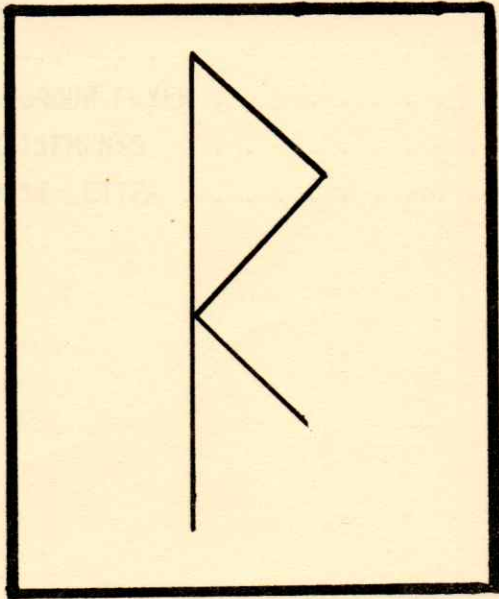


AJA
KINDRED
ORGANIZATION



A J A
Kindred
Organization



CONTENTS

QUESTIONS ABOUT KINDREDS	1-2
ACTIVITIES FOR KINDREDS	3-5
SOURCES AND SUGGESTIONS	6-7
RECRUITING	8-9
SUMBEL SUMMARY	10
NETWORKING	11
SAMPLE STUDY GROUP FLYER	12
SAMPLE ADVERTISEMENTS	13
CHARTER REQUEST LETTER	14

QUESTIONS

WHAT IS A KINDRED?

A kindred is a local group or congregation, if you will, affiliated with the Asatru Free Assembly. People in a kindred meet regularly to practice the religion of Asatru and to celebrate the rites of our faith. At the very least a kindred is a religious body; at its best it is a sort of extended family where everyone helps everyone else in all manner of ways. In this role it is the fundamental operating level at which we of the AFA will implement the Ingathering of the Folk, which is a complete religious, social, and cultural alternative to the existing system.

WHAT DOES A KINDRED DO?

As a minimum, a kindred meets regularly (at least once a month, more if the members wish) to honor the gods and study Asatru. Most groups will want to do more, and the possibilities are very wide-ranging. Elsewhere in this packet you will find a partial listing of the options open to kindreds.

WHO JOINS A KINDRED?

Kindred membership is open to anyone who 1) is a member of the Asatru Free Assembly and 2) is accepted by that kindred. No one has an automatic "right" to join a kindred - such affiliation is a mutual arrangement.

Leaders of kindreds, and kindred members, should remember that quality is more important than quantity. It is better to have a few trustworthy and energetic members than to have fifty who cannot be depended upon, or who are lazy. It is suggested that all potential members undergo a lengthy probation period (perhaps one year) before their final acceptance into the group. The reason for this is that severe character failings often take time to become apparent. The lengthy process of working through the Kindred Training Course will in itself weed out the insincere and the frivolous.

WHO LEADS A KINDRED?

The members of the kindred choose their own leader from among their ranks. This person functions as a godi (if a man) or as a gydja (if a woman). He or she represents that kindred, but is not officially sanc-

The religious lore surrounding this art is immense - and with good reason. Consult the Brewing Guild of the AFA, or a good book from the library.

* Go camping or hiking - Kindreds can grow together, and grow closer to the gods, in the out-of-doors. This can be done as casually and infrequently as you like. If you find it really enjoyable, why not encourage eager folks to try for the Pathfinder Patch? For details, write the Warrior Guild.

* Tell stories - Everyone could decide on a story they'd like to tell and which they think others in the kindred would appreciate. These could be personal anecdotes, or stories they've heard or read. Reading at the meeting would not be fair! Story-telling is an art nearly lost to our Folk. Let's hear your sagas!

* Do some networking - Other kindred members are a valuable resource on which we can draw. We can, and should, do things to help each other. If our needs aren't known, though, and if we don't know who can help meet them, it can be difficult to effectively help our fellows or get help from them. Networking puts it all together. See our attachment on how to make it work.

* Start a food co-op - Often, a number of people can band together and buy food in large volume, thus allowing members to get more food for their money. There are also co-ops for people who want to buy large amounts of health food. This takes a goodly number of people (10 or more) and will take both work and organization, but it can be a way to pay less and eat healthier food. There are both material and spiritual rewards here for kindreds! Write to us if you want to try it.

* Have a book evening - Nothing tells quite so much about a person as what he or she reads. Members can bring their favorite books to a meeting and have a chance to share them with others. The resulting discussions (and arguments) will easily fill the evening and will help kindred members to know each other even better.

* Have a potluck - Sharing food should be a religious act for the kindred. Potlucks are an ordinary, but fun, way to keep our religion in all the parts of our lives. There's not much to it - everybody brings an appropriate dish, perhaps something that reinforces and celebrates our rich Northern European cultural heritage! It's okay to call on the gods to bless the food before eating.

* Do some special activities for the children in the kindred - How about an Ostara-egg hunt for the kids, featuring rune-decorated eggs? Or a Yule-tree decorating party for our young kin? Story-telling is usually a hit with children. They can follow up a telling of the myths with poster making. How about producing a play based on some

Eddic tale? Or, in a different way, opportunities for involving children are many.

* Set aside a music evening - The medieval itage. Medieval melodies, the composers (Richard Wagner is an obvious one) and the many other greats. More than suitable field for recording your records or tapes or better yet, your musical tradition with the medieval (or whatever suits your taste).

* Bake bread - Again, bread in both literal and symbolic sense. Baked under specially made loaves at different times. Your kindred can share in this with different recipes, with different people make bread together. Everyone gets to

* Show video tapes - There's a lot of fine stories that have lessons for us and show them. Don't forget to show them too, - something which illustrates

* Rune study - Kindreds can study the system that has worked is to study the posture (stada), and relation to the material for discussion when it comes to lying the written symbol, and then in knowledge and insight. The Weiser Books (Thorson (Weiser Books)).

* Continued kindred training - The process. Discussion and study within kindred learning and advancing.

* Share Asatru with others - The spread Asatru in ways that suit them. Talking to friends, taking out on... The group could compare notes and recruiting more effective.

This is a beginning. Use your interests of your kindred. Remember the practice and the living of Asatru mind, drive on!

Eddic tale? Or, in a different vein, making non-alcoholic mead? Opportunities for involving children in the religious life of the kindred are many.

* Set aside a music evening - The range of Western music is our heritage. Medieval melodies, the deathless works of the classical composers (Richard Wagner is an obvious choice, but don't forget Beethoven and the many other greats), European folk music - all this is more than suitable field for exploration by an AFA kindred. Bring your records or tapes or better yet your instruments and share our musical tradition with the rest of the kindred over popcorn and wine (or whatever suits your taste).

* Bake bread - Again, bread is fundamental to human life in both the literal and symbolic sense. Farmers in the old Nordic lands would plow under specially made loaves as an offering to the Sky and the Earth. Your kindred can share in this holy aspect of bread by baking some. Use different recipes, with different grains native to our homelands, and make bread together. Everyone participates!

* Show video tapes - There's a lot of trash around, but there are some fine stories that have lessons for us of Asatru. Pick out some suitable ones and show them. Don't forget to get some good ones for the children too, - something which illustrates and promotes our values.

* Rune study - Kindreds can study runes in an organized fashion. One system that has worked is to study one rune per meeting - its meaning, posture (stada), and relation to other runes. There's plenty of material for discussion when it comes to the philosophical concepts underlying the written symbol, and there is a tremendous amount to be gained in knowledge and insight. The recommended text is Futhark by Edred Thorson (Weiser Books).

* Continued kindred training - Growing in Asatru is a never-ending process. Discussion and study meetings can be devised to keep your kindred learning and advancing.

* Share Asatru with others - Individuals in the kindred could try to spread Asatru in ways that suit them (leaving our "business cards", talking to friends, taking out ads locally) and report on their results. The group could compare notes and refine techniques for making personal recruiting more effective.

This is a beginning. Use your imagination and the needs and interests of your kindred. Remember always, though, that the purpose is the practice and the living of Asatru within the kindred. With that in mind, drive on!



SOURCES AND SUGGESTIONS

WHERE DO WE GET.....

Ritual gear - Many fine items useful for ritual can be obtained directly from these dealers:

Peter Seymour
32 Fairfield Road
London N 18
England

Send \$3 for his very comprehensive catalog.

Edelweiss
P.O. Box 3062
Covina, CA 91722

Write for information - they have a wide and very useful selection.

Kirby Wise
P.O. Box 531
Bouse, AZ 85325

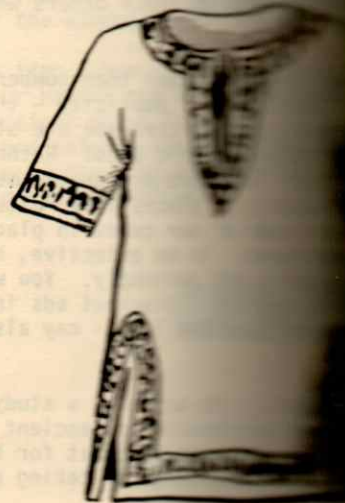
Kirby is well known to SCAers and others who prize fine workmanship.

The Vikings
S.V.L. Box 660
Victorville, CA 92392

These folks make excellent wooden statues of the Gods, ideal for a home or kindred altar.

Mead - Try local liquor stores or ask distributors. Some brand names are Chaucer's, Wassail, Gibson's Mead, and Bandor (imported from Denmark). Some of the smoothest, tastiest homemade mead we've sampled was made by Mike Murray, one of our Arizona members. You can write to him at the Odinist Fellowship, P.O. Box 961, Payson, AZ 85547. He is a good source for recipes, supplies and the like.

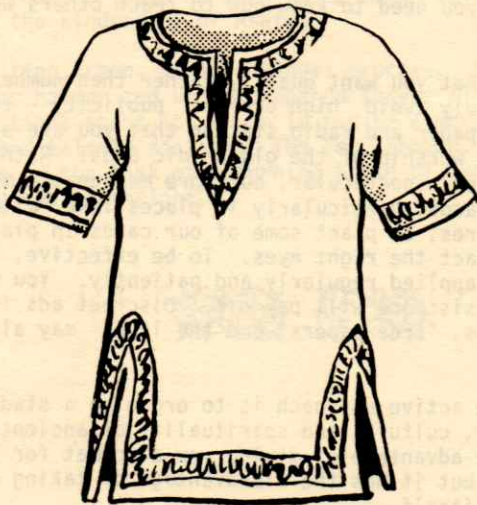
Tunics - Peter Seymour sells tunics which is a drawing of a typical one. They are simple, a cape, and you're all ready to go. The spinning-weaving guild is quite willing to spin tails; they may be willing to provide



Meeting Places - Private meetings are usually held in a personal, "homey" atmosphere. A member of Commerce and ask for a meeting place like. Be sure to check the owner expects of you in the cost.

D SUGGESTIONS

Tunics - Peter Seymour sells them, or you can make one yourself. Here is a drawing of a typical one. Add simple trousers, shoes, and, if desired, a cape, and you're all ready! As this is being written, a sewing-spinning-weaving guild is taking shape within the AFA. Write us for details; they may be willing to produce one for you.



Meeting Places - Private outdoor areas are ideal in sunny or even marginally bad weather. Members' homes are very good because they provide a personal, "homey" atmosphere. As a third choice, visit your local Chamber of Commerce and ask for a list of halls, conference rooms, and the like. Be sure to check their suitability before booking them! Know what the owner expects of you in the way of meals, reservation of the room, and cost.



RECRUITING

Recruiting is one of the essential tasks of the kindred - in fact, without recruiting there may well be no kindred! Just how does one proceed?

Early in the process of kindred formation we will have put you in touch with Runestone subscribers or AFA members in your area, but this is only a beginning - you need to know how to reach others who haven't heard of us yet.

Keeping in mind that you want quality rather than numbers, the best policy is to deliberately avoid "high profile" publicity - things like announcing to the newspaper and radio station that you are starting a group dedicated to the worship of the old Nordic Gods! Rather, go about gaining adherents in less spectacular, but more manageable methods! Leave notices on bulletin boards, particularly in places like "alternative" or "metaphysical" bookstores, or plant some of our cards in places where they're likely to attract the right eyes. To be effective, both these techniques have to be applied regularly and patiently. You won't get instant results, but persistence will pay off. Discreet ads in appropriate local media - bulletins, "free papers" and the like - may also be productive.

One somewhat more active approach is to organize a study group dedicated to the "history, culture, and spirituality of ancient Northern Europe". This has the advantage of giving you a format for both enticing and screening people, but it has the disadvantage of taking quite a lot of time and effort in itself.

All in all, personal recruiting (as opposed to impersonal means like literature left lying about) offers real advantages. It allows you to bring people in when you feel they are ready, and there is a personal rapport established which eases the entire process. Survey your circle of friends and acquaintances to find people who may be suitable for AFA membership. Remember, this may or may not be the same as the people who would be the easiest catches! Your personal example - what sort of person you are, and how you live your life - will be the decisive factor in influencing these folks. This way of bringing people to Asatru is slow, but it produces more solid, lasting relations.

Very public approaches, such as a lecture series before a general, unscreened audience, are not something to be encouraged unless you know your subject and the role of the Asatru Free Assembly very well indeed. It is easy for the beginner to run afoul of hostile or touchy questions

from the crowd, or even to be deluged with inappropriate statements by persons who have no plans for this sort of thing.

At this tender, ever so delicate stage of organization, many people will be discouraged. While anyone can be encouraged to join The Runestone, kindred membership is a different matter. Be selective! Is the person you are bringing into your family? These are questions that must be asked before extending an invitation to join. Persistence is a must. Err on the side of caution. Everyone has faults. Just be sure that the welfare of the kindred or of Asatru is the primary concern.

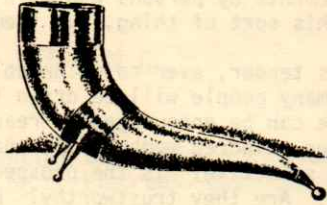
Recruiting, then, is a continuous process. Wearing your hammer and being prepared to answer questions about it - in the face of a situation and talents dictate. Persistence in the task of recruiting is the key to their religious birthright.

from the crowd, or even to be deliberately provoked into making inappropriate statements by persons who wish us less than well. If you have plans for this sort of thing, run them by us first.

At this tender, ever so vulnerable stage in the life of any organization, many people will be drawn to us who are simply not desirable. While anyone can be encouraged to read our literature and subscribe to The Runestone, kindred membership, and AFA membership at large, is another matter. Be selective! Is the prospect a "flake"? Will he or she turn others away? Are they trustworthy? Would you want him or her to marry into your family? These are questions you have to honestly ask yourself before extending an invitation to join the kindred. A probationary period is a must. Err on the side of high standards, yet remember that everyone has faults. Just be sure those human failings won't undermine the welfare of the kindred or of Asatru.

Recruiting, then, is a continual process. It can be as simple as wearing your hammer and being prepared (maybe with one of our cards) to answer questions about it - or it can be a more active endeavor as your situation and talents dictate. The key, though, is steady, unwavering persistence in the task of returning those of our Folk who are ready, to their religious birthright.





A SUMBEL SUMMARY.....

A sumbel (or summel, or symbel, depending on which Germanic language you choose) is a special kind of ritual drinking event dating from ancient times. It's described in "Beowulf," among other places.

The idea behind the sumbel is to take the spiritual power of the past - the deeds of the Folk and its heroes and the accumulated wisdom, strength, and victories of the clan or tribe - and concentrate it in the present so that it can be applied to the challenges of the future.

This is done by the participants in turn taking a drink of mead (which symbolizes the divine inspiration given by Odin) and doing one of the following:

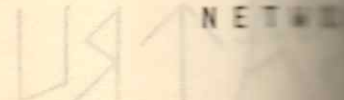
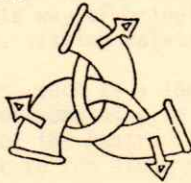
- reciting or reading a poem
- singing a song or playing a musical instrument
- telling a story of heroism or other high virtue
- making a toast
- telling something they have done that they are proud of
- making an oath or resolution

.....all with the essential theme of the accomplishments, abilities, and skills, both great and small, of the group.

It's considered poor technique to get drunk at the sumbel.

The success of this ritual banquet depends on active participation of the people involved. We hope you'll let the inspiration flow freely in you, so we can all benefit from it!

NO ONE WILL BE FORCED TO PARTICIPATE in the sumbel. You are perfectly welcome to sit and enjoy while others do the talking if you wish. But we hope you will choose to bring a poem or song or story or whatever that moves you, personally, and share it with us.

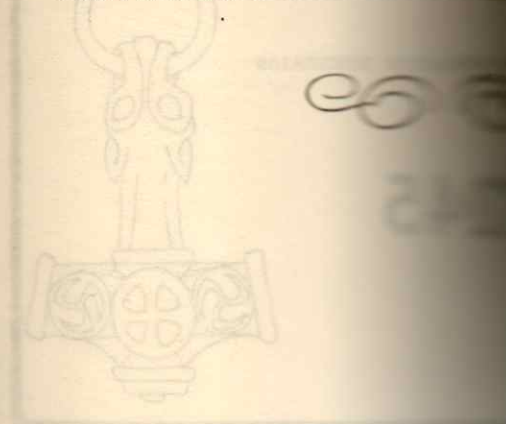


Basically, there are two parts to what needs people have and how to get it. A simple system for getting the information sheet to be presented to kindred members requirement could list it or the help out either directly or by other means ample of what we mean.

PERSON	NEEDS
Maddy	Lighttable
Erik	Bicycle
Steve	To sell his car
Tom	Help painting his house

Of course, at first, not everyone but as the spirit of community is out for the requirements of others tended to them, this kind of effort be profitable. Kindreds will be of kinship grows.

Remember, to counter our efforts to make special efforts to foster kindred units are, the better



NETWORKING

Basically, there are two parts to the networking process: finding out what needs people have and locating other people who can help fill those needs. A simple system for getting the information might be to put together a networking sheet to be presented to kindred members at each meeting. Anyone who has a current requirement could list it on the form and other members can see if they can help out either directly or by offering ideas or suggestions. Here is an example of what we mean.

PERSON	NEEDS	POSSIBLE SUPPLIERS
Maddy	Lighttable	Local printshops second hand, AFA members?
Erik	Bicycle	Christy's old one
Steve	To sell his car	Maybe Hardy
Tom	Help painting his house	Everyone in the group!

Of course, at first, not everyone's needs can be met within a small group, but as the spirit of community is developed and kindred members start to look out for the requirements of others recognizing that the same benefit will be extended to them, this kind of deliberate pattern of mutual assistance can really be profitable. Kindreds will be ahead financially and spiritually as our sense of kinship grows.

Remember, to counter our alienated, isolation-encouraging society, we need to make special efforts to foster habits of helping our own. The stronger our kindred units are, the better able we will all be to live according to our faith.



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