Voice of the Asatru Folk Assembly

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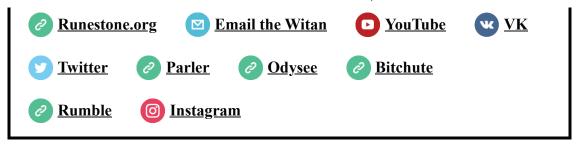






Pórshof Second Hof of the Asatru Folk Assembly

http://www.thorshof.com/



Donate to the AFA

Words from the Alsherjargothi



For those that do not know, my mother, Janet Flavel died a few days back. It was not an unexpected passing, but it still is painful and has given me a good opportunity to reflect on things. Some of this may be rambling, but they are thoughts that I find worth mentioning, nonetheless.

My mom spent the last 15-ish years of her life with the slow and merciless process of dementia. I gradually lost more and more of my mother until she was completely gone. We often think of our soul complex from a theoretical point of view. I got to watch the slow deconstruction of that complex over the march of years. This illustrated to me, in the most profound of ways, how we are all made up of pieces that make us "us," and as those were stripped from her one at a time, it taught me a lot. I feel I now understand what's meant when Óðinn says in the Grímnismál "For Hugin I fear lest he

come not home, But for Munin my care is more."

I also am deeply comforted in the knowledge that my mother will look on from beyond the veil and watch over my family. I know we all think that, or "believe" this to be true but I FEEL it now in a profound way.

I don't write this to be morose, but I wanted to share some things that have been on my mind. Life is short. The older I get, the more aware I am aware of that. There is limited time, and we all have so many dreams to accomplish. The time is now, don't waste time, don't waste opportunity to build your legacy. Also, as I have come to understand, the best way to stave off senility is to keep mentally active. Always learn more, always think critically, always strive to be more than you are. A thought to leave you thinking on this month—our myths illustrate time and again that entropy occurs when we stand still. If we don't strive, if we don't move forward, the pull towards degeneration and chaos wins. The key to legacy is constant motion, doing more, achieving more, being more. By doing this, we stay one step ahead of the wolf.



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Words from our Witan

Hexennacht Ritual



At Hexennacht, my blots tend to focus on the magic of women and gifts to the goddess Freyja. Three "mighty women" are called upon during Blot to bless the Folk with fire and smoke for protection in all realms, material, physical, emotional, and spiritual. Freyja, skilled in seidr, is given our gifts of gratitude and devotion and we ask for her to bless the folk with strength, determination, self-awareness, and skill to let us work our own "magic" in our own lives, in whatever way we can, whether that be through crafting and creating, building our physical and spiritual selves to greatness, or destroying all obstacles in our paths to victory.

Items needed:

Horn

Mead

Bowl

Cauldron

A stick to suspend the cauldron

Sand (if using cauldron, fill the bottom of the cauldron with sand)

Charcoal

Lighter

Lavender

Rosemary

Mugwort

Assistants:

3 ladies of the folk

Gather your folk and have the women bless the mead. Enter the ritual space in a

sunwise motion, forming a circle around the central altar.

"Hail the Holy Æsir, Gods and Goddesses of our Folk! We ask you to join us today as we honor your kin!

Hail the Æsir!

Hail to the Honored Ancestors, Mothers and Fathers as far back as time remembers! We ask you to join your sons and daughters gathered here and witness our devotion! Hail the Ancestors!

Hail the Friendly Vaetter, spirits of this land and place! We as you to look upon us in worship, see our deeds!

Hail the Vaetter!"

"Freyja! Beautiful goddess of both power and beauty, of strength and love,

We give gifts of ourselves to you!

We give you our devotion, our love, our respect, and our might!

Hail to you, Freyja!

The daughter of Njord,

The wife of Odr,

The sister of Frey,

The mother of Hnoss and Gersemi,

You show us the power of love,

The power of strength,

The power of endurance.

You show us the power of the mothers, of the daughters, of the sisters and of the wives!

You teach us to be better women!

You inspire us to be better men!

Folk, prepare your gifts for Freyja. From your heart to your hand, and from your hand to the horn, give the best and brightest of yourselves to her."

Ask your hornbearer to collect the gifts of the Folk

"Freyja! The horn is heavy with the gifts of your Folk.

If you find them worthy, take them from us now."

Hold the horn high and await the acceptance of Freyja.

Pour the gifts into the bowl.

Refill the horn.

"Freyja, we have given you our gifts and we ask that if you find these folk worthy, bless us with gifts of your own.

We ask you to bless us with strength and will,

The ability to find our own power within,

To overcome and to achieve our goals.

Let us find that spark within ourselves, our own "magic", our own gifts and talents.

Hail Freyja!"

Receive the gifts of Freyja. Walk the horn around the circle of gathered folk and offer them the gifts of Freyja.

Pour remaining mead from the horn in the bowl.

Light the charcoal disc and place on top of the sand in the cauldron.

"Hexennacht, in days of old, was the time of movement and preparation, of both folk and animals.

A time of transition and of magic.

Our folk gathered, men and women, young and old, in celebration.

As the herds and menfolk who tended them went out to pasture, they were blessed for protection and strength, and for a safe return.

Fires were tended, celebration made, and prayers spoken.

The magic of the Folk, was sent with the men and the herds.

They were sent with hope. They were sent with song, dance, blessings, and joy for the future.

As in days of olde, our women will bless you now.

Though you may not be tending the herds, remember you are tending your families, and leading your Folk to victory."

Motion your first assistant to come forward. She will place the lavender on top of the charcoal.

"The first woman approaches,

With the devotion of a daughter,

With the love of a sister,

And with the compassion of a friend,

She lends herself to the Folk.

To bless you and to remind you that you are loved and never alone."

The first assistant should take her place at one end of the stick if a cauldron is being used.

Motion the second assistant to come forward. She will place the rosemary on top of the

charcoal.

"The second woman approaches,

With the support of a wife,

With the protection of a mother,

And with the strength of an aunt,

She lends herself to the Folk.

To bless you and to remind you that you will always be protected and supported."

The second assistant should take her place at the other end of the stick if a cauldron is being used.

Motion for the third assistant to come forward. She will place the mugwort on top of the charcoal.

"The third woman approaches,

With the wisdom of the grandmother,

With the memories of the great-grandmother,

And with the ancient knowledge of the Disir.

She lends herself to the Folk,

To bless you and to remind you of your own immortality"

The third assistant should take the fan. All three women should move together around the circle, blessing the folk with the smoke from the cauldron.

"May the Gods and the Ancestors bless you with strength!

With love!

With protection!

With victory!"

After the blessing is completed, close the blot.

"This blot has ended.

We have given our gifts and received gifts in return.

Take the blessings of Freyja and the blessings of your women.

Go forward with passion, with strength, and achieve the victory that awaits you!

Hail the Gods!

Hail the Folk!!

Hail the AFA!!!"



Witan Brandy Callahan bcallahan@runestone.org

Words from our Gothar

Individualism and the Clan



Our Germanic world view puts unity ahead of all else. Individuality has no context outside that of the clan. The power of o is orderly and harmonious; it follows r (the right path). It is here where peace and freedom reign. Our ancestors compared "the group of kinsmen to a fence, Stave by Stave, enclosing a sacred ground. When one is struck down, there is a breach in the clan, and the ground lies open to be trampled on." This is Frith, and to be removed from that enclosure, to be deprived of human context is to be obliterated. Worse than death one becomes a Niðing.

If personal sympathies and antipathies can never stand up to the authority of Frith, how

did this ideal of individualism come to take such a grip on our Folk? Particularly in America, where it was even further aggrandized to a "rugged individualism". What causes someone to want to distance themselves from their people, their clan, or even their immediate family in extreme cases?

Well, we know the sacral locus of most Folk-religions is the Folk community itself. The sacrality of the community is expressed in rituals celebrating the relationship with their own gods and "promote a strong sense of in-group identification and loyalty." In contrast universal religions have the salvation of the individual as the sacral locus. Gilbert Murray states "It is an atmosphere in which the aim of the good man is not so much to live justly, to help the society to which he belongs and enjoy the esteem of his fellow creatures; but rather, a means of a burning faith, by contempt for the world and its standards, by ecstasy, suffering and martyrdom, to be granted pardon for his unspeakable unworthiness."

The Chinese experienced this in the third century when instead of the Confucian ideals of preservation of the body and perpetuation of the family, many turned to Buddhism with its celibacy and ritual acts of body mortification, albeit with much less impact.

People in individualist cultures are less aware of Innangard / Utangard boundaries. They show little emotional commitment or loyalty to the Innangard and do not hold a sense of common Wyrd with other members.

But this atomized existence is not in harmony with the cosmos (Xartus). Our Folk-Soul aches for those connections to be re-established. The dissonance of not living in harmony with the natural order or primal laws harms our Folk in various ways. Like a missing limb we experience that phantom pain. We have been taught independence is the goal to strive for, but interdependence is the ultimate goal. One moves from being wholly dependent as a child, to being independent, to reach our full potential though we must let go of that independence and become interdependent with the clan. *g* is the rune of sacrifice (making sacred). This is the mystery of the interdependence not just between men, but between the gods and men.

Of all the baggage those of us raised Christian carry, this hyper-individualism is the most detrimental and hardest to shake. Some may even mistakenly come to Asatru for their individual bona fides (being Asatru to distance oneself from Christianity is not pious) and will either embrace the natural order of tribe over the individual, as is our folkway, or they will withdraw to their solitary practices, free of the obligations required by Frith. Individualism is the easy path, but it is not the right path. Freed from that limitation of individualism they grow stronger and make our folk stronger as

a whole.

This is the deeper value of our motto "Asatru is about roots, it's about connections, it's about coming home." Only within that fence of Frith do we find the freedom to become who we capable of being. It is here where the divine speaks the loudest to us, it reverberates off our members and is amplified in a way that is impossible for the individual. It requires sacrifice of the individual as exemplified by the All-Father. Óðinn did not sacrifice himself to himself to gain the knowledge of the runes for himself, he did it for the Æsir that they could bring order to the cosmos for the benefit of the descendants of Ask and Embla.



Gothi Lane Ashby lashby@runestone.org

Orthodoxy in Asatru



We live in a time where "dogma", "doctrine", and "orthodox" are considered bad words, especially in "pagan" circles. This is because these words all bring to mind images of Christianity during the high Middle Ages: images of priests, ceremony, ritual, rules, and ostracizing when those rules are broken.

These concepts are NOT Christian concepts. They are simply religious concepts in general!

Many "pagans" in our modern times will say that Asatru is about following your heart, not listening to anyone else, only connecting with the Gods to "work" with them, etc.... This is demonstrably incorrect, a major disservice to our ancestors, and egregiously impious.



Our ancestors did, in fact, believe in hard truths about our faith, as did every other ethnic group regarding their ethnic faith, as did every universal faith, and so on. Much of Asatru was not up for debate, just like one would see in any real religion. For example, imagine debating with a Christian about whether or not Satan is evil. It sounds quite silly, doesn't it? Christians will not bend on this, because it is part of the orthodoxy of their faith, and it would cease to be a religion if this were simply a matter of personal opinion!

Asatru should be, and is, much the same in that regard. There are hard facts in our faith: the Gods are real, Loki is not worthy of worship, the runes have power, and so on.

None of these points are up for debate, and none of these are a matter of opinion if you are truly Asatru. If you disagree with any of these points, then Asatru is a purely academic pursuit for you.

Asatru is a REAL faith, with REAL rules, where our people connect with our REAL Gods. Anyone who says otherwise is not seriously interested in this faith.

Gods be praised.

Gothi Trent East teast@runestone.org



Walk the Pious Path, for Upon Victory Lies



Life is good, treat it as such! Great with prayer, and a heart open to the gods, and your ancestors:

"Hail, day! | Hail, sons of day!
And night and her daughter now!
Look on us here | with loving eyes,
That waiting we victory win.
"Hail to the gods! | Ye goddesses, hail,

And all the generous earth!

Give to us wisdom | and goodly speech,

And healing hands, life-long."

Without faith, and piousness towards our gods, building yourself up, and taking on the world is daunting. Perpetually theorizing about the gods closes you off from experiencing them. Learn what you need too and put faith in those who have dedicated themselves to their service and spend more time building a relationship with them instead. All the esoteric knowledge, and practice will never come close to the power of being a doer, winning the favor & blessings of gods.

Don't be too hard on yourself, as you grow and journey in Asatru. It's a faith, a series of ongoing relationships, and at times trials. These are things set in motion by the gods, and past actions of our folk, that are opportunities to shape us for the better and thrust us upward in life. This is why the gods & challenge bless those who are loyal, endure, and have conviction. They want us to be more like them, and growth & evolution is seldom comfortable. Be bold, have principles, be noble, and absolute in all that you do. Make each act you commit into action, an act of worship. Life is good, live it!



Gothi Jason Plourde

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The Quest For Freyshof

"Njördr in Nóatún begot afterward two children: the son was called Freyr, and the daughter Freyja; they were fair of face and mighty. Freyr is the most renowned of the Æsir; he rules over the rain and the shining of the sun, and therewithal the fruit of the earth; and it is good to call on him for fruitful seasons and peace. He governs also the prosperity of men."

- Gylfaginning



<u>Freyshof Fund – Asatru Folk Assembly (runestone.org)</u>

This sacred quest has had a great start so far! The generosity has been amazing, as always!

This is the list of things that need to happen before we can make Freyshof a reality:

- 1. We need to pay off Njörðshof. We took out 2 separate loans for this hof. As of this month, we have paid the smaller of those loans off entirely! We now owe \$112,399.58 on our remaining loan.
- 2. We need to raise our monthly donation average by 7.5%. (This is membership dues and Hoftollar plus other donations)
- 3. We need to locate a suitable property.
- 4. We need to find lenders and build a war chest.

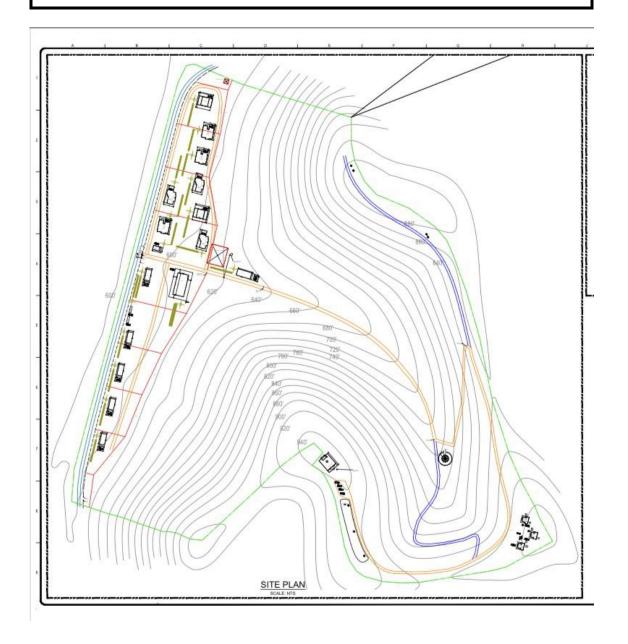
This is not a "quick" process so stay patient and resolute. As we progress, I will keep you all updated on our progress!

Hail Freyr!

Matthew D. Flavel Alsherjargothi, Asatru Folk Assembly mattflavel@runestone.org



Sigrheim: Home of Victory



Last month, a team went out to consult a septic engineer and to take more accurate measurements. This new information is reflected in the updated site plan.



Plans move steadily forward for the home of the Asatru Folk Assembly! Our first resident is moving out to the property this very month! Also, a moot will be hosted on site 4/22.

As this project develops, please keep in mind; the dream is certainly to have several families live on the grounds BUT ALSO to have as many AFA families as we can get to come live in the surrounding county. The dream of our AFA community is very real and there are options for all different types of property and all different sized lots within minutes of Sigrheim. We have several families already looking for homes/property close by!



And don't forget, Sigrheim is OURS, and we can only build it up as the Capital of Asatru and the AFA with the help and donations of our generous Folk! Donate to the <u>Sigrheim Fund</u>. Plus, we'd love to see you out there in July for Sigrblót at Sigrheim



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Victory Never Sleeps





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AFA Homeschool Program



Check out the Asatru Academy at Asatru Academy.org

Greetings everyone! We at the academy hope you had a wonderful Ostara. As we near the end of the school year, we are so proud of our students, and look forward to an even bigger school next year!

I'm sure you've seen our very nice Academy logo designed by the talented Madison East. But maybe you've noticed, we don't have something that every school needs—a school motto.

This is where our members come in. We want to hear from you! We need motto suggestions, which we'll translate into Old Norse rather than the Latin that you usually see.

Please email me at <u>rstamm@runestone.org</u> with your entry.

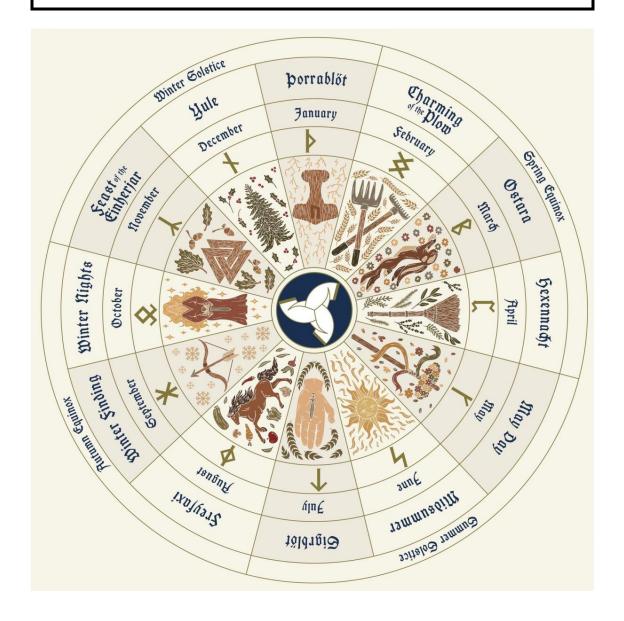
If we choose your entry, the winner will receive a t-shirt of your choice from the AFA store! And be announced in next month's Runestone!

We look forward to seeing what you all come up with.



Gothi Robert Stamm
Dean of AFA Academy
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Remembrance and Holy Days



<u>Calendar – Asatru Folk Assembly (runestone.org)</u>

2023

Date	Observance
January 9	Day of Remembrance for Raud the Strong
January 21	Þorrablót
February 9	Day of Remembrance for Eyvind Kinnrifi
February 18	Charming of the Plow
March 9	Day of Remembrance for Olvir of Egg
March 21	Ostara
(observed on 18th)	
April 9	Day of Remembrance for Jarl Haakon
April 22	Day of Remembrance for John Gibbs-Bailey "Hoskuld"
April 28	Hexennacht
(observed on 15th)	
May 9	Day of Remembrance for Else Christensen
May 1	May Day
(observed on 20th)	
June 9	Day of Remembrance for King Athanaric of the Goths
June 21	Midsummer
(observed on 17th)	
July 4	Day of Remembrance for Sveinbjorn Beinteinsson
July 9	Day of Remembrance for Alexander Rud Mills
July 15	Sigrblót
August 9	Day of Remembrance for King Radbod of Frisia
August 19	Freyfaxi
September 9	Day of Remembrance for Prince Hermann of the Cherusci
September 22	Winter Finding
(observed on 16th)	
October 4	Day of Remembrance for John Yeowell "Stubba"
October 9	Day of Remembrance for Meister Guido von List
October 15	Birthday of Founder Stephen McNallen
October 21	Winter Nights
November 9	Day of Remembrance for Queen Sigríð of Sweden
November 11	Feast of the Einherjar
(observed on 18th)	
December 9	Day of Remembrance for Egill Skallagrímsson

Date Observance

December 20 Mother's Night

December 20-31

(observed on 16th) Yuletide

Day of Remembrance

Jarl Haakon



Jarl Haakon, or Haakon Sigurdsson, son of the Norwegian earl of Lade, was exiled to Denmark after the murder of his father by Harald II Graycloak. He soon allied with Harald Bluetooth and they overthrew his father's murderer. While Haakon became the sovereign in the west, Harald Bluetooth annexed southeastern Norway. The two would again join forces when Bluetooth needed aid in fighting against the Holy Roman Emperor Otto II in 974.

Though forced into baptism Haakon's faith in his gods was so strong that he was not only able to revolt against Bluetooth's efforts to Christianize Norway for a time, but also to spread and expand his faith in his lands. In the end, powers that he could not

control began to sway the attitudes of his men and he was killed by one of his own retainers.

Jarl Haakon was the last Asatru Ruler of Norway, his death in 995 CE leading directly to the takeover by Olaf Tryggvason.

So, what can we learn from this story?

There will always be people in our lives who do not understand our faith or our dedication to our faith. Even our friends might choose to try and change our minds. When the people we have trusted do this we can sometimes find ourselves doubting our choices, even if for just a moment. 'What if?' Take that breath and reaffirm your faith. It isn't always going to be easy, but nothing that is worth anything ever is.

With dedication can come reward. We might not be able to make everyone understand our values and our beliefs, but for every person who turns away, there is a person somewhere whose mind can be opened by our words. There is that person whose soul longs to 'come home'. They just don't know it yet. Perhaps your words, your dedication, your belief will be the thing that helps someone else find their way, and what better reward could there be for standing strong?

We must also take a moment to remember to curb our arrogance. When we become too sure of ourselves and our ability to stand tall against everything that would fight us, we can become blinded by the reality of the situation around us. Always remember to take time to take the measure of the situation. Take the time to know if it is a good time to talk or to hold your tongue.

Hávamál 54:

Wise in measure let each man be, but let him not wax too wise; for never the happiest of men is he who knows much of many things



Gythia Catie Erickson cm.erickson@runestone.org

John Gibbs-Bailey "Hoskuld"



This year, on April 22, the AFA marks the first official celebration of a Day of Remembrance for John Gibbs-Bailey, known as "Hoskuld".

Hoskuld was one of the two founders of the Odinic Rite (along with John Yeowell, "Stubba"). Although writings on that organization's website indicate his efforts were integral to the foundation of the OR, only limited information about him is available. There are no books or articles to be found that he authored, no pictures of him publicly available. Even in the Odinic Rite eulogy for him, it is stated that they did not know when he was born, or even when he passed away.

Gibbs-Bailey embraced Asatru in the 1930's. He was a member of a number of smaller Asatru organizations from that time. While working with the different groups with which he was affiliated, Hoskuld developed the "Eight Charges and Virtues" of Asatru. These would later be expanded to Nine, in the 1970's, and promulgated by the Odinic Rite as the well-known "Nine Noble Virtues".

Hoskuld met John Yeowell, Stubba, in the 1950's. Gibbs-Bailey's influence played a strong role in Stubba's conversion to Asatru. In 1973, Stubba and Hoskuld formed The Committee for the Restoration of the Odinic Rite, changed to the Odinic Rite in 1979 (at that point they felt the rite had been restored). Hoskuld served as the first Treasurer

of the Odinic Rite.

It is important that we honor and remember not only the heroes of the distant past, but those in more recent days whose efforts have contributed to the renewal of our Faith.

Hail Hoskuld! Hail the Gods!



Folkbuilder James Cummings jcummings@runestone.org

Holiday

Hexennacht



When the ground was thawed, and the colder weather was beginning to give way to it became necessary to move the cattle from the winter fields to the summer ones. Hexennacht, traditionally, was a festival celebrating this very thing. The main focus of

the holiday was the bonfire. The men would all gather and build the large need-fire. They would then walk the cattle through the smoke to bless them before rehoming them for the warm months. Often the men would call on Frey during Hexennacht, asking for fertility and abundance.

While the men were off blessing the cattle the women gathered together for their own festivities. They had their own bonfires, and it was during this time that the women often burned herbs and practiced their local magic or Seidr. As the men called on Frey, the woman would often call on Freyja.

After the separate celebrations, men and women would come together and continue the festivities.

We in the AFA celebrate this day as Hexennacht instead of the more common "Walpurgisnacht". Walpurgisnacht is named such because it is the night before the Christian feast day honoring Saint Walpurga, who was credited with healing and repelling witches.

Men and women celebrating separately and then coming together are one of the main features of Hexennacht, as well as the bonfire. A good way to celebrate the holiday might include the men building the bonfire while the women practice communal Seidr. When they are finished the men and woman can join together around the bonfire. The women can throw herbs into the fire, and, asking for the blessings of Frey and Freyja, the men, women, and children can each take turns walking through the smoke.



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Upcoming National Events

Midsummer at Óðinshof - June 16th-18th



Come and tread the hallowed hall of the high one! Come celebrate Midsummer at Odinshof!

Get your tickets **HERE**

Midsummer approaches!! And how exciting! For at this year's Midsummer, we present several educational and fun workshops, exhilarating highland games, fascinating talks, moving rituals, and family-friendly activities throughout the entire weekend.

Midsummer is the premier event of the year at Odinshof! We have pulled out all the stops this year to bring you great speakers! New and exciting workshops! Bountiful feasts! And as always, you can expect to feel the very heartbeat of the Asatru Folk Assembly when you walk the grounds, step inside the ritual circle of and enter the Hall of Odin! There is no better place to gather with your Folk and celebrate Midsummer this year! Come home to the heart of the Asatru Folk Assembly for a Midsummer you won't forget!

Have a look at the amazing itinerary planned over on our <u>ticket page</u>!

Ticket costs include meals, camping, on-site showers, bathrooms, and all events occurring throughout. There are a few workshops that do require pre-registration, so make sure to sign-up for those that interest you and reserve your spot as space will be limited.

We will be having a raffle, auction, and several vendors, so don't forget to bring your cash or cards, and if you have a unique item you would like to donate towards the raffle, bring it along as well!

Lodging: Odinshof has free on-site camping and if coming from afar, we can assist with tents, bedding, etc. If dirt camping isn't your thing, there is also the Brownsville Motel nearby and several Airbnb's, as well as a casino in the area. For help with booking or any information, please contact <u>Sierra Chapman</u>.

Weather: Even though clear skies and warm weather are expected, please keep an eye on the weather before arriving as it can be unpredictable at times.

Volunteer: If you would like to volunteer during the event and become an Odinshof Doer, please contact <u>Ashley Stockton</u> at your earliest convenience. It takes us all working together to make big events run smoothly, and those that volunteer receive an Odinshof Doers T-shirt!

Side note This time of year is also California's fifth season: FIRE SEASON! So, we ask you to please be very conscious if you are a smoker and stick to designated smoking areas and always place your butts in a can.



Midsummer is Odinshof's big fundraising event of the year so if you are unable to attend and would still like to donate, please feel free to do so.

As of right now, we are still working toward many repairs including a new roof that will cost us around 35k! This roof is needed before the next rainy season in order to keep Odinshof up and running. The structure damage due to water could be slowly growing and repairing it is a must! For more information on this please keep an eye out for the soon to be added Odinshof Restoration Project page on the <u>Odinshof.org</u>

website and pick up merch, participate in any active raffles, or just donate!

We can't wait to see you around the campfire!

Don't wait! Get registered today! Some workshops have nominal fees to help cover the cost of supplies. And they will also have limited available spots. Those workshops are listed under registration.

Event and Workshop Tickets **HERE**



Folkbuilder Ashley Stockton <u>astockton@runestone.org</u>

Winter Nights 12 in Ohio



The Asatru Folk Assembly's Annual Winter Nights will be held between the Greater Dayton & Greater Cincinnati area in Clinton County, Ohio from October 27th – 29th!

Since 2012, this long-running AFA festival has been dedicated to our ancestral mothers, the Disir. When the harvest is in, the summer plants have died off, and the winter is quickly approaching the veil between the living and dead is said to be at its thinnest. Again, we will gather to worship our Gods, Goddesses, and Ancestral Mothers. We build upon the success of the Asatru Folk Assembly by making new friends and renewing old friendships.

We look forward to seeing members and friends!

Your registration includes all workshops, lectures, meals, lodging, and of course our holy rituals. Only AFA members and vouched-for guests will be admitted to this event. If you are not an AFA Member you should confirm with the member who is vouching for you that they will do so when asked about your registration.

Register at https://runestone.org/product/winternights/ today!

Things to know:

- Children 17 and under attend for free!
- You will need to bring your own bedding and it can get chilly at night, so plan accordingly.
- Tenting is limited; you must contact Witan Clifford Erickson if you intend to tent.
- The camp address will be provided after registration as the event gets closer.
 Travel plans can be made for Clinton County, Ohio.
- We are pleased to announce lower ticket prices this year, due to a change of venue to features a commercial kitchen and other amenities we had come to expect since the first event in the Poconos of Pennsylvania.

Member Family – Weekend: \$120

Member – Weekend: \$80

Member – Day: \$40

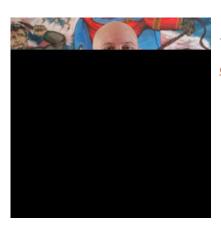
Guest – Weekend: \$100

Guest – Day: \$50

Child – Weekend: Free

Child – Day: Free

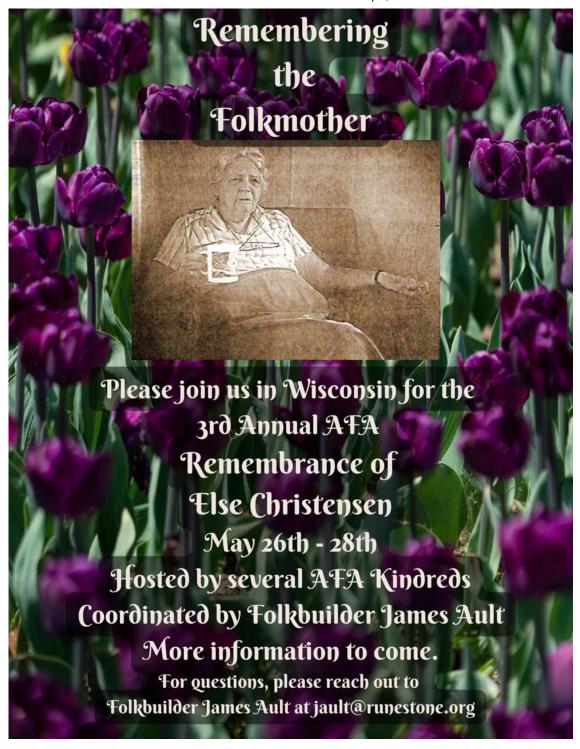
If you have any questions or concerns, please email <u>cerickson@runestone.org</u>.



Witan Clifford Erickson cerickson@runestone.org

Upcoming Regional Events

ElseFest 3 in Wisconsin





Folkbuilder James Ault

jault@runestone.org

Be A Doer



We need you to volunteer for the AFA!

Yes, you. We have work to do and need folk who are artists, editors, writers, accountants, lawyers, publicists, reputation managers, professionals of all manner, technical support, web developers, system admins, tradesmen, craftswomen, and

more. See the list of amazing projects we have below. We will find a way for you to help our Folk.

Please email <u>volunteer@runestone.org</u> to help us make a difference in our world.

Baby Blanket Project

The Women of the AFA are proud to be continuing this fine and noble work we call the Baby Blanket Project! We're committed to ensuring all new babies born within the AFA are gifted a handmade — knit, crocheted, or woven — baby blanket! It's just our little way of celebrating each new addition to our folk!

This project has been going strong for nearly a year now, and has been a rousing success! The Ladies of the AFA have knitted, crocheted, and sewn beautiful baby blankets for over 20 of our littlest folk, with more on the way. They've been delivered everywhere from Alaska to Florida, California to Sweden!



If you are a member of the AFA who is expecting a baby, please let your Folkbuilder

know so we can get a blanket to you. If you would like to contribute, either financially or by volunteering as a baby blanket crafter, let your Folkbuilder know about that as well, so he can get you in touch with the right people. It's so rewarding to see your handicraft being loved by our little heathens!

Would you like a blanket for your newborn, or to donate and help with yarn costs (yarn is expensive!)? Please email babyblanket@runestone.org today!

Folk Services



For some, it may be a natural disaster. For others an unexpected change in health, and for some just an unforeseen chain of events. Whatever the case may be sometimes we find ourselves in a sticky situation, and although we try and to work and do our best to pull ourselves out, sometimes we may need the help of our Folk community to give us a hand up...

That's when our folks Services Program comes in. We give one-time monetary grants to those members in need. These folks are so grateful and we know that once they get back on track they will contribute to this fund. For those that are able, we are in need of funds so we can be prepared for when these situations arise in our community. If you're able please place a donation today. Even a small donation adds up in the grand scheme of things and even \$5 or \$10 can help if enough people pitch in. If even a fraction of the folks who like the page did that each month, imagine the possibilities!

AFA Folk Services is intended to provide modest, one-time monetary grants to AFA members in dire need of basic services. It is also to be a source for referrals and information to help members get help beyond what the AFA can directly provide. For more information, please email folkservices@runestone.org.

Your contributions are earnestly solicited and of course, are tax-deductible! Please donate to Folk Services or one of our other AFA Fundraisers at http://www.runestone.org/donate/.

Thanks in advance!

Photo Donations

We have a real need for hi-res photographs of our members' gathering, being active in their kindreds, and showing what it means to live Asatru!

If you are willing to donate some hi-res photos for use in promotions such as the AFA Calendar, the AFA



website, our publications, and more please email them to the AFA at photos@runestone.org. The larger the resolution the better, so please email them from the device where the photo was taken.

Eir's Blessings



Everybody needs a little extra help sometimes. Women, being the frithy creatures that we are, are uniquely suited to the task of manipulating energy for the purpose of healing. Magic, you could say.

Do you have a health concern and need a little extra energy? Are you battling with a mental illness like depression or PTSD? Is your baby having a hard time with teething? If you've answered yes at all, reach out

to us. Once a month women of the AFA will get together to perform healing rituals all across the globe. If you would like to be included, please send a message to let us know!

At the same time, Women of the AFA! If you are interested in helping to create a frithful, healing magic, let us know! It's easy, but it makes a huge difference to those in our community who need our help!

You can reach us at <u>EirsBlessings@runestone.org</u>

Last Will and Testament

Recently, several members of our AFA family have passed beyond the veil. One was an old man in ill health, two were young men in the prime of life... all died with no legal will on record. Sadly, in two of these cases, our dead AFA members did not have their wishes respected regarding their funerals nor the final resting places of their remains.



We never know when tragedy will strike. We have a responsibility to our loved ones, we have a responsibility to our own legacies, to plan for our passing, and to make our wishes known. Planning for and contemplating our death is uncomfortable. Hopefully, we all have plenty of time for that down the road, but we can't count on that. Maybe we worry about expenses or hiring a lawyer. We all have excuses to put things off until later, unfortunately, sometimes the clock runs out before "later" happens.

We have found an amazing resource for our U.S. members to make legally binding wills in minutes online for **free**. This site also has resources to make Advanced Medical Directives and Powers of Attorney. It takes only **minutes** at https://www.doyourownwill.com/.

Please make your will today.

The AFA would like to collect signed original copies of wills for all our members and store them. We want to ensure that when members of our AFA family die, their wishes are honored. Please send these to:

Allen Turnage PO Box 16027 Tallahassee FL, 32317

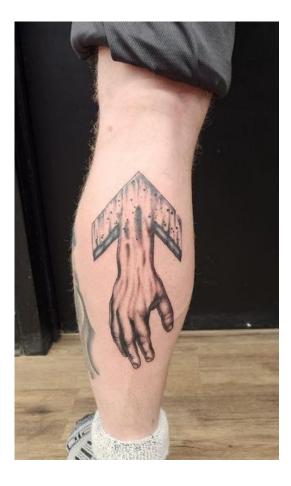


Witan Allen Turnage
aturnage@runestone.org

The Artisans of the AFA Support Our Folk

211 Tattoo Parlor and Art Gallery - Green Bay, WI





211 Custom Tattoo Parlor and Art Gallery has stood proudly Folk-owned for 16yrs in downtown Green Bay, Wisconsin. It has gone through life with its artists and stood unmoved in its traditional roots as well as maintaining its top-notch reputation for stellar craftsmanship and partnerships to provide extra education to help health officials keep fresh and our craft at its best in the area. We have hosted many artists.











For fourteen years, until his passing, it was run by a wonderful artist named Corey Lee McAlister. It was an honor to be his friend, as well as maintain a booth in his studio. He was an incredibly talented man in many realms, and always a loving family a devoted to his Folk and Family. I learned a good deal from him about many things. Hail Corey Lee McAlister!











Now these days, I have carried the flame forward for some time now, requested by the wonderful young lady my friend left in his legacy with the hope that I keep it what it always was because we never have ever had customers or clients here!!! Only friends! If you're ever in town, come look us up @ 211 S. Broadway, Downtown Green Bay, Wild Wild Wisco, USA!



Folkbuilder Josh Rapin jrapin@runestone.org

Cooking for Our Folk



Cooking from the Heart. One of the first chefs I worked for told me that there are two main rules to cooking.

- 1. ALWAYS cook from the heart!
- 2. You must know the why of the rule before you can think about breaking it.

To this day, I still believe that number one is the most important; but two is the most valuable lesson. So, for example: why would you add flour to the mix when are you making Fried Potato balls? It doesn't add anything to the dish overall and in fact, it takes away flavor and disrupts texture. The reason is that what flour takes away: is moisture. It adds to the binder and liquid consumption.

So, what does this mean for the folk? Plan and simply don't take shortcuts. Whenever I pick up the knife and began cooking for the folk, I think of it as channeling the ancestors. Cooking reminds me of that age-old musing "I don't measure seasoning; I wait for the tap on the shoulder from the ancestors to tell me that's enough."

When you cook from the heart, people can tell. Don't cook out of spite or obligation. Cook for the folk because you want to! Find new recipes. Test them. Make them better. And when your heart tells you it is right...time to serve. If you have never made

cookies from scratch...make them. Why not? Use the best ingredients you can afford (don't take out a second mortgage for this) but be proud to feed the folk.

When the recipe is right and you feed the folk, please send the recipe to cookbook@runestone.org with details of when and where it was served (Hof/moot).



Folkbuilder Mike Joyner <u>mjoyner@runestone.org</u>

Ancestral Food and Culture

Ostara Stew



A unique stew.

I love cooking for the Hofs. Every so often I get to cook something really special. Oddly enough this year my cooking was served at three of the fours Hofs for Ostara. I know kinda cool right. Homemade bratwurst that I had made and brought with me when I visited Baldrshof for Yule was served on Saturdays lunch at Baldrshof. To help The Chef of Thorshof I fixed a Cajun Grits Scramble for Thorshof breakfast on Saturday. For Njordshof I got to make a very special stew.

While visiting Thorshof I helped with the pulled pork dinner. So naturally as any southern cook would ask,

"hey what are y'all doing with the pork bones?"

"Oh just going to throw them away?"

"Can I have them?!?"

"ok....."

So they made there way back to Florida and were cooked down into thick bone stock. That stock became the base for Njordshof's Ostara Rabbit Stew.

5 Rabbits, cleaned/boiled/picked

2lbs Chicken breast, cut into chunks to bulk up stew if needed

2lbs Carrots sliced

5 sm Turnups, peeled/quartered/sliced

5 lg white onions, sliced

1 head of celery, sliced

6qts stock (ham or chicken will work)

2 sticks butter

fresh thyme, removed from stem

Fresh rosemary, destemmed and chopped

Add butter and onions to very large pot. Cook on medium for 10 minutes. Add the rest of the vegetables and cook for 10 minutes stirring often. add the stock, thyme and rosemary (pending volume might need to also add water). Cook for 1hr+ at mid-high. 45 minutes before serving add meat. S&P to taste. Don't forget to enjoy.



Folkbuilder Mike Joyner mjoyner@runestone.org

Shepherd's Pie



5lbs russet or Yukon gold potatoes

2 sticks salted butter

1 cup milk

1 pound ground lamb, or beef lamb preferred

1 yellow onion

3 cloves garlic

1 cup carrot, diced

1 cup of peas

1 cup green beans, chopped

1/2 cup red wine, Cabernet or Shiraz

1/2 cup beef stock

Seasonings: rosemary, thyme, salt, & pepper. Bay leaf if desired



Bring potatoes to boil and mash with butter and milk until smooth, then preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a cast iron skillet, fry ground meat and season until cooked and remove from pan when done. Then, add onion, finely chopped and fry in fat until tender and then deglaze with red wine.

Add back meat, and vegetables until they are soft and tender, and most of the moisture has cooked off. Add stock and crushed and chopped garlic.

Then, either pipette the mashed potato or smooth with a spoon on top of the mixture to make a topping for the fillings. Feel free to decorate as you wish.

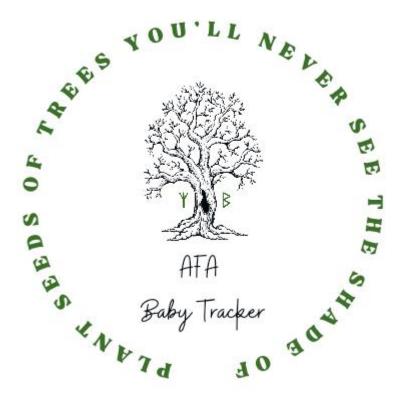
Bake covered at 350 for 45 minutes, then uncovered for an additional 15 minutes.

Remove from oven, let cool, enjoy!



Christian Penner
Apprentice Folkbuilder
cspencer@runestone.org

Baby Tracker



To show the growth of our folk we present to you an ongoing baby tracker. We will be keeping track of how many children have been and are born within the AFA from 2022 and forward. The ongoing tracking is proof that we are building something sustainable for the future of our folk, which is a place for these children to grow up within and a place where they can feel proud of who they are!

Total babies born in 2023: 8



Jessica Keller Apprentice Folkbuilder jkeller@runestone.org

Ladies Mysteries Podcast

LADIES MYSTERIES PODCAST

April 30th at 1:30 pm CST





Witan Brandy Callahan: Cartomancy
Gythia Catie Erickson: Tasseography and Pendulum
Gythia Anna Plourde: Armanen Runes



Contact Christine Dumas for more information cdumas@runestone.org





Folkbuilder Christine Dumas cdumas@runestone.org

Sisters Sunday Chat



For the last several months, I've been running a bimonthly Sunday chat for the women of the AFA. It's been incredible! We have had turn out from every Hof district including

women far afield as Sweden and South Africa. We've had chats about our current crafting projects, books, motherhood, family, Asatru, our day to day lives and more.

The ability of the internet to bring our women together in Frith and friendship is an amazing thing. I would like to invite all our AFA womenfolk to join us on our Frithweaving sisterly chats. 10 am central time, dates posted monthly!



Alison Clausen
Apprentice Folkbuilder
aclausen@runestone.org

Saga's Literature Project



Saga needs your stories!

Do you have thoughts throughout your day or your studies that you ponder about our Gods, Goddesses, Heroes, or our Faith?

Do you and your family or Kindred have ways you like to venerate the Gods that are special to your own traditions?

How do you celebrate our Holidays or Days of Remembrance?

Do you have advice for those who have finally come home and wish you could have it handy to give to them?

Are you enrolled in Asatru Academy or partake in Lore Study or the Virtue Recovery Group?

The Asatru Folk Assembly wishes to create booklets, brochures, and pamphlets to have on hand in our Hofs and with membership Assembly-wide to give out to anyone with curiosity, whether they are a member or not.

This will be key in our studies as experienced practitioners and should serve as a more efficient way than directing those with questions to our websites alone.

Saga needs your help! Submit any ideas or write-ups you have on the topics listed above to me, Apprentice Folkbuilder Shane Duffy at sduffy@runestone.org!

Note: All submissions are subject to review from myself and up the chain of command to the Alsherjargothi himself.



Folkbuilder Shane Duffy sduffy@runestone.org

Prison Ministry



Greetings kinsfolk,

The importance of this AFA Prison Ministry is so much more than just for those who are actually incarcerated, it benefits not only them as followers of Asatru but their families and loved ones on the outside as they will see the noticeable change in their demeanor and demand that our faith commands for them to lead a noble life. We all are future ancestors and will help them be examples of our faith and not be a burden or a product of recidivism.

We are compiling letters from prisoners that are Educational, Empowering, and Encouraging along with special spiritual writings from our Gothar to create a quarterly newsletter to be distributed to inmates, institutions, and jails. Our mission is not about providing free books or literature to bored prisoners who simply want free stuff. We

intend on making real-world change for the better of our folk.

If you have a loved one who is incarcerated or know of someone who is Folkish and will benefit from this ministry, please contact me at <u>jault@runestone.org</u>. Or if you'd like to donate to this ministry, you can donate to the AFA general fund on the Runestone website with an earmark "AFA Prison Ministry" in the comments section.



Folkbuilder James Ault jault@runestone.org

Lore Trivia



Get 10 Bonus Points for Lore Study Review Night (last Tuesday of each month at 730PM CST—link in Spiritual Excellence) when you hit 95% or higher!

Play Here!

Rules:

- 1. No google, brave or other browser searches. The answers are in the book we are using or can be found in the posted videos from each week we meet up in the AFA Spiritual Excellence page. (This is the Honor System. We trust you to keep it fair.)
- 2. If you get 95% or higher, you get 10 Bonus points towards our next Lore Study Review Trivia Night!

Don't worry, if you don't get it the 1st time, use the book or the videos that are shared in Spiritual Excellence from our Tuesday night get-togethers and try again! We want you to know these things. That's the point of Lore Study. We just want you to have fun and a little friendly competition whilst doing it!



Once you finish your trivia questions, I will get a notification so we can track those that took them and award the bonus points for the next trivia night!

May the odds be ever in your favor!





Folkbuilder Melisa Mills mmills@runestone.org

AFA Eldri ~ New Group for Seniors



From the Icelandic for "elders," I created this group as a gathering place for our older AFA folk to share their thoughts, their memories, and dreams. Yes! We still have dreams. Every age group needs "a place of their own." This is ours.

This is primarily a MeWe group, but meeting in person is ideal. At Odinshof, we'll make time at our larger events to sit aside as AFA Eldri and enjoy each other's company.

Currently, we have a Teams meeting every Friday at 1:00 PST. A recent topic was Wills and end-of-life planning – as we've ALL been advised to do. Lawspeaker Allen Turnage and Folkbuilder Otto Rafuse, both attorneys, have offered to share their knowledge on this subject at a special AFA Eldri meeting, date to be determined.

We've barely begun to explore our common interests: hobbies, travels, genealogy, spiritual practices, childhood memories ... I expect we'll learn much about each other in the months and years ahead.

Over age 50 and interested? You can email either Sara Ault or me, or find us on MeWe. sault@runestone.org; sheila@runestone.org

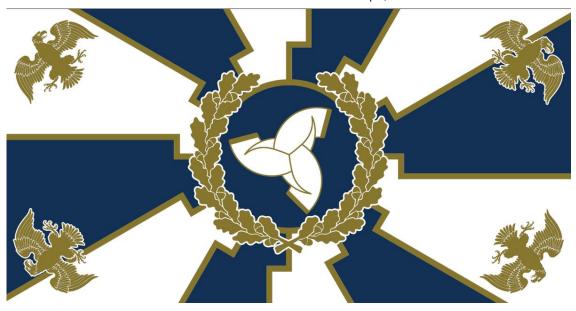


Gythia Sheila McNallen sheila@runestone.org

Now Available in the AFA Store



AFA Lapel Pins are back in stock! Get your set **HERE**!



And Sigrheim Flags are now available! Buy yours **HERE**!



Folkbuilder Melisa Mills mmills@runestone.org

Þórshof

Food Pantry at Þórshof



This month at the hof, we had our first food pantry with goods from our new donor. Fresh produce, bakery goods and finally, proteins. We had more chicken than we knew what to do with. We also had beef and pork to hand out. As with many endeavors we had to try to supplement the food drive in the past 2 years with small donations from local sources, thanks to Heather Young and Katherine Herul.



This month that all changed for the better, thanks to Heather and apprentice Folkbuilder Matthew Bain. On the Friday before the food pantry, Matt and his wife, along with local membership had to make 3 trips to the hof to deliver the food. Heather and I had to rush to the Hof and buy a deep freezer to handle all the overflow.



Saturday we met up at 10:00 am and began loading the food into bags, meat in the coolers, and set up. We didn't know what to expect, 3 cars? 7? Thankfully we had enough people to handle what was to come. By 1:00pm, we had fed 40 families in Linden and the surrounding areas. We really appreciate the help from local membership, including our friends Jennifer, Craig and Jaeger. Craig and Jen came in with little notice to help us out.

We look forward to the next food drive on April 29th at Hexennacht!



Gothi Daniel Young dyoung@runestone.org

Ostara at Þórshof



Before we give a summary of events, allow me to say THANK YOU to all who traveled great distances to see us. We welcomed the Goddess of Dawn and Renewal with a total attendance of 90 AFA members! Last year's record was within reach, but we fell short, just by 3. Thank you to all the Folkbuilders across Þórshof District for the great success we achieved together, your tireless efforts are appreciated.

Friday began with Welcoming the Gods, which was presided over by Folkbuilder and Gothar Student, Adam Hudak. We had a pretty full house at about 50 people for the opening ritual. A huge thank you to Brother Hudak for leading us in Greeting the Divine! Hail the Aesir!

For supper Friday night, Folkbuilder Heather Young made a mean bacon ranch cheeseburger meatloaf with all the sides, which was eagerly devoured. After supper, we processed into the Temple for Pórr Blot, lead by our Alsherjargothi, Matt Flavel. Our High Priest invoked the Thunderer and nearly rocked the building to it's foundation. The power of Donar was palpable. My heart rate registered on my smart watch at 150 bpm, just to give you perspective. We finished the night with some fellowshipping in Rumph Hall. A few adult beverages, and we were having a great time.

Saturday began with a sunrise service, greeting the Goddess of the Dawn, the heralder of light, and rebirth. We had a dozen folks show up at 6:00 am to welcome her! Njordshof Folkbuilder Mike Joyner was cooking up a Cajun grits breakfast while we watched the guys and ladies process into the Temple. After breakfast, Gythia Catie Erickson lead her Ladies Group in the Ve while we had Men's Group in the Hall, lead by Robert Shotwell, our Folkbuilder in Eastern NC. The Ladies Group ran for over 2 hours, while they shared with each other (I don't know what they do in there!)

After lunch, it was time. Time to give of ourselves to her, Ostara. Lawspeaker Allen Turnage lead us in while we galdred Berkano, and it was different. We were almost singing the Rune Galdr. This was my first time seeing our Lawspeaker lead us in Blot. While Gothi Turnage was blessing the folk, he became so emotional, that there were few dry eyes in the Ve. I was moved to tears, which has never happened to me. After that powerful ritual to Ostara, we then began Oathing the newest Folkbuilders. We oathed Tracy Adler and Otto Rafuse of Njordshof District and Robert Shotwell, Russell Brown, Jess Keller and Mike Melillo of Þórshof District. Welcome to the team, guys, the work has just begun. And thank you for you have done and continue to do for our AFA family!

Supper was served again by Folkbuilder Heather Young, a traditional pulled pork Carolina barbeque with sides.

It was auction time, lead by Witan Clifford Erickson. We generated over \$5000 toward Pórshof with auction items such as a hand-painted portrait of Ostara painted by the 15(!) year old daughter of one of our members, a hand-carved horn by Folkbuilder Stian Penner from Baldrshof District, and much much more. Thank you to all who donated items, those who bid on them, and those who ran the auction! Your generosity is what makes this Church function, and it helps us toward our goals.

We gathered in the Ve for High Sumbel, lead by Alsherjargothi Flavel. We had up to 80 gathered for this sacred rite, my favorite Asatru Ritual. It took nearly 2 hours to complete, sharing stories of ancestors, our devotion towards our Gods, hailing our

Heroes, sharing our experiences. As is our tradition, we had each round lead by a different horn bearer. Thank you to the ladies who performed this sacred duty, Gythia Catie Erickson, Folkbuilder Heather Young, and Madison East.

Sunday. Time to say goodbye. Time to exchange information with new friends. And time to begin the cycle again. After breakfast, Gothi Trent East lead us in Wayfarer's Blot. Gothi East again rocked the building with power and pious devotion. We had so many volunteers stay late to help with the cleanup, we were done in an hour. Goodbyes were finally exchanged.

We at Pórshof owe a huge debt of gratitude to the fine folks from Njordshof District for coming up to support us. We had so many people from Ohio and Pennsylvania as well. A lot of miles were tallied to make this great event happen, and we thank you.

A special thank you to Alsherjargothi Flavel, Lawspeaker Allen Turnage, Witan and Gythia Erickson for putting in the miles to help us put this together. Also to Mike and Katie Joyner for helping Heather put together meals for the Folk.

If you weren't able to come down to Þórshof for Ostara this year, make the effort to come support us in 2024, we'd love to see you.

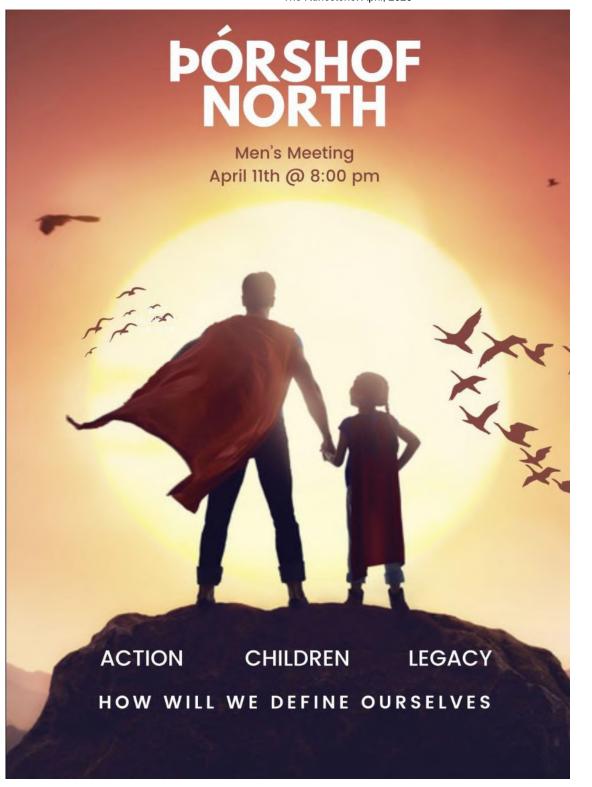
Hail Ostara, Hail Þórr! Hail the Aesir!

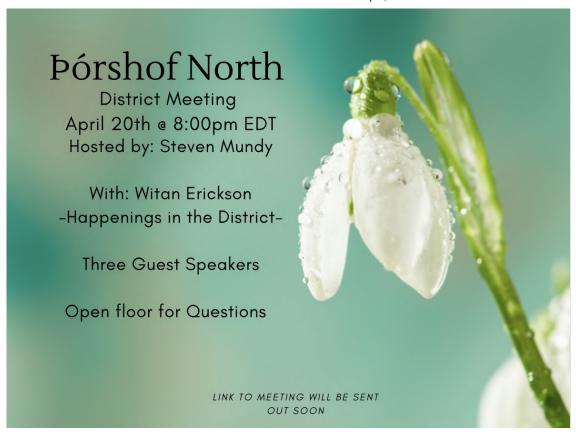


Gothi Daniel Young
dyoung@runestone.org

Upcoming Events at Þórshof







France

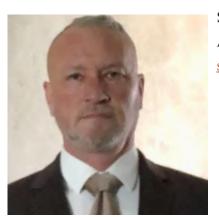
Eddic Schooling in France



Bonjour, Voici un peu de nos nouvelles.

L'ouverture de l'école Eddique à Quimperlé en Bretagne était un jour mémorable pour les enfants et leurs parents. Leur premier cours était sur le Ginnungagap et la création de notre monde, et tous étaient très attentifs et très heureux de cette matinée. Cette journée nous a donné l'envie de poursuivre cette aventure et d'apprendre ensemble tous les dimanches matin. L'école Eddique est un lieu unique et magique où les enfants et les parents peuvent découvrir toutes les merveilles de notre monde et apprendre les leçons de la vie. Alors, que chaque dimanche matin soit une occasion de partager et de se découvrir.

The opening of the Eddic school in Quimperlé in Brittany was a memorable day for the children and their parents. Their first class was on Ginnungagap and the creation of our world, and everyone was very attentive and happy with this morning. This day gave us the desire to continue this adventure and to learn together every Sunday morning. The Eddic school is a unique and magical place where children and parents can discover all the wonders of our world and learn the lessons of life. So let every Sunday morning be an opportunity to share and discover each other.



Stephane Pompignac
Apprentice Folkbuilder
spompignac@runestone.org

Indiana

Ostara In Kentucky Runestone



As we traveled towards our destination we experienced the modern world with all its needless consumerism and decay. Behind all of this busy chaos and disorder was a lone drive way leading to an unknown place we were soon to experience. the entrance to the property was a paved pathway leading through a bamboo forest and when it opened up there was a huge meadow of green grass surrounded by tall trees. The trees seemed to shield us from the world we had just came through. it was a moment of calm and relief. As we approached our folk we were greeted with smiles and familiar faces, hugs and handshakes, there was grilling of meats and conversation of all the great things we have accomplished this year thus far, even though some of us have never met it was like we had been friends for a lifetime.



The children made new friends and played, talked, ran and even did an egg hunt together. We all gathered for our blot to Ostara. Children and adults alike. As we galdred the rune Wunjo we could hear the wind blowing softly and the trees gently swaying with it. The sun was bright and illuminating the purple periwinkles growing throughout the grass around us. There was an overwhelming sense of peace and harmony amongst us.



Its moments like this that we know we are building a future for our families and creating a positive future for our children. We must stand firm and unmovable in our beliefs and forever strive to bring our folk together.





These new friendships like the beginning of spring are the foundation and building blocks of the future of our Folk.

Hail the Gods!
Hail the Ancestors!
Hail the Folk!
Hail the AFA!



Michael Butler Apprentice Folkbuilder mbutler@runestone.org

Folk Springs Eternal



The old that is strong does not wither, deep roots are not reached by the frost." - J.R.R. Tolkien

Indiana is thawing. Not long ago our land was sleeping and dead, Ostara has come and she has brought revitalization to both our earth and Folk. This month in we held a blot to celebrate shining Ostara with all the standard trimmings (in Kentucky no less).

I will not focus much upon it here because Indiana Apprentice Folkbuilder Michael Butler has agreed to document the occasion in his own article. Instead I will touch, very briefly, not on our planned celebration to honor Ostara; but on the unplanned, even subconscious, manifestations of Ostara bursting forth within her month and our lives.

Ostara is ubiquitously associated with fertility and the springing forth of life where previously there was none (winter). Could there be any better month for a baby shower? I attended the shower of a member this month and we didn't mention Ostara once, yet her hand was present in all of our works. We celebrated life in not one, but two mothers, we played capture the flag (albeit a little slowly and creakily) with barefoot children running through the living grass.



The burgeoning spring is not just warmth and Sun, it is violence. It is life bursting forth against the constraints of frozen death, of the strong setting their roots and branching out to bask in the glory of the Sun. I witnessed this manifest in my kinsman who had his first sanctioned fight this month... at the age of 38... with a (partially healed) broken rib... fighting a man 10 years his junior. After his bout, eyes black, sinuses exploding, head ringing, I offered him the surcease of age as an acceptable excuse for his loss by decision. My kinsman turned to me and said "No. I need to train harder. I do not accept age as an excuse. I am not average. I refuse to be average. You may have hung it up," he said; "but I refuse."



Not to belabor the point, but the gentleman picture above is 80 years old and performing hack-squat in slipper in the middle of his living room. If you're wonder what the look on his face is, that's not effort, it's contempt because we asked him to lift it for the picture even after he told us that it wasn't nearly enough weight.



This man, my kinsman and our Folk, are strong and refuse to wither. Our roots are indeed not touched by frost; the warrior spirit of our ancestors springing from the frozen earth as clover from the ground. Folk-soul springs eternal and undiminished in the race of champions.

Hail always to Ostara. Hail always to the Folk.



Folkbuilder Johnathan Rock jrock@runestone.org

Maine

Northern New England



We had a record turnout for our March event! Thank you to all that showed up. We have a new Apprentice Folkbuilder in Rhode Island, Jonathan Osborne. So between the two of us from here on, we should be able to make more than one event happen each month in different states in New England. This should help keep the driving time to and from events down for many of us as well as give everyone even more opportunities to get out of the house and have some fun.

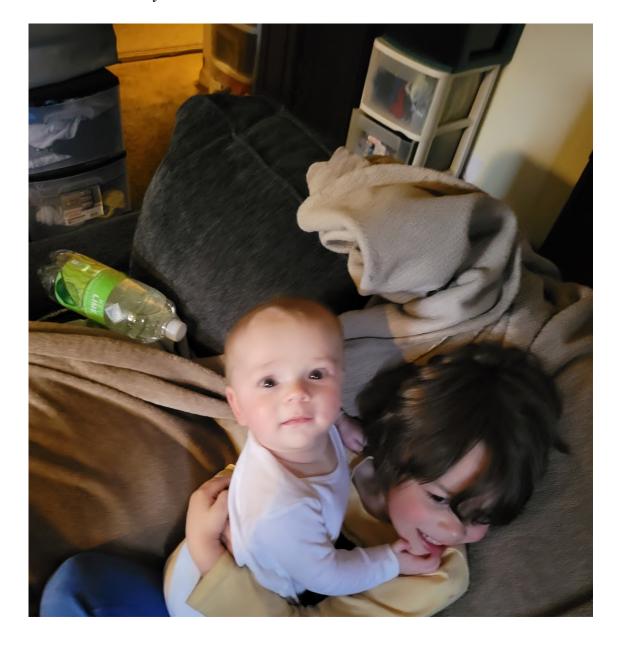
For our next event, we're having a lunch moot at the Texas Roadhouse restaurant in Augusta, ME on April 29th at noon. I've eaten there several times and the food is awesome every time. I hope to see you there!



Daniel Mason
Apprentice Folkbuilder
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Maryland

Tell Your Own Story



The past few months, I have been becoming more and more interested in popular culture. As a father, I do care about what is being put out there for my children to see. What I see, quite frankly, is not that pleasing. If it is not full of disdain (or worse) for our Folk, it is not only encouraging, but celebrating self destructive behaviors while at

the same time attempting to shame and demean those who would live a goodly life.

I have seen the tales that I was brought up, that encouraged and exalted beauty, turned ugly. The manly man is now a craven coward. The comic relief and original plot is instead replaced completely so that a narrative that is hostile to a healthy society can be implemented. That which made me laugh and shed a tear is instead made awful, seemingly out of absolute spite. In the forefront of it all, I see the stories and characters of my Folk replaced with the Other. It does not seem to matter who or what the other is, just that my Folk are removed from the story that was created and told by our ancestors.

This goes beyond movies mind you. I see where a simple children's series is demonized because the author expressed pro-woman sentiments. If you enjoy the books or the videogame that has come from it, you are ultimately the worst kind of person. At least, this is what they would have you believe. All while taking a decent game with a compelling story and making it the most absolute trash possible for the tv series.

This goes beyond these simple fictions. I have seen the tv shows that would suggest that our ancestors were the basest of degenerates, flaunting all Noble and even Knightly virtues. Worse yet, I have seen a rather popular video game where our Gods were depicted most improperly. Odin was not the great and wise warrior king we know him as. He was a spindly craven madman who abused his entire family and sent the world into chaos seeking power and knowledge for HIS own sake, with no care for his people. Thor is depicted as a drunken brute (An abusive father as well. I suspect the director has some personal issues to deal with) and is summarily killed by Odin when he chooses to not be a mindless destroyer. Baldur is killed by the protagonist (after he madly tries to kill his own mother) and Loki and his children are depicted as the good guys (check out his wife and see the obvious slant this is taking).

This is quite frankly beyond simple artistic license. It is the utter inversion of our myths and culture. The entire time pushing an anti warrior ethos. Now, we could all say that we will just ignore this stuff and tell our kids that it is garbage. We could even say that we will only expose them to the things that are good that came before. But let's be honest: We can't rely on Tolkien and Peter Jackson forever. Our children will eventually interact with the products of popular culture. Moreso they shall interact with children who have been fed this for their entire lives and who will legitimately take the depictions of our Gods and Myths as the truth with little to no artistic license, rather than the utter inversion and corruption that it is.

I recently attended Ostara at Thorshof. It was a joyous occasion and much happiness and Frith was built. I saw there some very nice artwork by an extremely talented artist who was quite shocked to see how much her Folk felt her artwork was worth. I know there are talented writers, artists, and developers amongst our people.

We need to have our people make the movies and books and even things like games for the next generation. A culture is expressed in it's art. We need to tell our story, or else it will be told for us and by a hostile sickly horde that seeks nothing but to destroy our Folk and our way of life.



James Bethard
Apprentice Folkbuilder
jbethard@runestone.org

Netherlands

Welcoming a New Apprentice Folkbuilder



Please welcome Jackie Verweij of the Netherlands as one of our newest apprentice Folkbuilders for the Þórshof District! We are excited to see the success Jackie will achieve in the coming months and years.

Hail Jackie Verweij! Hail the AFA! Hail Þór!

Jackie Verweij

4/7/23, 10:29 PM

The Runestone: April, 2023



Apprentice Folkbuilder <u>jverweij@runestone.org</u>

North Carolina

Appalachian Happenings

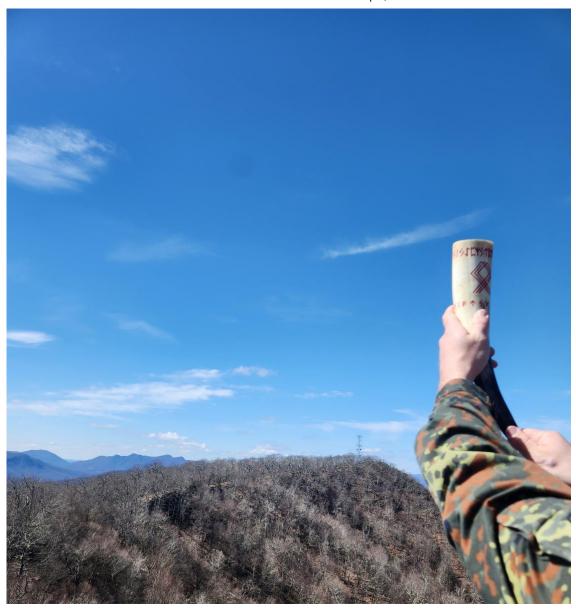


On March 18th, we gathered on Mount Jefferson, North Carolina, to discuss the Noble Virtues and to give Blot to the High One. As the fire crackled behind us on that freezing morning, we discussed why we conduct the ritual Wotan on the peaks. We talked about the spiritual war being fought all around us, and how it manifests itself here on Midgard. We spoke on the importance of giving the holy Gods our devotion, our will, our very selves. Only with such sacrifice can we contribute to the re-awakening of the Odinnic consciousness within our Folk; only in such a way can we make bright the fires of worship and kinship.





As we journeyed up the mountain, our spirits rose higher and higher. We shook off the coldness of the morning, climbing rocks, taking in the views, and chasing children. When we arrived at the chosen Blot site and began to prepare the ritual tools, two unseen ravens were heard communicating with each other with a series of clicks and gurgling croaks. Ravens being extremely rare in the area, we all stood in silence, listening to the ravens as we lit the incense and prepared the horn of wine. We then placed our hands on the horn, each imbuing the libation with our gifts of devotion and intentions of future deeds, after which we shouted to Wotan that we were ready vessels to work his will among his Folk, that we dedicate ourselves to the revival of the proper Folk ways, the continuation of our worship, to always be ambassadors of Wotan among the Folk.



Making our way down the mountain, we contemplated and discussed what it would look like to see a return to proper order in our society, and a rebirth of our culture; a cultural renaissance, if you will. We discussed what parts we could play in making that happen, and the responsibility we all share to ensure that a change comes, for our descendants, for our Gods, and for ourselves.

Hail Wotan!

Upcoming Events



Tyler Bethea
Apprentice Folkbuilder
tbethea@runestone.org



Food Pantry





This month started our donations with Thorshof local Walmart. Our first week was three pallets worth of food. We got so much in fact we had to go get a deep freezer to help accommodate.





I'd like to give a special thanks to both of the Young's for helping get everything started, to Jäger Croft and to my wife Nadine for sacrificing their Fridays to help get and store the foods.

Hail the Folk! Hail the Gods! Hail the AFA!



Matt Bain
Apprentice Folkbuilder
mbain@runestone.org

Ohio

Perseverance



I have learned that everything in my life I love and hold dearly has not come easily and not presented itself until I have incurred some form of trial. This lesson has revealed to me that Perseverance is paramount in development of a full existence. Years of hard work has forged a man of experience and skill with his hands on this day, years of chasing and cultivation has produced the wonderful woman I love intensely today, and years of being burned and mistreated has produced a compassionate yet firm demeanor that drives me forward in the present. The point I'm trying to make here is simple. If you want anything worth a damn don't expect to get it without some form of

discomfort. Our ancestors dealt with more awful and uncomfortable situations than we today can possibly fathom. It's because of their grit that we exist. So if you want the glorious things they have left for us we must earn it. Re-forge the sword handed to us by our fathers. Allow nothing petty to allow you to deviate from your course. We are capable of great things yet the world of today finds us softened in many ways. We must sweat, bleed, and say what we mean again. I know all of you reading this know of the greatness and nobility we posses in our souls. I hope that our gathering together can bring us to a place of glory again. I believe we're taking the first and most important steps with what we are doing here together. Let us make them firm and stand fast in a new era of noble action. Let not ego or nonsense bring us to lower forms of living. We have important work to do and new heights to reach. Let's make ourselves people our grandchildren will be proud of, and hand them a sword untarnished. Life isn't always easy but you are more than equipped to make it worth living if you never give up.

Hail to all of you!

I wish you a path of glory in any one you so choose!



Folkbuilder Joe Drotos idrotos@runestone.org

Ostara in Central Ohio



In late March, Under Ash + Oak Kindred hosted Ostara. The morning was filled with thunderstorms, rain, and hail. As the afternoon approached, the clouds dispersed, and the sun's rays spread across the sky. The wind was wild and turbulent, but as time passed it settled softly.



We enjoyed joyful conversations as the children colored wooden eggs. Some of the adults also joined in, while the remaining food was cooked.



While the women cleansed the property inviting Ostara in, the men worked on starting a fire.



Due to the high winds, we all agreed it would be best to create a hole to bury our offerings.



Blot was officiated by my Kindred sister, Mary Jane. She incorporated the women by giving them different roles in Blot. Using the combined feminine energy, we stood together calling upon Ostara, Nerthus, Frigga and Freyja. Each Folk was asked to draw a runic egg from a sack and transmit the rune through galdr.



Each woman wrote an invocation to one of the goddesses and created an offering for their goddess. We each placed our offering in the hole that was dug into the ground.



After each member was blessed with mead, they were give a piece of rabbit meat to consume or offer to the Gods, then followed by the opportunity to hail a God of their choice.



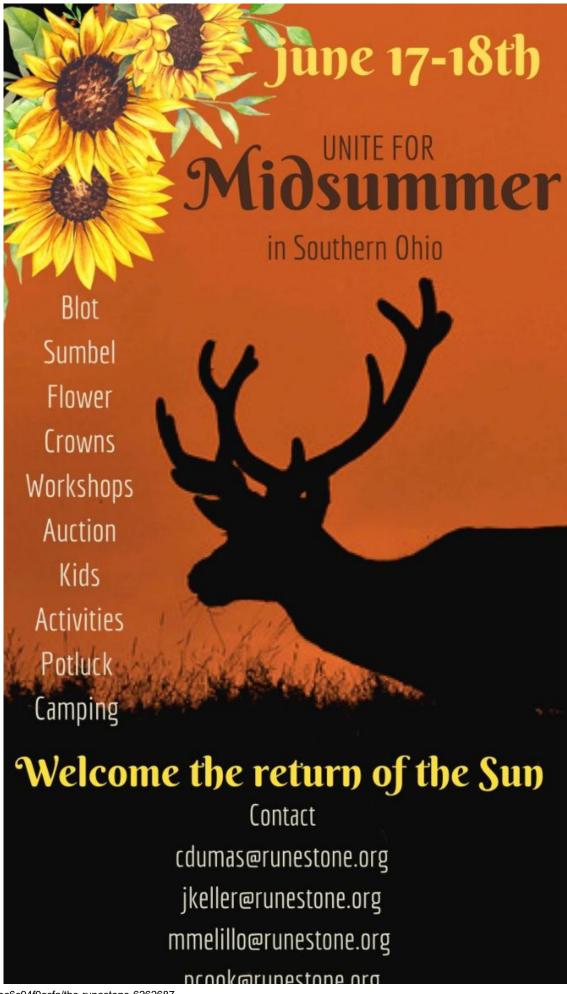
Mary Jane closed Blot with a powerful speech on Aryan might. After blot we feasted, enjoying rabbit jumbalya, beef stew, ham, chili, fresh bread, carrot cake, date balls and fresh vegetables. We ended the night with an emotional Sumbel. We are thankful for all who attend and hope more members attend our next event.

Upcoming Events





Cdumas@runestone.org



pcookerancsconc.org



Folkbuilder Christine Dumas cdumas@runestone.org

Pennsylvnia

Greetings!



I joined the AFA in June of 2021, and I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. I would soon find out however as I had experienced a great loss shortly there after. My grandfather passed away at the age of 70, and I didn't know what to do. However when I explained my loss to the folk I was met with an overwhelming sense of love and community. That was when I knew that I was exactly where I was meant to be. Now I plan to try and

help those who are already apart of the folk and those who have yet to come home.

Hail the Gods! Hail the Folk! Hail the AFA!



David Bryson
Apprentice Folkbuilder
dbryson@runestone.org

Hello Þórshof District



First and foremost, I would like to introduce myself. Steven Mundy is the name; the family and I have just moved into our new home which just happens to be located at the Capital of the State of Paranormal and crazy Twilight Zone happenings. AKA Harrisburg Pennsylvania! So far, the area is amazing, it has a different rhythm for sure. Exciting and full of opportunity would be the best way to describe my outlook on this new Adventure.

My beginnings were like most who have found their way home, I was a Mormon boy following the steps my parents laid out for me. For many years it felt right, and I believed the teachings and order of the religion, it wasn't until my early 20's when I finally started reading more enlightening texts that I began questioning my "faith". I decided to leave the church and become rogue and lived this way for a few years.

One night scrolling through Myspace, ha YES that was the site back in the day! I ran into an article about the Æsir and similarities between them and the Greek Gods. The Æsir stood out and more research began, there was a point when I decided this is it, this is what I want to practice. I called my father one night; we randomly poke fun every once and a while to keep each other amused. It was during this call when I mentioned my findings and my interest... To my surprise my father has always followed the ways and believe it or not had been a member of the AFA and I didn't even know. He sent me my first Hammer.

I didn't join the AFA at first.

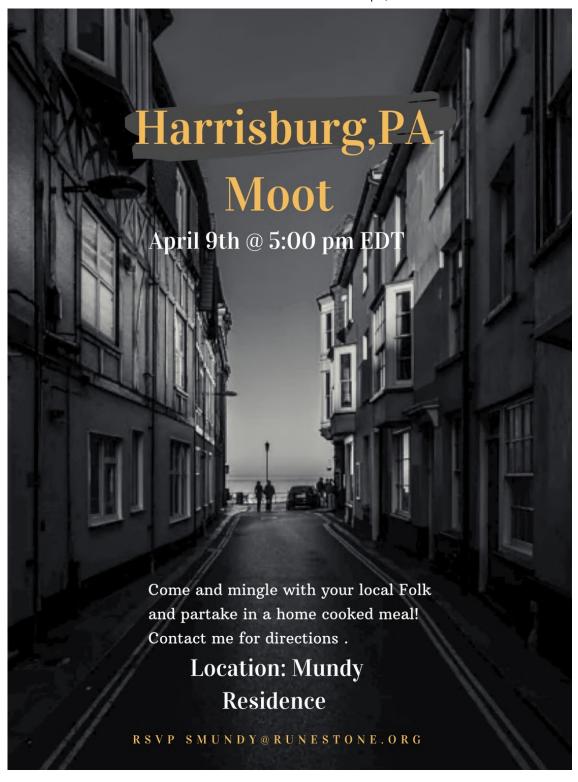
Since that point I had been on many journeys, creating groups and learning more about this way of life. The amount of "Rituals and Blots' ' that I have witnessed around the nation are more than I can remember, I randomly dipped my toes in several different renditions of Asatru, Odinism, etc.. Taking and practicing what I liked and throwing what I didn't to the wayside.

It took seven years before I finally joined my father's side in the AFA.

My first visit to Óðinshof was one I will never forget, the people, the power, the influence. Through all my seven years of jumping around from group to group, never had I felt as right and at home as I did amongst the grounds of the first Hof. The Blot I attended was the most powerful I have ever felt, Goosebumps is putting it lightly.

After joining I began Folkbuilding for Öðinshof District and have been doing so ever since. But now my fellow Thor's Mates and Ladies, I'm here to continue this work with you. There is no place I would rather be. I look forward to meeting each one of you!

Upcoming Events



Steven Mundy
Apprentice Folkbuilder
smundy@runestone.org

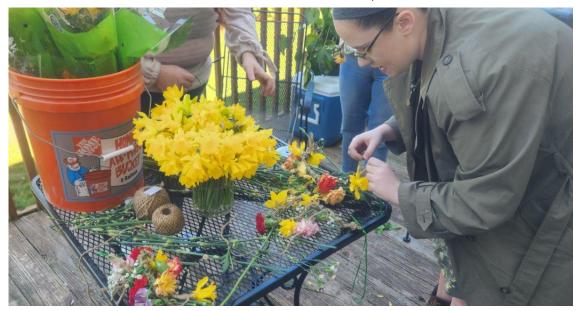


Pennsylvania Ostara



We gathered together on a Sunday afternoon to celebrate and welcome Ostara as we built deeper bonds among our Folk.

In the beginning of our day, we had an open discussion about Ostara, who she is, and why we honor her during this time of year. The Folk had an opportunity to share any stories or experiences with the group that they may have had in relation to Ostara or memories of spring that they wanted to share. We ended the discussion on a note about the light that she brings, and how this is a new time for new beginnings together, that what once was is no longer and that we must focus on the path of the light.



A glass basket that belonged to my grandmother was passed around which had papers in it. We discussed how important it is to have intention with seriousness behind the sacrifices or weaknesses that we are willing to give up having a new start or a new beginning. That when we do these things, don't just do it to do it, but be serious with the intent that was placed into the offering in this manner because it affects us all. Anyone who wanted to participate in this was welcomed to take a paper and write down one weakness that they wanted to burn out of their life personally to focus on. They were asked to hold onto these papers until blot.

After the open discussion, the men and women broke off into groups. The men had men discussions and the women Folk bonded while making flower crowns.

Once everyone finished up their crowns, we readied for Blot and made our way to the entrance of the space. There were a few elements of blot that I would like to mention. The women Folk went off to the distance to bless the mead and retrieved their flower crowns. The significance of the crowns being worn from this point on, was to represent the womb, in that the feminine Divine bring the new life into this world, and so that as we reentered the ritual space, the women came back "a-new light" wearing the crowns made of flowers. We waited until the men Folk beckoned us in song to rejoin the circle.

They sang:

"A dawn star has risen, a new day has come, say goodbye to the night, awaken in the light. A dawn star has risen a new day has come. Prey for strength in our fight, bind your hearts to the light", and repeated until the women returned to their spots.

Towards the end of blot, one of our women folks walked around with a basket of hallowed out eggs with messages inside. A rune was painted on each one the outside. The group was asked to not look at their egg but to cup it, enclosing it in both hands. A living rabbit was incorporated by being placed in the middle of us all, as we chanted "Ostara awaken, erwache Ostara" until the rabbit chooses someone from the group. It was really beautiful, she actually went to one person, and laid down on his feet. The rune was revealed for the group, and we then closed up. The interesting part was the individual that the rabbit chooses, he actually had brought us all tulip bulbs as a gift and gave them out before we all left.



We ended our evening with a feast and sumbel!



One last thing that was imbued to our Folk was to get outside, go enjoy the gifts of this season, be with nature and learn from it. How does what is happening within nature reflect what is happening within your own life? How can you emulate more of that within yourself? For me, witnessing the blooms of the trees, seeing how that happens naturally, and spontaneously is similar in seeing the organic spiritual growth and healing among our Folk.



Folkbuilder Jessica Keller jkeller@runestone.org

Separate but United Forever



For myself, this past trip to Ostara in the South was the end of an era in a way. Yet as we know life is a state of eternal change. Things end and begin all the time. Nothing is the same from one moment to the next.

Nonetheless, I have only known Thorshof as my district but that will change one day. Though I've been so lucky to experience some very special things there. From the dedication, to baby naming's, and being a part of very powerful rituals. And of course, some of the best people I have met have been there. Thorshof is another home though far away the distance seems small.

I want to personally thank the Folk down in Thorshof District South for once again making Ostara great for so many and leading the way for us up here. You have been the fighters in the ring so to speak. Your challenges and triumphs will guide us as another Hof district will soon emerge.

Separate but united forever.



Folkbuilder Adam Hudak ahudak@runestone.org

Toddler Moot



In March we had our second Pittsburg Area Toddler Moot at the Pittsburg Zoo!





We had a wonderful time exploring and looking at the all the different animals. The elephants and the Flamingos were a real hit, but the aquarium was a favorite of all!

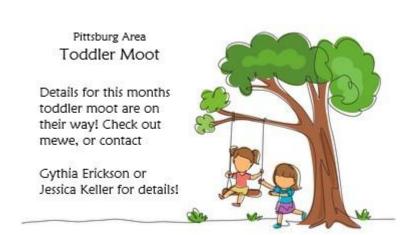




We are looking forward to this months Toddler moot, and many more to come!

Hail the AFA!
Hail the Children!

Upcoming Events



Niagra Falls Moot

Join us in a Canadian side Niagra Falls Moot on April 29, 2023!

We will meet at 12pm to view the views, eat the foods, and build Frith, with a small Blot somewhere along the way!

Contact Witan Clifford Erickson cerickson@runestone.org or Gythia Catie Erickson cm.erickson@runestone.org 717-894-9682 for more information! We hope to see you there!

Join Cythia Catie for a traditional Garden

Tea Party!

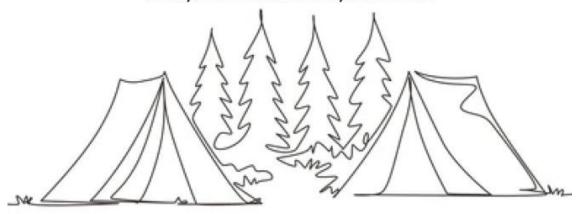
Traditional Fare, Tea Leaf Readings, and Fancy Hats!
Saturday, May 13th, at 1pm
Rain or shine.
We hope to see you there!

Contact Cythia Catie for more information cm.erickson@runestone.org 27.793.9652
Located in Erie, PA

Join the Keystone Tru Folk and the Sagert family on a

Midsummer Camping Moot!

Friday, June 23rd-Sunday, June 25th



Join us in upstate NY for camping, a midsummer Blot, and good times. More information to follow.







Gythia Catie Erickson
cm.erickson@runestone.org

Rhode Island

Welcoming a New Apprentice Folkbuilder



Please welcome Jonathan Osbourne of Rhode Island as one of our newest apprentice Folkbuilders for the Þórshof District! We are excited to see the success Jonathan will achieve in the coming months and years.

Hail Jonathan Osbourne! Hail the AFA! Hail Þór!



Jonathan Osborne Apprentice Folkbuilder josborne@runestone.org

Sweden

Song of Gratitude



I was listening to Elder McNallen's appearance on VNS. The subject of gratitude was touched on, and the way Elder McNallen talked about embracing gratitude made me think of a short song sung in a Swedish children's movie called "Dunderklumpen".



It is sung by an old crone, Elvira the Poor, who lives up in the mountains. She is poor in material wealth, but the song she sings shows that she is rich in gratitude.

Elvira Fattigans sång (The Song of Elvira the Poor)

Swedish

Tack för allt jag minns

Tack för allt som finns

Tack för himlen

Tack för kväll

Tack för vinden

Tack för fjäll

Tack för allt jag ser

Tack för allt som sker

Tack för renar

Tack för sol

Tack för stenar

Tack för jord

Jag har det så bra

Jag har det så bra

Så bra

Så bra

English

Thanks for everything I remember

Thanks for everything that exists

Thanks for the sky

Thanks for evening

Thanks for the wind

Thanks for the mountains

Thanks for everything I see

Thanks for everything that happens

Thanks for reindeer

Thanks for sun

Thanks for rocks

Thanks for earth

I have it so good

I have it so good

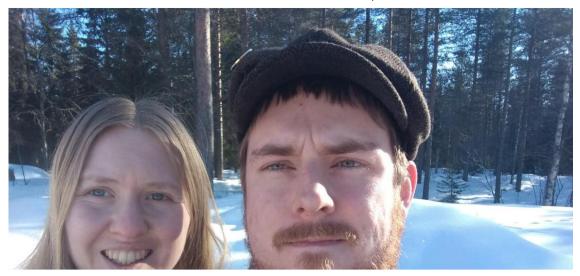
So good So good



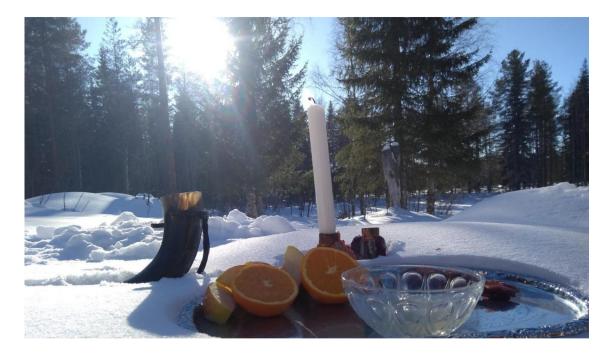
Elvira Fattigans sång (The Song of Elvira the Poor)

There are always things to be grateful for, even when life is at its darkest. Reach out and nourish that gratitude. Let your soul and heart be free from stress in the moment.

Ostara in the North



How we have longed for the warm rays of the sun! The Lugnet family celebrated the return of the light, and gave thanks and blot to the Lady of Spring.



It was a beautiful sunny day, as it is of me writing this. The grip of winter is faltering, and the birds chirp songs of hope and life.

We asked Ostara to fill our hearts with love and gratitude, and to remind us to seize every day of spring and the coming summer.

Hail Ostara! Hail the Folk! Hail the AFA!

New Member of the Lugnet Family



On the 2th of March, our second daughter arrived in our home. It has been a hectic, yet magical time for our family.

Welcome to the world, Viktoria Dagny Lugnet!

Upcoming Events



Hexennacht

Haparanda, Sweden

22th of April

elugnet@runestone.org



Erik Lugnet
Apprentice Folkbuilder
elugnet@runestone.org



Tennessee

Upcoming Events





Folkbuilder Russell Brown rbrown@runestone.org



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