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Beltaine, 2008
No. 25.2

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CSANA

Celtic Studies Association of North America

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Incorporated as a non-profit organization, the Celtic Studies Association of North America has members in the United States, Canada, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Europe, Australia and Japan. CSANA produces a semi-annual newsletter and bibliographies of Celtic Studies. The published bibliographies (1983-87 and 1985-87) may be ordered from the Secretary-Treasurer, Prof. Elissa R. Henken, Dept. of English, Park Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602, USA (Email: ehenken@uga.edu).

The electronic CSANA bibliography is available at: http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/celtic/csanabib.html, or visit our Web site at: http://www.csub.edu/~cmacquarrie/csana/. The electronic bibliography is available at cost in printed form to members who request it.

The privileges of membership in CSANA include the newsletter twice a year, access to the bibliography and the electronic discussion group CSANA-l (contact Prof. Joe Eska at eska@vt.edu to join), invitations to the annual meeting, for which the registration fees are nil or very low, the right to purchase the CSANA mailing list at cost, and an invaluable sense of fellowship with Celticists throughout North America and around the world.

Membership in CSANA is open to anyone with a serious interest in Celtic Studies. Dues are payable at Bealtaine. New and renewing members should send checks in any of the three accepted currencies to Elissa R. Henken at the above address. Checks in US dollars, payable to CSANA, must be drawn on a US bank or an affiliate of a US bank (international money orders cannot be accepted). Cheques in British Sterling must be made payable to Elissa R. Henken. Checks in Canadian dollars must be made payable to Diana Luft.

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Stones, fragments of the very earth we live on, hold various fascinations throughout our lifetimes: as children we drop them into puddles, later skip them on the surface of water, use them to line our gardens, and sometimes, like A. A. Milne, just clamber up on them to “meet the evening face to face.” Milne’s rock stands in its natural setting, mute and immovable. Indeed, moving the great boulders of the earth is beyond individual human capacity unless aided by supernatural powers. Obelix can carry a menhir upon his back, but only because he fell into the magic potion as a child. Merlin’s mystical powers are so great that he can whisk the giant circle of Stonehenge from Ireland to England. But the great pyramids of Egypt were created by the backbreaking labor of thousands of slaves transporting and stacking giant blocks to reach towards the sky. Furthermore, although Milne’s rock is mute, engravings on stone stand as a monument to the human desire for immortal communication, such as the legal inscription of Hammurabi’s code on his Babylonian obelisk, the combination of religious imagery and runes on the Ruthwell cross, or the intertwining of inscription and art on Mayan steles whose glyphs preserve both the intellectual and historical achievements of a lost civilization. We lesser mortals can only stand in awe of these great rocks, and then perhaps leave to skip a stone or climb up on a boulder to watch a sunset, feeling again at one with the earth. This fascination is the focus of the collection *Megalith*, in which eleven writers record their journeys to seek out great standing stones in the British Isles and imagine their stories. For, as Jan Morris states in the Preface, these massive rectangular blocks “are above all allegories of the imagination.” (viii)

The collection begins with Jim Perrin’s lyric “Appropriations”, telling of his flight from a literary festival to seek out the silent standing stones of Drumtroddan, Scotland, and muse on the cup and ring marks that hide within themselves the mystery of their origin. These lead him to reflect on his wife’s death, on witches, wild hunters and old tales, and to conclude that although we must enquire, “as surely, we must still ourselves with an acceptance of the unknowable” (15). In “Stone Fields,” Bernard O’Donoghue recalls farming days as a boy in County Cork, eating
lunch leaning up against the great stone standing beside the quarry. His father was a bad farmer, allowing stone and quarry to render useless his best land; when the farm was sold to Mick Mac, he had the stone toppled into the quarry which he then filled, and promptly died at the age of 42. But the stone was never resurrected: “there wouldn’t be any point... because we no longer know what it meant or what it was for: why it stood at exactly the angle it did, or faced the way it did. Its potency was due to things we don’t understand” (25).

From his cricket match on a pitch beside standing stones that “look from a distance like a giant grey mushroom nestled beside a peaty cow pat”, Tristan Hughes muses about the stony nature of Anglesey in “The Stillness of Stones.” He considers the long string of tourists from Geraldis Cambrensis onwards who have come to visit Anglesey’s stones of all sorts: “the castles and the churches, the menhirs and the megaliths, not the human body, but the remnant bones.” (35). And this, perhaps, is why “so many of the visitors to stones like these have been those who are most dissatisfied and disaffected with that world--those who seek an imagined haven from its agitations and confusions and restless accelerations” (40). Driven by the desire for remote wilderness, Andrew McNeille climbs up to the platform cairn in Brenig, Wales to seek inspiration for his “Words from Stones.” Here he gazes out at the spectacular view of the panorama of Snowdonia, and wonders what this vision of the mountains meant to the prehistoric builders.

“In a Blue Mist” includes four seasonal sketches by Niall Griffiths of the Cow and Calf Standing Stones on Pendham Mountain in Ceredigion, Wales. The first three recount tales he has heard, while the fourth presents his own encounter. “Winter” tells the almost unbearably tragic story of the man on furlough from the first World War who goes to the frozen stones to scream away his life. “Spring” concerns the psychiatrist’s son who escapes the curious gaze of the world to become a madman in the mountains, offering birds and animals as sacrifices to the great stones. In “Summer” a hitchhiking college student is picked up by two supercilious English tourists who stop to embrace the megaliths; two years later she cannot remember what the tourists looked like, but has never forgotten the stones. Finally in “Autumn”, the author himself visits the hilltop as the valley is bathed in a bright blue mist from which only the stones emerge as eternal guides.

Gillian Clarke describes in “The Poetry of Stone” how the sun, the sea, the Pentre Ifan Burial Chamber in Pembrokeshire, Wales, her childhood copy of Guide to Minerals, Rocks, and Fossils, and her memories of her grandmother led to the making of personal myths, and inspired her to write poetry. “Stations” presents Damien Walford Davies’ description of his trip to The Field of the Dead in Llanllawer, Wales: sounds, smells and sights are so vividly evoked that we feel as if we are partaking in this lazy meandering towards the field of standing stones. This lulled sense of contentment sets off even more starkly Davies’ recounting of the cruel and bloody battle that took place here in 1081 between Irish and Welsh. When Davies has paid tribute to this time of brutality, he turns his car back along the summer path to the modern world. Menna Elfyn concentrates on Arthur’s Stone in her “Stones in Seventeen Frames,” letting it take her back to her childhood as the daughter of a preacher “well-versed in the ways of stones and
absolutes” (87). She also brings some of the life of the stone back with her in the camera image on her mobile phone: now she, too, can cast great stones across oceans.

“Guarding Emptiness” intersperses Elin ap Hywel’s memories of visiting the Tinkinswood Burial Chamber in South Glamorgan with the portrait of the uncle she never met. His ghost entwines with the ghosts buried near the standing stones, and in some sense with the ghost of the family farm that can no longer exist without a man—the uncle who died too young—to maintain it. In “Recovering the Past,” Jem Poster describes excavating the Nymphsfield Long Barrow in Gloucestershire and examines with gentle reverence the archeologist’s paradox of demolishing that which he sets out to examine, destroying the burials of ancient bones, perhaps the whole while trembling at “a sudden, dizzying intimation of unseen immensities” (111). The collection finishes with “Surviving”, David Constantine’s gorgeous word-painting of the Burial Chambers on the Isles of Scilly, which resemble nothing so much as great stone ships of death decorated with lichen and bits of flowering gorse, facing the sea towards the past of Greece, yet containing within themselves the seeds that are the hopes of humans for continuance on earth.

These brief synopses cannot hope to do justice to the richness and beauty of this collection. The essays indeed mirror Jan Morris’s list of our varied fascinations with the stones themselves: “In their lichened, faceted faces we see our lineaments; in their solitariness, our loneliness, or our need to be alone; in their gregariousness, our congregational temper; in their alignment, our deviousness; in their poised mass, our fragility; in their rootedness, our deracination; in their age, our ephemerality; and in their naked out-facing of time and the elements, a valuable lesson in patient dissent” (2).

**Lisi Oliver**

Department of English
Louisiana State University

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**The Archaeology of Celtic Britain and Ireland c. AD 400-1200**


In this detailed and elaborate account, Laing provides an exhaustive review of the archaeological work that has been undertaken through 2004 in connection with eras and places that call for thorough investigation—the “Celtic” cultures of Britain and Ireland circa 400-1200 A.D. The book represents a second edition of a work first published approximately thirty-five years ago. Laing began the second edition as a mere “update” (xiv), but soon discovered the self-sacrificial dimension of the task he had set for himself: “This edition of the book began as a simple ‘update.’ It has required a virtual rewrite. It has been a back-breaking, time consuming and soul-destroying task” (xiv). New approaches are partly responsible for the onerous nature of the revision: “The width of available research methods have both aided and hindered the production of an overview” (xiv). New approaches encompass the scientific and the
literary: “In 1970 not only were technological advances such as pollen analysis, tree-ring dating or geographical survey relatively undeveloped for this period and area, but study of literary sources was less well advanced” (xii). Laing jokes about the jargon inevitably associated with the varying approaches ranging “from the very highly scientific to art history…” (xiv) in researching the Celts: “My guess is that those cognizant with terms such as argentiferous galena or plough pebbles, may not even be aware [of] the significance of triskeles, peltas, language death, colophons, totemmemoria or the cundach of the cathach of Columcille” (xiv). Nevertheless, Laing has tried to minimize the use of jargon and has succeeded in offering a readable account of the archaeology of the period and area and of the historical issues upon which archaeological evidence sheds some light.

In his preface, Laing immediately notes the inflammatory connotations of a loaded word, “Celtic,” by observing that “the one fact remains: the term Celtic is one of the most emotive in the European past” (xii). Debates, he notes, have not always been conducted in an objective and scientific manner, but “have been based on what (by today’s standards of scientific investigation) appear to be the most tenuous arguments and flimsiest of evidence” (xiii). He describes the nature of the period in which he is working as the time between Roman rule in Britain and Norman rule in Britain and Ireland (xii). In his introduction, tackling the question of the identity of the Celts, Laing observes that “the Celts in the period under review had (as far as is known) no collective noun for themselves” (3) and that writers in the Classical period did not refer to “Celts” in connection with the inhabitants of Britain (3). The attempt to identify the Celts has been conducted, according to Laing, via many approaches: the linguistic, the historical, the archaeological, the political and social historical, and the art historical.

In fourteen well-constructed chapters, Laing illumines his chosen period through revelation of the archaeological investigations that have been carried out, particularly in recent years. In his first chapter, “The Celtic World,” he examines the cultures and institutions of various areas within the Celtic world of Britain and Ireland, noting the materials available for study: “from Law codes, biographies of early saints and churchmen, poetry, to archaeological objects, sites and art treasures” (10). In his second chapter, “Settlements,” Laing goes into detail about archaeological evidence relating to the organization of Celtic societies during the period, noting the changes wrought in archaeological investigation by recently developed technology (31). In this chapter and in subsequent chapters, Laing provides specific details, often accompanied by diagrams and illustrations, concerning settlements, farming, everyday objects and equipment, industry and technology, trade and communication, clothes and jewelry, art and ornament, and the church. In so doing, he is not afraid to tackle controversial issues. For example, in his chapter on the church, he takes on the notion of a “Celtic Church”: “As far as hard evidence goes, there is nothing to suggest that there was a single entity which could be termed the ‘Celtic Church,’ nor that the elements within it identified themselves as separate” (209).

A focus on specific geographical areas characterizes the remaining chapters, as Laing devotes a chapter each to Southwestern Britain, Wales, Ireland and the Isle
of Man, Southern Scotland and northern England, and Northern Scotland. Brilliantly and painstakingly, Laing sheds light on various historical issues with the evidence uncovered by archaeological investigation. He notes of King Arthur, for example, that “current thinking sees him more as a latter-day Romano-Briton rather than a ‘true’ Celt, operating from somewhere in the West Country (though in legend he is associated with many locations including Scotland)” (237-8). In connection with Ireland, Laing observes that Roman influence during the classical period may have been greater than was previously thought: “It may even be possible to discern in Ireland a similar change in society to that which is apparent amongst contemporaneous peoples on the fringes of the Roman Empire” (273). Laing also notes the contacts between Romans and Britons in southern Scotland as manifested “by Roman material on native sites” (294). Christianity itself evidences such associations, according to Laing: “Since Christianity was the official Roman religion from 395 onwards, its adoption in Celtic border areas is further evidence of close ties with the Roman world—political, economic and intellectual as well as spiritual” (303). In his epilogue provocingly subtitled “The end of the Celtic Britain and Ireland,” Laing indicates the significance for Celtic culture of the twelfth century—the century of Norman ascendancy and consequent “feudalization”:

The twelfth century, then, marks a convenient divide in the Celtic-speaking areas of Britain and Ireland. The Norman advance effectively brought late Celtic Britain and Ireland culturally in line with England and Europe, and though it is unlikely that the Anglo-Norman penetration had any profound effect on basic patterns of settlement or peasant economy, feudalization brought about certain social changes. (334)

In addition to the exhaustive coverage of his topic in fourteen chapters, Laing provides three appendices identifying the groups and individuals mentioned in his book and discussing the issue of historical dating. Included also are sections presenting further reading, references, and an index.

**Gregory J. Darling**
John Jay College of Criminal Justice and Fordham University

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**Special thanks to Morgan Davies for hosting**

**CSANA**
**2008**
**at**
**Colgate University**

The Celtic Studies Association, like Spring, came to beautiful Hamilton, New York, this past April (17-20), at the invitation of our indefatigably generous host Professor Morgan Davies of Colgate University. In contrast to the exciting big-city ambience in a classic art-deco hotel provided CSANA by Professors Edgar Slotkin in Cincinnati (2007), here we were treated to wonderful bucolic views from the hilly Colgate campus, where the paper sessions took place, and to the down-home delights of the Colgate Inn, where a sumptuous banquet was held Saturday evening. Two dozen papers on a wide range of Celtic topics were given in the course of four days, by scholars from near and far, senior and junior (see below), and a stimulating seminar was held on the medieval Latin and Welsh biographies of the famous early twelfth-century king Gruffudd ap Cynan, led by Dr Paul Russell of Cambridge, Professor Catherine McKenna of Harvard, and Ms. Patricia Malone of Harvard (winner, we note, of the prize for Best Student Paper). In addition to the many scholars offering papers and chairing sessions, the ample audience for the conference program included Colgate faculty and students, and many CSANA members who came to listen, learn, talk, and enjoy, among them Dr. Caoimhin Breathnach of University College, Dublin. Professor Davies, his delightful family, and the welcoming agencies of Colgate University looked after all our needs and treated us to seemingly inexhaustible buffets at the genteel Faculty Club both Thursday and Friday evenings.

Yet again a CSANA host has set an exceedingly high standard for his/her successor to try to surpass! We look forward to the cutting-edge scholarly presentations and good times that no doubt will await us, courtesy of our gracious and ever-resourceful northern California members, at the 2009 UC Berkeley meeting.

Matthieu Boyd (Harvard University), “How to Tell a Gwerz when You Read One, and Other Aspects of Formulaic Language in the Breton-Language Vernacular Ballads”

Tim Bridgman * (Binghamton University), “Names and Naming Conventions of Celtic Peoples in the Extant Fragments of Posidonius of Apameia”

Stephen C. Crimmins (University of Washington), “Like a Bee that Grazes: Early Irish Legal Analogy in Bechbretha and Coibnes Uisci Thairidne”

Joseph Eska (Virginia Tech) and Angelo O. Mercado (University of California, Santa Cruz), “The Oldest Celtic Poem Redux”


Natalie Anne Franz (Harvard University), “Women and the Gwerziou: Transgressions and Truth in Breton Song Tradition”

Katherine R. Frazier (Saint Mary’s College), “More than a Name: Placenames in the Táin Bó Cuailnge”

Margo Griffin-Wilson (Harvard University), “Bedding and Blessing in a 17th-Century Irish Poem”

Cathinka Hambro (University of Oslo), “Both Goddess and Saint? The Female Protagonist in Three Early Irish Texts”

Aled Llion Jones (Harvard University), “The Harmony of Metre: Approaches to Creativity in the Bardic Poetry”
Greetings from Berkeley. As hosts of the joint meeting of the California Celtic Colloquium and the CSANA Annual Meeting for 2009, we propose to hold the conference over the weekend of March 12-15, 2009. The following weekend is our Spring Break and earlier ones seem too early for our usual calendar. If anyone knows of a major conflict or impediment concerning these dates, please contact me immediately [dmelia@berkeley.edu]. Qui tacit consentit.

Cordially,
Dan Melia (for the organizing committee) dmelia@berkeley.edu

The 2009
CSANA conference
and the Annual
California Celtic Studies Conference
Berkeley
http://ls.berkeley.edu/dept/celtic/

(CSANA 2010 conference will be at the University of Notre Dame and the 2011 conference is scheduled for Ohio State.)

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Cordially,
Dan Melia (for the organizing committee) dmelia@berkeley.edu

Thanks also to Fred Suppe who again organized two CSANA sessions at Kalamazoo in 2008 and call for papers for 2009.
Fred Suppe is organizing two sessions to be sponsored by CSANA for the 44th annual International Congress of Medieval Studies to be held in Kalamazoo, Michigan during May 7-10, 2009. General rubrics for these two sessions are "Emotions in Celtic Texts and Culture" and "New Work by Young Celtic Studies Scholars." The latter session is particularly intended to showcase research work by graduate students, untenured faculty, and young independent scholars who do not currently have an academic affiliation. To propose a paper for inclusion in one of these sessions, please send to Fred your proposed title, a brief description of the topic and treatment, your audio-visual device needs (computer projector for use with Powerpoint, overhead projector, etc.), your name, postal address, e-mail address, and telephone number. Proposals received by September 1, 2008 will be given priority consideration and the absolute final date for Fred to receive proposals is Monday, September 15, 2008. Fred's postal address is: Professor Frederick Suppe, Department of History, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, USA; his e-mail address is fsuppe@bsu.edu; his office telephone number is (765) 285-8783; and he can receive FAX messages at (765) 285-5612.

Scholars do not need to be current members of CSANA to propose a paper for inclusion in one of our sessions at Kalamazoo, but it is a CSANA requirement that those presenting papers under our auspices at a session which we sponsor must be members at the time when they present their papers. Fred would welcome suggestions from CSANA members and others regarding scholars, particularly young scholars, who might welcome the opportunity to present their work during one of these sessions.

Felicitations to CSANA members

Dan Wiley who has accepted an assistant professorship at Southern Illinois University

Michael Newton who has accepted an assistant professorship at Saint Francis Xavier College

Anders Ahlqvist who is taking up the Sir Warwick Fairfax Chair of Celtic Studies at the University of Sydney.

Westley Follett who will be Assistant Professor in History at the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Park campus.
John V. Kelleher
Memorial Lecture
and 28th Annual Harvard Celtic Colloquium
October 10-12, 2008

October 9, 2008 ~ 5:00 pm
Faculty Club Library
Presented by the Harvard Celtic Department

Professor Damian McManus
School of Irish & Celtic Languages
Trinity College, Dublin

“Good-Looking and Irresistible: The Irish Hero
from Early Saga to Classical Poetry”

For further information please visit http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~hcc/.

YEARBOOK NEWS
FROM THE CSANAY EDITOR

Law, Literature, and Society. CSANA Yearbook 7, ed. Joseph F. Eska, will appear shortly from Four Courts! Unfortunately, prices have been raised by the Press, in response to increasing publishing counts and the dollar/euro discrepancy, but a discount is still available to CSANA members in good standing: $60.00 (including postage). Please send your check, made out to “CSANA,” to CSANA Secretary-Treasurer Elissa Henken, Department of English, Park Hall, University of Georgia, Athens GA 30602, or order on our website, using Paypal http://www.csub.edu/~cmacquarrie/csana/).

Contributors include:
Timothy P. Bridgman, “Naming and naming conventions concerning Celtic peoples in some early ancient Greek authors”
Michael Meckler, “The assassination of Diarmaid mac Cerbaill”
Karen Eileen Overbey, “Female trouble: ambivalence and anxiety at the Nuns’ Church”
Lahney Preston-Matto, “Derbforgaill’s literary heritage: can you blame her?”
Sara Elin Roberts, “Emerging from the bushes: the Welsh law of women in the legal triads”
Paul Russell, “Poets, power and possessions in medieval Ireland: some stories from Sanas Cormaic”

Purchasing the Yearbook is a vital way you can contribute to keeping this journal going strong, not
to mention taking advantage of your membership and receiving a discount. Also, be sure to ask your library to order Yearbook 7 and back issues via the Four Courts Press website at http://www.fourcourtspress.ie/. Back issues are also available to members at the discounted price of $50 (including postage; special double volume 3-4 is $90); for more information, including the titles and contents of CSANAY 1-6, see the CSANA website under “The Yearbook,” or contact the former CSANAY editor, Joseph Nagy, at jfnagy@humnet.ucla.edu.

Books for Review

If you are interested in reviewing any of the following books, or if you have another title in mind for review and would like me to contact the publisher for a review copy, please contact the newsletter editor at cmacquarrie@csub.edu. Reviews for the next newsletter should be received by September 15.


**Emily Lawless 1845-1913: Writing the Interspace.** Heidi Hanson, 2007. Cork UP; Cork, 2006. **Hardback:** 234 pages.

**Empire of Analogies: Kipling, India and Ireland.** Kaori Nagai. Cork UP; Cork, 2006. **Hardback:** 185 pages.

**The Fenian Ideal and Irish Nationalism, 1882-1916, by M.J. Kelly.** Boydell: Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2006. **Hardback:** 282 pages

**Gearrscéalta ár Linne.** Edited by Brian Ó Conchubhair. Cló Iar-Chonnachta: Indreabhán, Co. na Gaillimhe, Éire, 2006. **Paperback:** 392 pages


**Newgrange.** By Geraldine and Matthew Stout. Cork UP; Cork, 2008. **Paperback:** 122 pages


**Paypal available for CSANA dues**

Members may now pay dues and subscribe to the Yearbook by credit card through the online company PayPal. All credit card payments must be made in US dollars. Because of the transaction fees, the CSANA prices for those paying by credit card will be $15.75 US (associate member) and $26 US (sustaining member, yearbook). When buying Yearbooks, people must add $1 for every $25. Some members have been paying $26 for dues on PayPal, but then only $25 for a yearbook.)--and multiples thereof. Please note that conversion fees from other currencies to USD will be charged by the credit card companies. [The prices and system for those paying by check or cash remain unchanged.]

To pay by credit card, go to the PayPal website (www.paypal.com), press the tab "send money," type in the e-mail address ehenken@uga.edu. Remember to pay in US dollars. Put csana in the e-mail subject line. In the Note box, type in your name, postal address, e-mail address, and for what exactly you are paying (dues year, membership rate, Yearbook number).
Those of you who have a date of Apr 07 or earlier on label of your newsletter are due to pay your dues. Please return this sheet in the enclosed envelope, and your check or money order, to Elissa Henken.

The privileges of membership in CSANA include the newsletter twice a year, access to the bibliography and the electronic discussion group CSANA-L (contact Prof. Joe Eska at eska@vtaix.cc.vt.edu to join), invitations to the annual meeting, for which the registration fees are nil or very low, the right to purchase the CSANA mailing list at cost, an invaluable sense of fellowship with Celticists throughout North America and around the world.

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Associate Mbr (student, retiree, unemployed, institution) $15.00 ($21 Canadian, £10.50, $15.75 PayPal)
Sustaining Member (regular) $25.00 ($35 CAD, £17.50, $26 via PayPal)
Contributor $50.00 ($70 CAD, £36.50)
Patron $100.00
Benefactor $250.00

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Don’t forget to order your Yearbooks as well. The publisher has increased prices for the Yearbooks -- members who had already paid their $25 have the choice of paying the additional amount ($35) to receive 7 or cancelling their order and applying that $25 to their CSANA dues. Please indicate your preference on this form or contact Elissa Henken.

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| _______Yearbook 2, $50.00 |
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