



## **The Mythology of TORCHBEARERS**

Hey Ho! As the darkness descends on Mabon--the Celtic name for the Autumn Equinox-- Vinotok Mummers, Mood Makers and Festivarians call forth the balance between day and night, feminine and masculine, Summer and Fall, Equal Sun and Equal Moon.

All are being danced down the streets as neighbors gather, awaiting the mysterious and magical Procession of the Great Grump because Vinotok IS Today!

In the distance you can hear the drums sounding the Earth's heartbeat, as everything around grows quiet in anticipation. Then we see it--the Light streams forth as torches light up the night. In ranks of 2-by-2 the Torchbearers and guardians of the People are guiding the Embodied Beings of our healing, communal mythology in a stately cadence. See the Green Man, the Harvest Mother, the Maidens and Flagbearers as the fire lights up their powerful and enchanted faces and figures! Here is Sir Hapless the Knight and Lord Protector and his partner, the Primordial Earth Dragon.

This night is truly made of dreams, and fierce compassion and wild, ecstatic awareness.

For now, comes the Great Grump, as It is carried by the Executioners to Its sacrifice in the Harvest Bonfire. The torches remind us that the Spring and Summer must be consumed to make way for the Autumn Harvest and Winter Snows. Every year the Torchbearers conduct this stunning procession. And just so, the Great Grump must be consumed in fire at the Crossroads of the village, so that past grievances are banished, making room to beckon blessings for the coming year.

And each year before the Vinotok festivities the Torchbearers gather around a sacred Council Fire. As a dedicated brotherhood they draw the Viking Rune oracles for guidance and add these symbols to their torch staffs and regalia for devotion and protection. They commit their intentions to keep the village safe as the folk dance in the streets all along the Great Grump's journey to the Funeral Pyre. It is also the sacred rite of the Torchbearers to light the Great Harvest Fire, whose flames fill the night, devouring the hand-written paper Grumps and Grievances as they consume the glowing effigy.

Generosity of Spirit encircles the People as we dance around the cleansing fire and share the harvest together in the last celebration before the first snows arrive over the Elk Mountains.

The Fire of Life has been lit and it is a pleasure to burn!

It is so.

By Marcie Telander, Vinotok Godmother and Founder