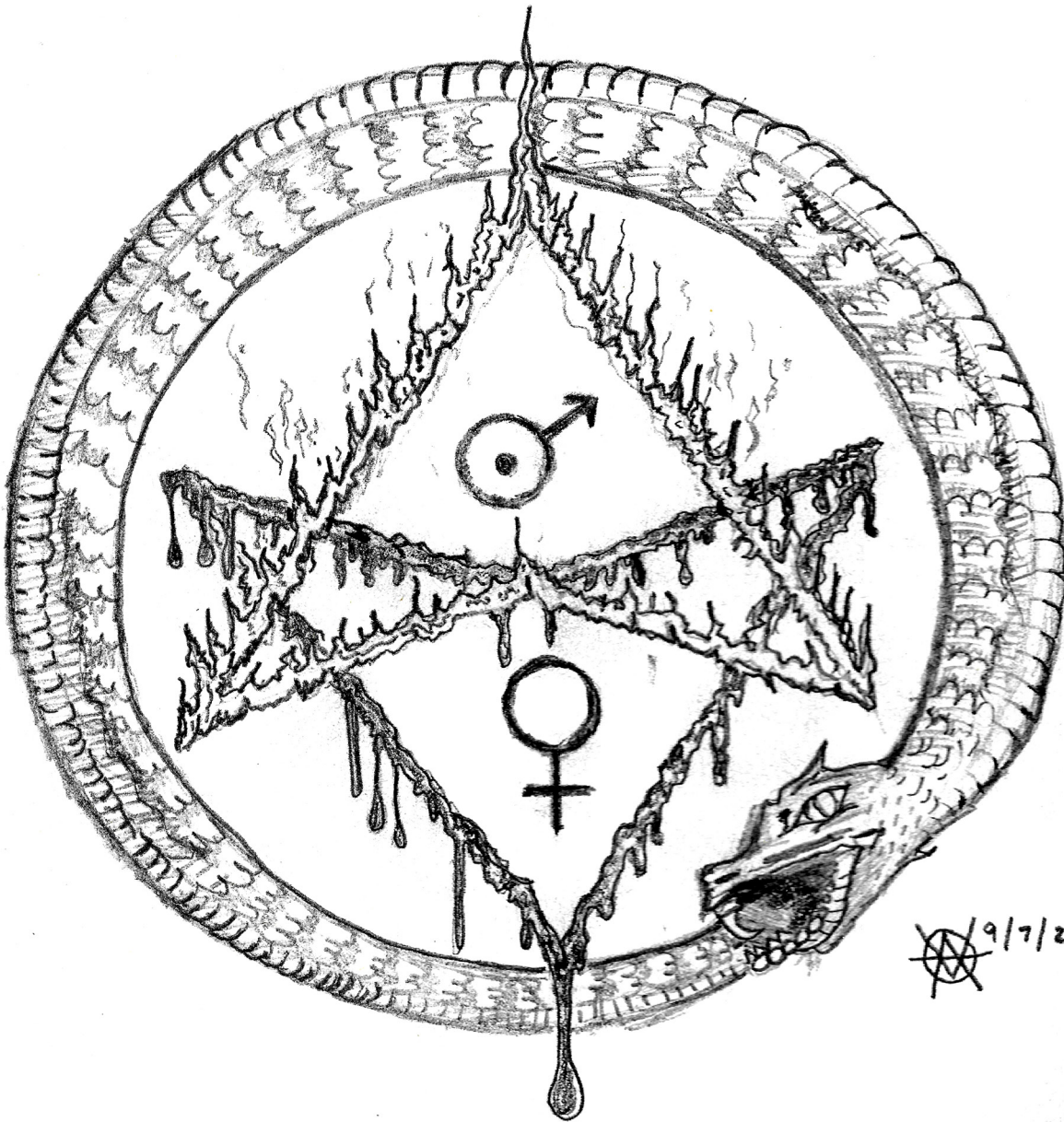
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The official organ of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.



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Ordo Templi Orientis, U.S.A.



E.G.C.

Agapé

The official organ of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Happy vulgar New Year from the team at Agapé!

We've taken a holiday break, and we're rested, refreshed, and ready to continue bringing you issues of Agapé!

All of our articles, poetry, and art at Agapé are submitted by readers, so if you have something you've been working on that you'd like to see within our pages, we'd love to see it! The deadlines for upcoming issues are now set to fall upon the same day as U.S.G.L. Electoral College meetings, but you can submit your work at any time for consideration.

I wish you all a 2021 full of health and wealth and strength and joy and peace, and that fulfilment of will and of love under will that is perpetual happiness!

Love is the law, love under will.

Andrew
Editor, *Agapé*

FROM THE GRAND MASTER

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Annual Report

U.S.G.L.'s Annual Report for FY 2019^{EV} can be found here: <https://admin.oto-usa.org/annual-reports>.

Events During the Pandemic

Many thanks to the Masters and members of Golden Thread Camp, Sekhet Maat Oasis, Song of Freedom Oasis, and Serpent and Lion Oasis who submitted event proposals in September and October. Their proposals and post-event feedback have assisted us in fine-tuning our approach to hosting events during the COVID-19 pandemic and our efforts to keep our events as safe as possible in the current climate. In-person gatherings remain limited to outdoor venues only and restricted by specific conditions. Exceptions to this are limited to those bodies receiving prior dispensation through the U.S.G.L. COVID Response Team. For up-to-date information about what event proposals the COVID Response Team is accepting, and to see the outdoor event policy in its entirety, please visit our administrative web page: U.S.G.L. COVID-19 Information (<https://admin.oto-usa.org/covid19>).

NOTOCON XIII Postponement

Due to the pandemic and its effects on hotels and meetings, the U.S.G.L. Conference Committee is reluctantly exploring postponement of NOTOCON XIII to the soonest time possible for an event of this scale to be securely held in Denver. Due to understaffing of the venue, it is unclear when both parties would be able to mutually fulfill the terms of the hosting agreement. There is a significant risk of our fraternal event becoming a super-spreader event, and we are not willing to allow that to occur. The Conference Committee Chair wants you to know that she is balancing her heavy heart at postponement with being unwilling to heavily burden the dozens, or more, of our members it takes to make NOTOCON possible with the fear of exposure constantly present. The Conference Committee would like to recognize the Education Committee for the great work they're doing to give us so many alternative events to look forward to!

[Shortly before publication, the following statement regarding NOTOCON XIII was released by U.S.G.L.-ed

Due to the continuing spread of COVID-19 and the slow pace of immunization, we have, with much reluctance, decided to cancel our arrangements with the Denver hotel for NOTOCON XIII this year. If all goes well, NOTOCON XIII will be held at the same venue in the summer of 2023^{EV}. We will be skipping 2022^{EV} to keep with our odd-year history and to avoid interfering with other events scheduled for the summer of 2022^{EV}.

The Conference Committee is currently investigating various alternatives for online U.S.G.L. membership events this summer. We also encourage local bodies to continue scheduling their own online events throughout the year.]

Love is the law, love under will.

Sabazius



UPDATES FROM THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

The Electoral College took the following actions pertinent to local bodies last month:

Chartered Golden Thread Camp as Golden Thread Oasis in the Valley of Pittsburgh, PA.

Transferred mastership of ANABASIS Camp in the Valley of Indianapolis, IN from Br. Jay L. to Sr. Natasha G, who will serve as Master Pro Tem (title to be amended when initiations are again permitted as she had to delay).

Transferred mastership of Roar of Rapture Camp in the Valley of Omaha, NE from Br. Adley N. to Br. David E.

Extended the tenure limit for Behutet Camp in the Valley of Kansas City, MO by one year.

Additionally, the Electoral College approved the proposed Master Selection Process and will have new application forms available through Document Control for 2021 EV.

Thank you to the outgoing and incoming body masters, and to all those who serve in these difficult times.

Internally, but also of interest, we have suspended the timeline for resolving Acting Masters and Masters Pro Tem until Fall of 2022 EV. We had an internal procedure that required us to appoint a Master within three meetings of appointing an Acting Master/Master Pro Tem. In light of the pandemic and the uncertain future, we have voted to suspend this requirement for two years. Unless further action is taken, this and previously suspended requirements will automatically go into effect at the specified meeting.

Finally, a reminder: all local bodies are required to participate in some clearly defined aspects of the Virtual Valley program. Those bodies who are not onboarded by the Winter meeting will be brought up for review. Please contact me and I'll put on my tech minion hat to get you set up.

Yours in Service,
Hattie Quinn
President
U.S.G.L. Electoral College

About the Electoral College

Appeals – Those wishing to appeal decisions of the Electoral College may do so in writing to the Supreme Grand Council through the Grand Secretary General (gsg@oto-usa.org). Those wishing to appeal verdicts of the Grand Tribunal to the Areopagus may do so with the sponsorship of a seated Elector. See our website for contact details of individual electors (<http://ec.oto-usa.org/electors.html>).

Those wishing to appeal Notice of Pending Bad Report at a Local Body may do so by writing to the Secretary of the College outlining the manner in which the Notice was deficient or false.

Attending Meetings – Dues Current Members in Good Standing of V° are invited to attend regular meetings of the Electoral College. We request that those planning to attend first contact the Master of the hosting body to R.S.V.P. Online regular meetings may be observed by being physically present with a willing Elector.

Communications – In addition to hosting email lists for masters, mentors, and communication with Grand Lodge, we also maintain a blog of Updates, News, and Transmissions on our website (<http://ec.oto-usa.org/wp>) and are experimenting with a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ECUSGLOTO>).

Initiates with specific concerns or questions regarding the operation of the Electoral College are invited to write to either the President or Secretary. See the included U.S.G.L. Officers Directory for contact details.

Revolutionary – Members in Good Standing of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the IX° living within the United States but not currently serving as Officer or Voting Member of any Governing Body of U.S.G.L. are heartily encouraged to volunteer to the post of Revolutionary by contacting the President or Secretary of the Electoral College. Thus may progress be effected.

Website – The official website of the Electoral College can be found at <http://ec.oto-usa.org/>. In addition to the aforementioned resources, one may find information on volunteering to host a meeting or organize a study group in new areas, and other services provided by the College or expected of local bodies within U.S. Grand Lodge.

Love is the law, love under will.

GRAND LODGE NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

U.S.G.L. Local Body Activity During Quarantine

The last year has, to put it mildly, been a challenge for everyone. A global pandemic plus economic and political uncertainty have put a lot of pressure on us personally and professionally, and in our efforts to

do the work of our Order. We're writing this article in October 2020 EV with the awareness that the few months between now and its publication will be fraught with so many decision points that it's impossible to guess what the environment will be when you read it.

With that in mind, let's proceed with the idea that this is a snapshot in time, what is happening now, and a look back over the last six months to remind ourselves what we've so far been able to accomplish through the trials of 2020 EV.

In September, a survey was distributed to local masters through the U.S.G.L. Virtual Valley. The Electoral College and Strategic Planning office used the survey to ask the following questions:

1. What ways has your local body remained active since the COVID-19 lockdown began in March?
2. What has been the greatest challenge for your camp/oasis/lodge during the COVID-19 restrictions?
3. What has been your camp/oasis/lodge's greatest success during this time?

With 63% of bodies responding, we received a partial overview of the activity that took place from March to October. Charts detailing the survey responses appear at the end of this article.

So, in what ways have we remained active in O.T.O.? Overwhelmingly, local bodies have increased their online presence, with 97% of those reporting providing classes, workshops, and discussions via online mediums like Google Meet, Zoom, and Discord. Socials and business meetings have moved online as well.

Many bodies have been so impressed by the success of online events that they plan to incorporate them into their post-COVID planning. Frater PFDV, Master of Golden Lotus Oasis put it this way:

With stay at home mandates and people self-isolating, Golden Lotus began to explore online options for events. It has broadened our audience and increased our average attendance. We are planning to continue to do occasional online events even after restrictions are lifted.

In July, our Grand Master approved a plan to allow for outdoor events, adhering to particular protocols, which allowed bodies to take advantage of the summer weather to meet safely. Reports indicate that a handful of bodies have taken advantage of that option to offer outdoor socials, classes, and original rituals.

This increase in online traffic has had some interesting effects, with many members reporting an overall increase in national community connection. To further assist this positive outcome the U.S.G.L. Education Committee now offers a shared calendar of events for bodies that opt in, to share information about online events that are open to the public.

As of this writing, 21% of bodies are participating, and the calendar lists 12-20 events per week. You can learn more by visiting the calendar here: <https://edu.oto-usa.org/usgl-local-body-public-events/>

All of this positive activity is certainly not the whole picture, however. Every Camp, Oasis, and Lodge is facing new challenges to keeping our "doors" open and our momentum going. Despite an increase in online activity, the majority of masters reported that their top issue is community engagement and connection, citing frustration over initiation backlogs and the inadequate sense of connection in online mediums as well as the effects of virtual burnout.

There is also stress for many around finances, with 28% of masters reporting meeting expenses, particularly rent, as a top challenge. Some assistance has been offered by Grand Lodge, which helped in the early months, but as the period of restriction has become more protracted, the strain has continued.

Finding ways to maintain funding for a currently unused space and weighing the pros and cons of keeping it against the likelihood of being able to find a replacement space post-COVID can be overwhelming emotionally as well. At least one body succeeded in negotiating a lower rent. Others are managing to maintain income to sustain their space, but not all have been able to do so: two bodies reported they have closed their physical doors, opting to put their furnishings into storage

and bide their time until they have the opportunity to rebuild. It's not entirely seen as a negative, though.

Sr. Sherri, Master of Hidden Springs Oasis says:

Hidden Spring Oasis vacated our temple space on August 1, 2020, and moved our temple furnishings into storage, allowing for a significant reduction of our monthly expenses and reduced dues for members financially affected by the pandemic. Our members are all looking forward to a fresh start in a fresh space once things open up again.

This is but one example of the optimism and fortitude that is coming to the surface during this challenging time. When asked what the biggest wins have been during COVID restrictions, many reported successful online events. Surprisingly, 19% called out improved financial health since the quarantine began, with lowered expenses and continued or increased dues and donation income.

The top answer though, at 38%, was the perceived increase in fraternal support and sense of community. Despite—or perhaps due to—the challenges we face, many are feeling an increase of fraternal bonds. Our members are pulling together to help each other, to support our communities locally and nationally, and to focus on what we are able to do.

Sure, we still plan for a day when we'll be able to meet in person, to initiate, to celebrate our mysteries together, but no restrictions can restrict fraternity. They have forced us to look a little deeper, and try a little harder, to make meaningful connections where we are able.

Note: To further explore the ingenuity of our local communities, it is our intention to publish a "spotlight" in each upcoming issue of Agapé. You can read the first installment, focusing on the work of Golden Thread Oasis in Pittsburgh, PA, in this issue.

SPOTLIGHT - GOLDEN THREAD

Local bodies across the U.S. are rising to the challenge of COVID-19 and demonstrating their resilience and creativity. In each issue of Agapé we will take a closer look at one of these local bodies, with the goal of inspiring others and perhaps offering new ideas as we continue our journey to the other side of the pandemic.

Our first look is Golden Thread Oasis in Pittsburgh, PA. Brother Terry, Master at Golden Thread, was gracious enough to answer our questions about the impressive body of work they have managed to maintain over the last several months.

1. Golden Thread is having two to four online events per week. How do you manage creating content at that pace? You mention having an event proposal form; how does that help?

A lot of our schedule is made up of regular repeating events. Our Thursday Night Study Group has met weekly for many years. Currently we are making our way through *The Temple of Solomon the King*. Sunday nights are movie night. We pick out a film to stream (usually something cheesy and occulty), open a Zoom call, coordinate pressing "play," and usually talk over most of the movie. It's lots of fun. We've watched such gems as the very loose film "adaptation" of *Moonchild* called *Night Tide* (with Marjorie Cameron); *Simon, King of the Witches*; and (obviously) *Beyond Lemuria*.

Another regular event is our "Gnostic Narratives," a radio-play style interpretation of Liber XV. We don't just read the script, but rather attempt to offer a narrative journey through the ritual in the hope that our listeners can close their eyes and visualize themselves participating in the Mass. Other repeating events include our initiation discussions and in-person rituals and get-togethers.

On top of the repeating events, we have special events. Anyone can propose an event, whether they are local or distant or a member or non-member. An individual simply completes our Event Proposal Form and, if approved, we get it on the calendar. We've hosted a handful of lectures and presentations, a few open-mic poetry nights, a Cake

of Light cooking class, yoga class, and more. All online, of course.

What we've found is that attendance per event is smaller than usual, but it is mostly a different group of people for each event type. But recently attendance has started lagging overall, so we started slowing down on online events. It seems that we are collectively feeling the effects of Zoom fatigue. With so many people working from home, managing cyber school for their kids, and otherwise socializing more online, there is definitely some screen time burn out going around. We are in the process of recalibrating and figuring out the type and frequency of events that best serve our community.

2. You are also having in-person events at public parks, including participatory ritual. What kind of rituals do you do, and what kind of attention do you get doing them in public?

We've rotated the locations of our in-person events, which has given us the opportunity to explore several of our local public parks. We do a little hanging out and catching up with each other and we also do some ritual, most recently some rituals inspired by the Gnostic Mass. Everyone has been missing that energy.

It is not too hard to find a place tucked away in the woods or otherwise off the beaten path. It has been wonderful to gather under the trees in the green and work some magick together. Occasionally a biker or jogger happens by us, but (so far) everyone has been respectful. Usually they just give us a double take and pick up their pace a bit.

Recently we held an event at a local cemetery/park. It is a beautiful and enormous area right in the middle of Lawrenceville (a few minutes from downtown Pittsburgh), often full of yoga classes, theater groups, and sightseers. We chose a fairly "exposed" place for our ritual there, but none of the passersby seemed to mind.

Since we are performing in public areas, we have reviewed what to do if a member of the public would like to join us. If anyone would like to stay and watch the ritual, they are welcome to; we would

just ask them to maintain proper social distance, wear a mask, and be respectful. Of course, since we do not own the property, all we can do is ask politely. So far, no one has taken us up on it.

3. Tell me more about the food/supply bank. Where did that idea come from and how does it work? Are you getting a lot of response to it?

As soon as the lockdown started, our priority was figuring out how we could serve our community through that challenging time. One of our first actions was setting up a food/supply bank for our members and extended community. It is still going strong. Due to a rather large donation of goods from a few members, it has a lot to offer. We have a contactless system in place whereby members can pick up or drop off supplies. Members can also request supplies be dropped off by volunteers. During the spring, if we would have advertised that we were providing toilet paper, paper towels, and mask-making supplies to our members, we probably would have got a lot of new recruits!

4. Golden Thread also has a contactless delivery system for library items; same question: how does it work?

In addition to food, supplies, and online events, people also need entertainment. So, we made our 2500+ title library available for contactless pickup or delivery. Members can request a title and it will be either dropped off by a volunteer (no contact) or placed in the accessible food bank area. In addition to books we have a few hundred movies and video games available for loan.

5. Golden Thread has also participated in the dispensation process to hold an outdoor Mass. How did it go, both the process of working with the Grand Lodge team and the event itself?

The process of working with Grand Lodge was simple and straightforward but required a lot of thoughtful preparation. GT had already developed a detailed outdoor event protocol, which we had been refining for our in-person events, so it wasn't too difficult to transfer that into a Gnostic Mass proposal. Providentially, we have a member who

has graciously volunteered a beautiful outdoor ritual space on his private property.



The Mass itself was beautiful and joyful. Our members are already familiar with our common sense COVID protocols which in no way diminished the energy of the event. It felt wonderful to be able to offer that service to our community again. As I write this, we are a day away from our next official performance and it looks like the weather will be perfect!

6. Anything else you'd like to share?

I am very proud of the services that Golden Thread has been able to offer our community through this pandemic: physical events and rituals for those who can attend, lots of online programming, food & supplies, books, media & entertainment, and general conversation & check-ins via our Discord servers. All of this has only been possible through the work of our dedicated team of officers and the support of our members.

Ultimately, I feel that all of these measures are of limited appeal. They are a way for us to get through the current crisis, but they do not constitute a sustainable model for the growth and development

of our community. We are still just treading water. Our membership is overwhelmingly looking forward to when we can safely continue our M.:M.:M.: and E.G.C. programs. Until then, like everyone else right now, we will continue to do the best that we can do in these uncertain circumstances.

CROWDFUNDING 101 FOR LOCAL BODIES IN THESE PANDEMIC TIMES

Sr. Vivian

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

If you decide to use an online crowdfunding platform to support your local body, you have several options with pros and cons to each. In this guide, I will outline what each crowdfunding platform does, how it works, and what to be cautious about (that I am aware of). I have designed this guide so that each section builds on the next, so I recommend reading the entire document for advice on how to successfully fund your campaign even if you have already selected your platform.

What is crowdfunding?

In the past ten years, crowdfunding has become a major way for small businesses, individuals, and charities to raise money organically from individual donors. It is a way to rely on your community for financial support for projects, growth, emergencies, or anything else you might need money for.

There are many crowdfunding platforms available and more show up online every year. Each has their own unique take on how to do it, and understanding the similarities and differences between them will help you choose the best one for you.

Basically you ask people for money in return for goods or services on some of the platforms, and on others you ask people for money for a cause without receiving anything in return, whether it be personal or for an organization.

Obviously it is easier to raise money when you have a product to give to people in return, but it is still quite possible to raise money for your body without having to come up with backer rewards. It

just depends on your needs and which platform will suit them best.

Strategy

To create a professional looking project, you will need to have several things completed before launching your campaign. First, you will need your budget so you can understand how much you need to raise as well as what you need to plan for once your project funds. Second, it is important to carefully write out copy to explain what your project is, how you intend to use your backer's funds to complete the project, and what the project will deliver (if anything).

Budget

To plan your budget, there are several things to consider beyond just the cost of your deliverables, contractors, and time. It is also important to put some aside for taxes as the money raised could be taxable income, although this may be less pertinent as U.S.G.L. is registered as a 501(c)(3) organization. Additionally, you will need to plan for shipping or delivering your product as well as whatever costs accompany the production of your deliverable if you have one, such as paying contractors to do layout for a book, artists for the art for the campaign or project, or others whose skills you need to create your project. Finally if you do have deliverables and you yourself are creating part or all of the deliverables, consider setting some of the funds aside to pay you fairly for your work; this is less pertinent if you are raising money directly for the body, as you may want to donate your time, but even then you may want to track the value of your work for donation purposes.

Timeline

Some of these guidelines are not as pertinent to some crowdfunding sources (such as GoFundMe), but if you are raising money to create a deliverable, then your timeframe is also important to consider. When planning your project, determine how long it will take for you to create your deliverable, including shipping. If you have too short of a time frame, problems may come up and you may deliver your backers' rewards late. Kickstarter and some of the other platforms require that you state when each reward will be delivered to backers, and to do so late can have financial and trust-related consequences.

Have a realistic idea of how long it will take you to create your product, and give a couple extra months (if appropriate) to make sure you have enough time.

Copy

Saying more than "give us money" is going to be important when asking people to back your project or donate to your cause. In order to build trust, you need to tell people what the money will be used for, even if you think it's obvious. The more detail you can provide, the better off you will be and the more likely it is that people will donate or back.

Additionally, saying who you or your organization are will help put a face on your project and build trust with your backers so they know who their money is going to as well as to what. You will also want a professional looking cover image for many if not all platforms.

Finally, it is highly recommended that you record a video of three minutes or less to explain your project. Kickstarter claims that projects with videos do better, likely because it adds a personal dimension to the project and lets people know your personality. The personal touch means that people will be more likely to back your project because they feel a connection to you rather than you just being yet another group asking for money. The reason less than three minutes is recommended is because most people have about a 1-2 minute attention span when it comes to these sort of videos. Because of this, it is important to state your purpose for asking for money quickly, succinctly, and clearly.

Design

When you are designing your project (using the template for whichever platform you have selected), consider how it will appear to your intended audience. Additionally, be sure you have the rights to whatever images you use for the project; contact O.T.O. legal in case of questions related to O.T.O. owned content. Choose a standard color scheme and try to make all of your images and other design elements look coherent and professional. Nothing screams "I don't know what I'm doing" than something that looks like 90's clip art. And you want to make it clear that you know what you're doing so that they feel like they can trust you with their money.

Communication

Communicating with backers, sponsors, patrons, etc. is one of the more vital components of crowdfunding. You will need to plan for at least weekly communication with them for most platforms (Patreon is an exception, although communication is still important).

When communicating with the people sponsoring you, it is important to tell a story. This is similar to the story you're telling with your initial contact with them (the copy, mentioned above). You need to explain how things are going and give further detail on what you are up to as it relates to the project. These can be anything from your thoughts on the project, your hopes with what you will be doing once it's funded (if applicable), how you are using the money, and so forth.

Also, with platforms like Kickstarter and Indiegogo, communication doesn't stop when the campaign is over. You need to communicate with your backers at every stage of the project, including creation and fulfillment. Tell them what you're doing with their money and this will make them feel like they can trust you to complete the project and get them their rewards.

Kickstarter

Kickstarter is one of the first crowdfunding platforms to gain popularity online and for the past eleven years, it has been one of the most successful. It is used to help people and small businesses raise money for projects such as video games, board games, books, movies, and gadgets.

The Kickstarter model is based on an "all or nothing" concept of funding. When you set up a project you set a goal amount of how much funding you would like to raise, and you receive none of the money unless you hit that goal. This requires careful planning and budgeting and also market research. If you set your goal too high, you may not get the funds necessary to pay for the deliverables you promise and your Kickstarter will not be successful. If you set your goal too low and don't account for the incidental fees, costs, and other expenses, you may not be able to complete your project due to having unexpected costs.

Kickstarter takes 5% of your total raised funds as their cut and Stripe (their credit card processing company) also takes a fee of 5% or less.

When working on your copy, I recommend header images for each of the sections in your campaign as well, such as Project Concept, What is Being Funded, Who We Are, Estimated Timeline, Backer Rewards (explained in detail), and a section where you describe your planned stretch goals should you surpass your goal.

Kickstarter also makes use of levels at which people can back you. These are organized by what they will get for their money, including just your gratitude all the way through one-of-a-kind items.

However, unless you are intending to use the funds from your crowdfunding campaign to distribute/make/sell a product, Kickstarter isn't for you. The reason for this is because the focus of this platform is to make things, not support charities or organizations. They also have rules against raising money for charity, which means that if you wanted to do a Kickstarter to raise money for your local body, but without selling a product to them, you would be unable to. However, if you are trying to raise money to print a book, make pins, or some other deliverable that backers could receive, Kickstarter isn't a particularly bad option. It has name recognition and many people trust it with their money.

Indiegogo

Indiegogo is similar to Kickstarter and has been around just as long. The major difference between Kickstarter and Indiegogo is that Indiegogo allows creators to raise money for more than just creating backer rewards. This includes funds for any idea, a charity, or a startup business. Instead of receiving equity in the idea or business, donors help fund the projects by donating and can receive a gift or the product of the venture in return.

Like Kickstarter, Indiegogo charges a 5% fee on contributions. This charge is in addition to Stripe credit card processing charges of 3% plus \$0.30 transaction. As with Kickstarter, it is important to consider these incidental expenses as well when planning your budget.

Indiegogo has different formatting requirements than Kickstarter and so my advice for how to set up your project will differ a little, but the general idea stays the same. I recommend looking at successful projects similar to your own to see how they have set up their project as well. Well-designed projects that look professional are substantially more likely to fully fund than projects that look poorly thrown together.

Unlike Kickstarter, Indiegogo allows for you to choose between Flexible and Fixed funding. This means you can either choose an option to keep what you raise, no matter whether you hit your goal or not, or set it so that you only get the money if you hit your goal. While this allows for more flexibility, if you decide to go with the Flexible path, you still have to pay fees based on the amount raised, regardless of whether you reach your goal or not. So depending on how you budget, don't forget to account for fees.

Generosity.com

In 2014, Indiegogo launched Indiegogo Life, a service that people can use to raise money for emergencies, medical expenses, celebrations, or other life events. Indiegogo Life did not charge a platform fee. In 2015 Indiegogo Life was renamed to Generosity.com.

Donors' credit card payments are processed by Stripe with a fee of 3% plus \$0.30 of every donation. When going this route or via GoFundMe (below), the theory is pretty much the same. Write out why people should be interested in giving you money, tell a compelling story, and make your goals and plans for the money clear.

GoFundMe

GoFundMe is one of the largest platforms for raising money for charitable causes out there. You may be more familiar with this one than Generosity.com and that name recognition is important. Not everyone who would be interested in donating may be familiar with all of these platforms, and as such, picking one with name recognition lends itself to allowing your donors to feel safe with the transfer of money between you and them.

GoFundMe also does not charge a platform fee like other fundraising sites. Instead they ask for a donation on top of the donation the individual is making to contribute to their operating costs. This makes it easier for donors to know how their money is being used.

Patreon

Patreon is a "patron" funded platform where you can receive either a regular amount every month from patrons or a certain amount of money per "thing" you create. For Crux Ansata, I created the Patreon for people to back us on a monthly basis, and in return they can receive access to our video content and updates from the officers.

Like with Kickstarter, you can create patron levels which give them access to different things you create. A lower level should have less access, while a higher level (i.e. they give you more money) will give them more access. Consider carefully whether you can commit to the things you are promising for the foreseeable future and be careful not to overcommit.

As for what you will end up paying Patreon, they have three tiers of access from which you can choose. Their "Lite" level has a fee of 5% plus payment processing fees and includes a hosted creator page, their communication tools, and workshops.

The next level, the "Pro" level, takes 8% plus payment processing fees from your earnings and include all of the things available in Lite but also membership tiers, analytics and insights, a special offers promo tool, creator-led workshops, unlimited app integrations (including Vimeo, which is useful if your content includes videos), and priority customer support.

Finally, the "Premium" level includes all of the previous in addition to a dedicated partner manager, merch for your patrons, and team accounts (so more than one person can add to your Patreon). For the purposes of Crux Ansata, we chose the Pro level simply because we wanted to have different access levels for our content (e.g. the \$20 level has access to all of our live classes while the \$10 level can only access the recordings).

Patreon is a time commitment for as long as it exists and you want to run it. So be very careful with setting up your commitments and projects in order to manage your personal time as well.

A final note on Patreon, when you set it up, you will be asked if the content you are providing is for 18+. If you do select that (which you may want to, given some of the content of our rituals and classes), be aware that you won't be searchable on their page and you will have to tell people to either Google your Patreon or give them the direct link.

Facebook

Finally, Facebook is another option for fundraising. It charges no fees for raising funds for charitable organizations, but they require that you have the following to be a recognized charity on their page: Be a 501(c)(3) organization registered with the IRS. Have a tax ID number. Note that at this time, organizations with fiscal sponsorship do not qualify to use Facebook Payments to receive money from donations.

Have a bank account registered with a licensed financial services institution. Bank account details, including the bank name, bank account holder's name (organization's name), and a legible and official bank letter or statement dated within the last 3 months. The date of birth and address of the charity's CEO or executive director.

Getting this information can be a pain, but once you have it set up, anyone who uses Facebook can set up a fundraiser for you, e.g. the "it's my birthday and I'm asking for donations for this charity" fundraisers. If you have any questions or would like me to look over your campaign, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at cruxansata.secretary@oto-usa.org
Thanks for reading!

(Further reading: 10 Mistakes NOT to Make in Crowdfunding – <http://tinyurl.com/cf10mistakes>)

I hope this guide serves you well. Feel free to add comments or questions as you read or reach out to me with the same.

Love is the law, love under will.

IMPROVING OUR CULTURE

Paul A. (Fr. Temujin)

Since joining in 1997, I have seen a great deal of positive change in the how the O.T.O. deals with societal changes, but we have to do more. In March of 2020 EV, I had a chance to attend the evening social at the Scarlet Tent at Alombrados Oasis. While there and after talking with some other sisters, I got to hear about some of their experiences in dealing with some of the brothers and male-centric attitudes among some in the Order.

Every man and every woman is a star.
Liber AL I:3

We dare not thwart Her Going, Goddess she! We arrogate no right upon Her will; we claim not to deflect Her development, to dispose of Her desires, or to determine Her destiny. She is Her own sole arbiter...

The Commentary to Liber AL, III:55

These two quotes come up frequently when we discuss women in the Order, but often, we fall short of their promise. More than once I've heard of a sister being encouraged to start working the priestess role before they felt ready, because everyone wants to do Mass. I know of several sisters whose ideas were ignored or tabled, but the idea was given the nod when a brother suggested the same thing.

If we are going to have a culture that really gives our siblings a chance to flourish, we have to provide it to all our members. If a sister, or anyone for that matter, has concerns or is uncomfortable with another member, listen and find out why. Give those who are interested in contributing or leading the opportunity to try. Our sisters don't need our opinions or our preconceptions. They need space and the same support we would give any brother as he pursues his will. If they need help, they will usually ask.

Additionally, we are in the age of #MeToo. Over the last few years many women have come forward and publicly shared their stories of harassment, assault, degradation, and abuse at the hands of men. Women are embracing their inherent power and

are rejecting the notion that “it’s a man’s world.” How can we legitimately ask them to pay dues and contribute if they are not being shown the same respect their brothers receive? Honestly, can we be surprised when a sister or a woman interested in the Order witnesses a “well that’s the way it’s always been” culture and votes with their feet? Personally speaking, I don’t know of any novice or ordained priest who has been told “I can’t wait to see you in the tomb” but I know several sisters who have been told by a brother, “I can’t wait to see you on the altar.”

As the O.T.O. moves forward, we have to continue to work for a more inclusive and supportive environment for all. Most of our siblings are starting to see or have already recognized and are promoting these changes. Just as we continue to evolve as magicians, our Order continues to evolve to face the new challenges of our society.

Following are stories and comments from several sisters around the U.S. who are active members in the O.T.O. The only edits were for anonymity, with the exception of the last story. I am very grateful to my sisters who shared their experiences with me. I have included them here so they may be heard.

“I had one old guard straight up tell me, ‘I don’t take direction from women.’”

“I approached O.T.O. in the late ‘90s, with a strong background in ceremonial magick. The tone from local OTO leadership was skeptical, featuring gems like, “That’s weird, I didn’t think girls practiced ceremonial,” and “You really should practice rituals that are more nurturing.” A couple years in I wrote a ceremonial invocation of Mars, which was initially received with enthusiasm by the local officers. Then one of them said, “Of course the central operator needs to be a male.” When I disagreed, they explained (at length) that a female invoking Mars would be confusing and lack credibility. The ritual did not move forward.”

“I once attended an initiation at a local body I was visiting. While changing into appropriate garments in closed space with other siblings, I became acutely aware of a brother staring at my body, but I chose to ignore this. After the initiation, when changing back into street clothing, I noticed him staring again; this

time, he muttered aloud in my direction, ‘Not going to say anything, not going to say anything...’, then he shook his head and turned to face another way.”

“I think my most challenging issue with belonging has come through interactions with other Sisters. In my early days, I was attracted to what I saw as confidence and strength in the female leaders in my valley. I wanted to connect with that, to become that, and over time I achieved a kind of success. Looking back on it now, I see that it wasn’t all that real. That we were interpreting “woman girt with a sword” with being cutting, with using brutal honesty as a foil for being “mean girls”, pretending at being empowered. Mean-spirited humor was the rule, and if you couldn’t dish it or take it there wasn’t much space for you. I’m embarrassed to say that I got really good at fitting in to this paradigm. Then I had an eye-opening moment several years ago when I learned second hand that a Sister had stopped attending events because two women had bullied her. I was one of those women. I knew that this was not the strength and confidence that I wanted. I knew things had to change.”

“I was sexually assaulted twice in one year. In both instances, I didn’t feel supported initially and in some ways still do not.”

“Unconscious bias still happens. Communicating clearly the reasons why someone is not promoted is just as important as why they are. The implied reason was a female couldn’t do the position the same as a male, even though the female had relevant experience. Repeated attempts to get a straight answer did not work, and the female stepped down.”

“At NOTOCON XI in Orlando 2017 ^{EV} it was announced that the then-President of the Electoral College was stepping down from that role after four years of service. This was no surprise to some of us, having been arranged a few months prior. He was genuinely enthusiastic to announce that the next president would be—for the first time—a woman. This was very exciting for the sistren, sharing in this historic moment as a first female president was appointed to the U.S.G.L. Electoral College. It was exciting for me when I was asked, having followed in the footsteps of truly extraordinary women, and having had my dedication and skills thus recognized by the Grand Master and my predecessor.

But sadly, that announcement was bittersweet because the headline was not the contributions I had made, the passion with which I had served, nor the concern for which I have ever held the growth and development of our Order and the wellbeing of its members. It was instead that we finally had a female president, and she was me. In my head that was a resounding “look, she’s got boobs, it’s not another dude, we are meeting the new quota,” and not an actual testimony to the incoming president having earned the recognition and the trust with which she was held after years of service, though I know this was all really the case.

Do not think I am not appreciative of the honor bestowed, nor that I did not swell with the enthusiasm of my siblings and their anticipation of what all gender minority members might achieve that we had not been able to previously. But every time we point to our differences, especially of such a personal and irrelevant nature, in the very moment of recognition of their work, it is what is known as a micro-invalidating. We invalidate their skills and experience by even unintentionally sending the message that these other things are the basis of their achievement rather than recognizing them in the same manner we would recognize a sibling of majority standing. So, while I am honored to serve as your first female Electoral College president, it would have made a better footnote in the announcement or even that year’s annual report.” – Sr. Hattie

If you made it this far, thank you. The stories above were shared with me because I asked and listened. Now I ask you, especially my brothers, how can we do better? How do we prevent new members from having similar experiences and how do we support them if they occur? What can we do to promote real fraternal behavior towards all our siblings? Let’s start a conversation.

THE SIGIL CHALLENGE

Sb. Lisa Hamaker

In early September as I was browsing social media, I noticed a sigil challenge that had started a few days prior. The first part of the challenge was to draw a

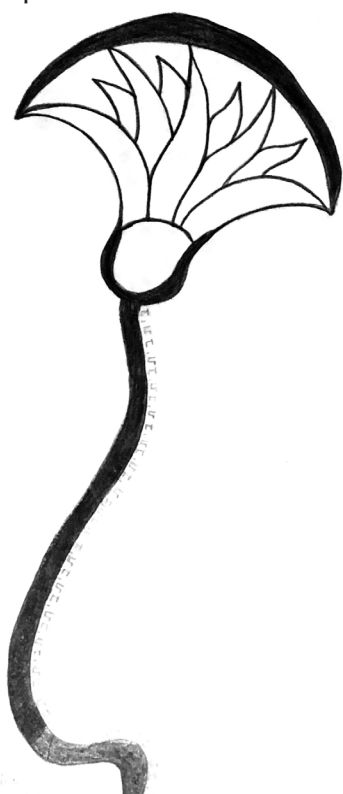
sigil each day for the whole month of September. I am relatively new at drawing sigils and decided this would be a great challenge. Discipline and focus were needed each day to find the time and allow a space for creativity to bloom. Most of the sigil artists were posting their completed sigils on social media sites using the hashtag #SeptemberSigilChallenge. The second part of the challenge was to use the one word provided daily by the challenge organizers. I accepted the challenge and went to work drawing the sigils for day one (Health) and day two (Queen). I started day three with the prompt, Deliverance. I quickly realized that I needed to refine the process needed to sit and develop the drawing idea. With five sigils done and twenty five more to go, “winging it” was not going to work. Drawing a sigil a day with the restrictions of a single word prompt was unexpectedly difficult.

The first thing I decided was to disregard the first idea or concept for the prompt word. Instead, I sat in meditation with the word. Without thinking on the word, but merely whispering it over and over, a dominant idea or concept would emerge. It became the base for what I would draw. Once I had the base concept, I would apply different methods to develop the sigil. For a couple of the sigils, I used the chaos magick process of drawing using the non-repetitive consonants letters. For a few others, I relied solely on automatic drawing. Most of my sigils were built by using the base concept, adding corresponding symbols, and a dash of automatic drawing. For those of you who are not familiar with automatic drawing, it is like automatic writing in that you channel thoughts, ideas, images that do not originate in your conscious mind. I’ve included a few of the sigils from the challenge and have provided explanations of how they were drawn. To see all thirty sigils from the #SeptemberSigilChallenge, go to my Instagram account: Lahama93.

Sigil 1: Queen – When I thought about the word, queen, I immediately thought of two things: Queen the band and Nuit. I opted to focus on Nuit. I first drew the symbol for Lapis Lazuli and added the Venus symbol.

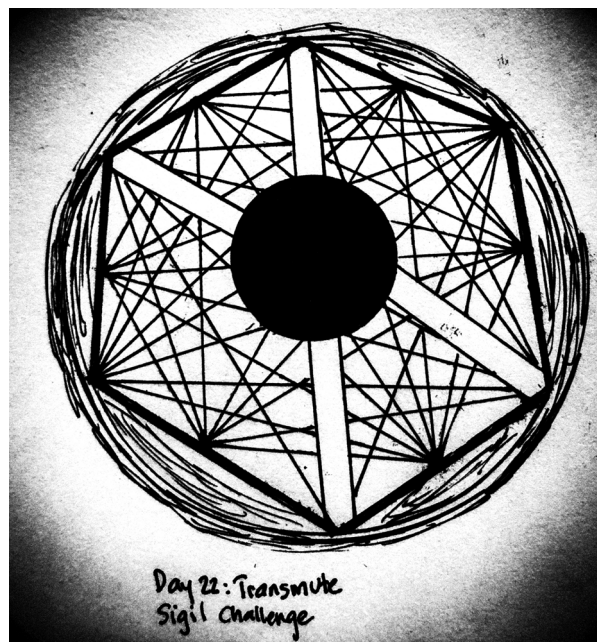


Sigil 2: Home – Home was the theme for day six. I have lived in six different places over the past 18 months. During that time, I redefined what home meant to me. I decided that as long as I have my spiritual practice, I can always find home. This sigil represents Memphis, one of the main cult centers for Sekhmet. The papyrus plant that I drew represents Lower Egypt and the leaves are meant to mimic the tributaries found at the mouth of the Nile. The stem is the Nile. I also included Hebrew script along the stem as it was Kabbalah meditation and manipulation of the Hebrew Aleph-Bet that led to my Sekhmet practice.



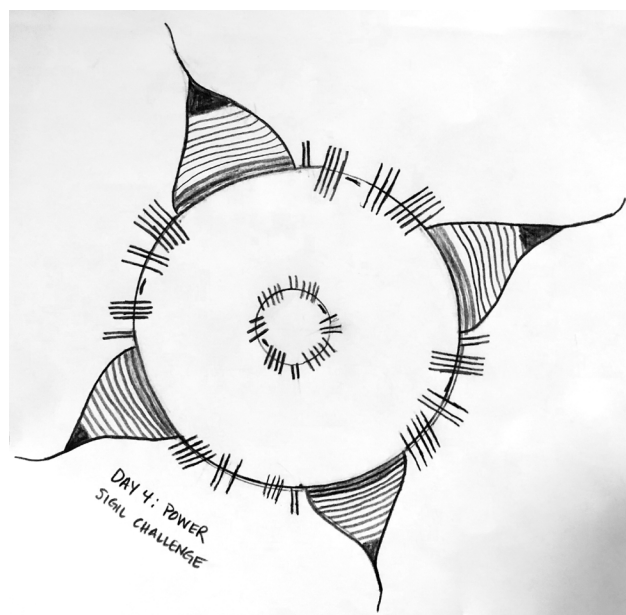
DAY 6: HOME

Sigil 3: Transmutate (auto) – Sometimes all we see is a circle until a particular tool or symbol parts the veil for us to see the workings otherwise left invisible.



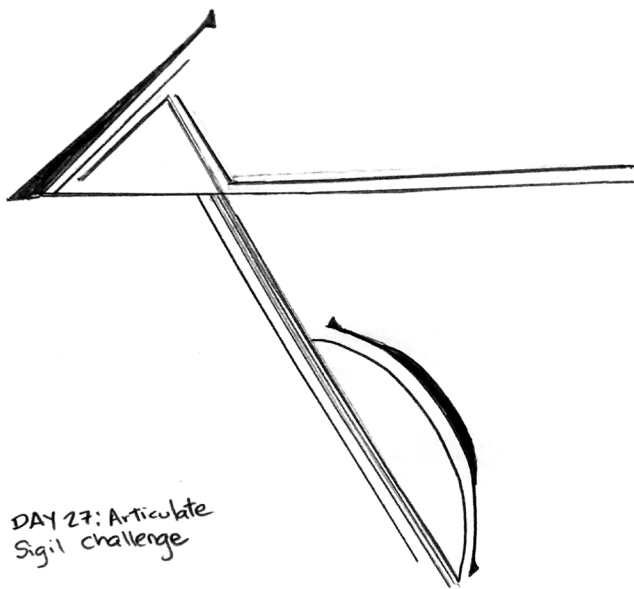
Day 22: Transmute
Sigil Challenge

Sigil 4: Power – When I sat pondering this word, the Gnostic Mass Collects permeated my thinking and more specifically the phrase “Source of Light, Source of Life.” This sigil began with the simple symbol of the Sun: a larger outer circle and a smaller inner circle. I added the rays with a particular number of stripes and then spelled out the Irish word for strength in Ogham. The word is repeated six times.

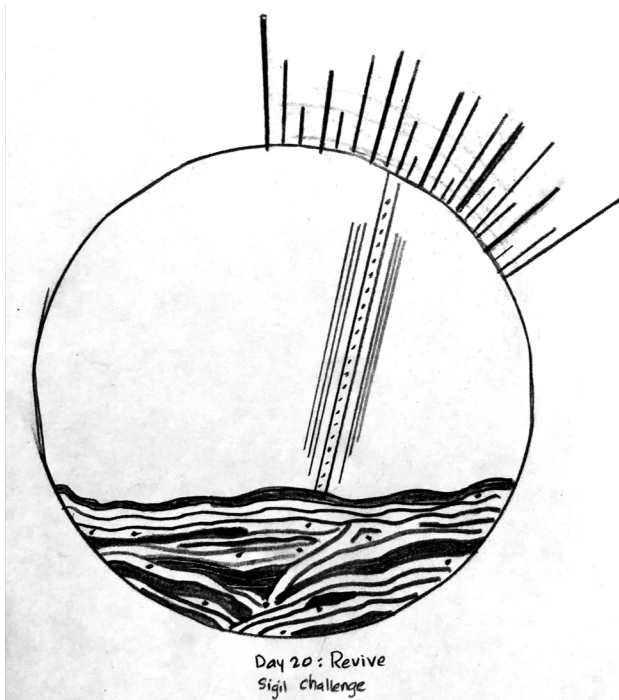


DAY 4: POWER
SIGIL CHALLENGE

Sigil 5: Articulate (chaos) – When I first read this word, I immediately thought of a tongue, throat, the vishuddha chakra, and da'at. However, being true to my process, I disregarded these concepts and sat with the word, articulate. The letters started dancing in my head. Some broke up into pieces, showing me lines and corners. I decided to use the chaos method. I kept all the letters. I broke some of them apart to make lines and corners.



Sigil 6: Revive – In order to revive something, it must at one time have been functional. There are two concepts that popped into my head when I sought a base concept. One is from Ezekiel 37 (The Valley of Dry Bones) and the other was ATU XIII of



the Thoth Tarot deck (the Death card). This sigil was about taking things that were thought to be dead and “breathing” new life into them. In this sigil, the “breath” is coming from the sun and is beckoning them to rise from the murky filth in which they are stuck.

Having drawn a sigil a day for a month, a new habit has formed. It has become part of my normal routine and I cannot imagine missing a day. My sketch books are filling up and I have even started gifting sigils to people who desire them. I have experimented with symbol sets from several different cultures and religious thought, some of which have included Hebrew (print and script), Ogham, and Georgian. Most of the sigils have been drawn with pencil. Some are traced over in black ink and I have recently started to add color. For anyone desiring to use custom sigils in their magical practice, there is no better time to start than today. Your practice and art will grow and evolve until it is a true expression of yourself. But it's important to make time and space and give yourself permission to experiment.

IN MEMORIAM: JAMES WASSERMAN

James Wasserman, American writer and occultist, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 EV, surrounded by family.

Wasserman was born in 1948. After attending Antioch College, he spent several years traveling the U.S. in search of spiritual teaching, studying with various teachers of meditation and other occult disciplines. He settled in New York City in 1973 and began working at Samuel Weiser's Bookstore, then the world's largest English language occult specialist. In 1977, he left Weiser's to establish Studio 31, offering full-service book production and graphic design.

In 1976, he joined Ordo Templi Orientis, having explored Aleister Crowley's system of Scientific Illuminism. In 1979, he founded Tahuti Lodge, one of the oldest continuously operating O.T.O. Lodges in the world.

He played a key role in numerous seminal publications of the literary corpus of Aleister Crowley. Three of the most important examples are:

- He supervised Weiser's 1976 edition of *The Book of the Law*, in which the holograph manuscript was appended to the corrected typeset text of the O.T.O.'s 1938 publication. This was executed in conformity with the book's instructions, the first time this was done in a popular volume.
- After several years of negotiation, he successfully arranged to professionally re-photograph the Crowley-Harris Tarot paintings for an improved second edition of the Thoth Tarot deck published in 1977, to which he contributed the Booklet of Instruction.
- In 1983, he helped to produce *The Holy Books of Thelema*, the critical collection of Crowley's inspired (Class A) writings.

In addition to his interest in religion and creative mythology, he maintained an ardent passion for political and personal liberty. He was a devoted student of the United States Constitution, the writings of the Founding Fathers, and Libertarianism.



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O.T.O. "does not include the A.:A.:, with which august body it is, however, in close alliance."

— Liber III

O.T.O. has long worked in close alliance with the A.:A.:, which first proclaimed the Law of Thelema to the world. The A.:A.: is a teaching, testing, and initiatory system dedicated to the personal spiritual advancement of its individual members. Within A.:A.: all services are rendered free of charge, and no social activities are held. O.T.O. and A.:A.: have jointly issued the journal *The Equinox* since 1912 EV, now in its fourth volume. Although they are distinctly separate organizations, neither including nor subordinate to the other, O.T.O. has historically assisted A.:A.: with practical matters that lie outside the latter's primary mission, which is purely spiritual in nature. Aspirants to the A.:A.: may write to:

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