



- [Runestone.org](https://runestone.org)
- [Email the Witan](mailto:email@runestone.org)
- [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)
- [VK](https://vk.com/runestone)
- [Twitter](https://twitter.com/runestone)
- [Parler](https://parler.com/@runestone)
- [Odysee](https://www.odyssey.com/@runestone)
- [Bitchute](https://www.bitchute.com/@runestone)
- [Rumble](https://www.rumble.com/@runestone)

**Donate to the AFA**

Your input is needed to make The Runestone a publication filled with events, photos and news. Please feel free to submit any events, news or photos (plain text with attachments) to [therunestone@runestone.org](mailto:therunestone@runestone.org).

## Words from the Alsherjargothi



Welcome to the 28th year of the Asatru Folk Assembly! I am excited to start this year with all of you, I am excited for all the great things we will accomplish together.

I am proud to say that we had an amazing 2021. We have grown in numbers. We have grown in quality. We have grown in commitment. As you can see in this issue of "The Runestone", we are doing great things far and wide.

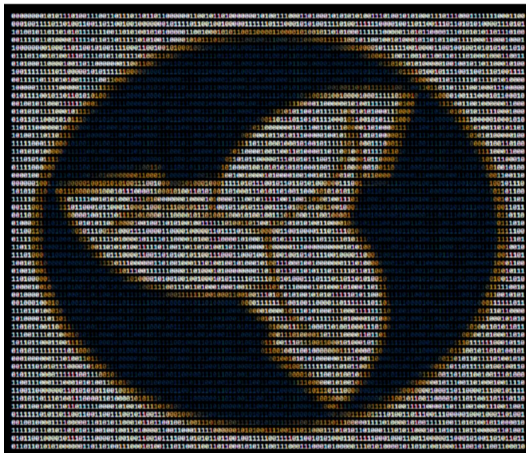
The start of a new year is the perfect time to set our sights on things we wish to

achieve. What things with you overcome in 2022? What victories are you resolved to win? We are devoted to the 10th Noble Virtue, VICTORY. We can achieve, we have achieved, we shall achieve. We are living in a time of greatness, a historical time, a time when our Folk are coming home, a time when our Gods are being worshiped again in their own temples. I am proud to stand with you all in these amazing times and I am excited for the saga-worthy deeds we have in our future. May 2022 be a year of victory!



Matthew D. Flavel  
Alsherjargothi, Asatru Folk Assembly  
[mattflavel@runestone.org](mailto:mattflavel@runestone.org)

## Social Media News and Groups Update



NO ADS. NO TRACKING. NO BS. #NOT4SALE



The Next-Gen Social Network

Hail! As you may already know, the Asatru Folk Assembly maintains a public presence on as many social media platforms as possible. Links to these are available on the first page of this newsletter. The AFA also maintains private groups that are topic and district-oriented and available exclusively to members. Examples of these are the AFA Genealogy group or the Baldrshof District group. Over the years these have been based on different platforms, such as private forums, Facebook groups, Telegram chat groups, and now [MeWe](https://www.mewe.com).

I am thankful to everyone for their effort and patience as we moved the AFA private

groups to MeWe! Gythia Catie and I are in the process of packing up to move across-state and know moving anything can be a real pain.

MeWe allows separate posts in its groups on specific topics. I will allow our AFA leaders to better moderate the posts to prevent infighting, misunderstanding, and off-topic content. MeWe also will allow us to have members answer four simple questions so that they are not anonymous to other groups members. These questions are:

1. What is your legal name?
2. What are your town, state, and country?
3. What is your AFA Kindred?
4. Would you like to provide contact information? (Please list here)

The conversation about whether folks should use their real name and photo is one that we can all have differing opinions about in good faith. In the private setting of AFA groups, we believe our members have a right to know with whom they are interacting.

We hope that having one's posts and comments associated with one's name will bring greater responsibility and accountability to those participating. Also, because these questions can only be viewed by members of the private and unlisted AFA groups our members will be able to use pseudonyms and avatars to maintain anonymity to the public outside of the AFA groups. The content moderation available on MeWe gives us a great opportunity to reboot that group so that our fellas can discuss men's issues responsibly and productively.

Now is a great time to set up your account on [MeWe](#) so that you can jump into the groups!

#### Districts

AFA Óðinshof Folk

AFA Thorshof Folk

AFA Baldrshof Folk

#### Interests

AFA Homesteading (Mead-making merged here)

AFA Genealogy

AFA Ladies Group

AFA Marketplace

AFA Men

AFA Military Program

AFA Moots & Meetups

AFA Outdoors

AFA Parenting (Homeschooling and Young Program merged here)

AFA Physical Excellence

AFA Spiritual Excellence (Adult Program and Rune Study merged here)

See you on [MeWe!](#)

## The Mission to Establish Njörðshof

*"The third among the Æsir is he that is called Njörðr: he dwells in heaven, in the abode called Nóatún. He rules the course of the wind, and stills sea and fire; on him shall men call for voyages and for hunting. He is so prosperous and abounding in wealth, that he may give them great plenty of lands or of gear; and him shall men invoke for such things."*



[Njörðshof Fundraiser – Asatru Folk Assembly \(runestone.org\)](#)

We appreciate your patience on this. We would ALL like for things to move faster but we move forward, nonetheless. As it stands now, we expect to be closed on Njörðshof by the end of January. We have had to wait on real estate appraisers, in the state of Florida, this is running about 3-4 weeks behind. We are getting VERY close.

Hail Njörðr!



Matthew D. Flavel  
Alsherjargothi, Asatru Folk Assembly  
[mattflavel@runestone.org](mailto:mattflavel@runestone.org)

## Day of Remembrance

### *Raud the Strong*



So well-known was the hero, Raud the Strong, that his story comes to us from several Icelandic Saga's, the most common of which is the Heimskringla (The Chronicle of the Kings of Norway) by Snorri Sturluson. The story tells of a great seafaring warrior who had Thor and Seiðr on his side.

Around the year 1000, the zealous Norwegian King, Olaf Tryggvason, began an expedition to North Norway to continue his Christianization of the pagan people. Olaf found much success in his efforts, owing largely to his brutal methods of both torturing and killing those who refused, but not all were swayed.

In Godøy, near present-day Bodø, lived the man Raud the Strong. Raud was known to have a strong connection with the Sami people, and to own a remarkable longship that was larger than any that Olaf himself owned. With a gold-plated dragon head, it is what many suppose the popular Viking longship designs are based on.

Upon hearing that Olaf was heading his way Raud gathered as many men as he could and lead a great assault at sea. Despite everything, however, Raud found himself overwhelmed and had to retreat from the battle. Stories say that Raud was able to Seiðr to call on the winds to speed him home safely while also blocking Olaf Tryggvason's chase.

It was all for naught, however.

Though he made it home, Raud was eventually caught by Olaf Tryggvasson. Despite the King's efforts, however, Raud refused to turn his back on his gods despite torture. In the end, he was killed when a live snake was forced down his throat. Many of Raud's men, following his example, were also killed after refusing to convert.

So, what can we learn from this story?

Some might make the argument that it is better to live another day, to fight another day. In some cases, this might be true. For every one of us sitting here reading this, however, one of our ancestors made a different choice. The choice to convert saved our lives.

For many of our ancestors, death was the best option. Which of us ever chooses to be killed in a horrible, painful way? Was death the better option? We must believe that for some, it was. For Raud the Strong, friend of Thor, it was. To convert was to turn his back on his Heritage, on his Honor, and on his Courage and a warrior and leader.

Our ancestors lived in a very different time. They lived in a world in which men and women could be killed for choosing to remain loyal to their Gods. We are exceptionally lucky that we live in a society that allows us the freedom to worship our Gods.

That very same society that allows us to worship our Gods, however, does not do so without stipulations. That society, so unlike the sort of tribal society our ancestors lived in, would tell us how to worship our Gods. They would tell us who is allowed to worship our Gods. And that society would try to harm us for choosing to do it differently than they tell us we are allowed to do it.

We don't face the same torture and death as Raud the Strong for choosing to worship our Gods our way, but we do face the possibility of ostracization from society. People, even our families, can turn their backs on us for disagreeing with the "rules" they have given us. We are not free from the effects of the multi-cultural paradigm, but we do not have to bow to it.

Like Raud the Strong, we can stand tall and be proud of who and what we are. We are Asatruar. Like Raud the Strong, we can stand against those who would tell us to turn our backs on what we know to be Tru. We can live with Honesty, with Courage, and with Honor.

Hail Raud the Strong!



Gythia Catie Erickson

[cm.erickson@runestone.org](mailto:cm.erickson@runestone.org)

**Remembrance & Holy Days**





[Calendar – Asatru Folk Assembly \(runestone.org\)](http://runestone.org)

2021

<b>Date</b>	<b>Observance</b>
January 9	Day of Remembrance for Raud the Strong
January 15	Porrablót
February 9	Day of Remembrance for Eyvind Kinnrifi
February 19	Charming of the Plow
March 9	Day of Remembrance for Olvir of Egg
March 20 (observed March 21)	Ostara
April 9	Day of Remembrance for Jarl Haakon
April 31 (observed April 16)	Hexennacht
May 9	Day of Remembrance for Else Christensen

<b>Date</b>	<b>Observance</b>
May 1 (observed May 21)	May Day
June 9	Day of Remembrance for King Athanaric of the Goths
June 29 (observed June 18)	Midsummer
July 9	Day of Remembrance for Alexander Rud Mills
July 16	Sigrblót
August 9	Day of Remembrance for King Radbod of Frisia
August 20	Freyfaxi
September 9	Day of Remembrance for Prince Hermann of the Cherusci
September 21 (observed September 17)	Winter Finding
October 9	Day of Remembrance for Meister Guido von List
October 15	Birthday of Founder Stephen McNallen
October 15	Winter Nights
November 9	Day of Remembrance for Queen Sigríð of Sweden
November 19	Feast of the Einherjar
December 9	Day of Remembrance for Egill Skallagrímsson
December 20	Mother's Night
December 20-31	Yuletide

## **Þorrablót**



Þorrablót is an Icelandic midwinter festival dedicated to, as the name describes, Þor, or Thor. Þorrablót is named after the Icelandic month of Þorri from the historic calendar and ran from mid-January to mid-February. Though Þorrablót is a relatively modern social celebration in Iceland, there is a reference in the *Flateyjarbók* that states that the Kvens offered a yearly sacrifice to Þorri at mid-winter. Typically, Þorrablót is celebrated by gathering together and eating many of Iceland's traditional foods and by singing, reciting poems, and telling stories.

Some good ways to celebrate Þorrablót include eating traditional Icelandic foods, such as Hákarl (putrefied shark), Blóðmör (blood suet, filled sausage/black pudding), Hrótsprungur (ram's scrotum with testicles), Lundabaggi (sheep's fat), or Svið (burnt sheep's head).

Don't worry! If these are unavailable, or simply not to your taste, eating goat and goat products such as goat cheese or goat milk are also appropriate options.

Called by some as the cabin fever holiday Þorrablót is a great way to liven up the doldrums of mid-winter. So take some time to light a fire and make merry. Have the folk tell stories or recite poems about Thor. Eat, drink, and enjoy the company of folk and family.

## Upcoming National Events

### 4th Annual Charming of the Plow



<https://runestone.org/product/4th-annual-charming-of-the-plow/>

We will come together for three magnificent days at the base of Washington's dramatic Cascade Range – February 4-6, 2022 – to celebrate the pre-Spring festival called Charming of the Plow. Join us as we blót to the Aesir and Vanir for new growth and plenty in the coming year, and share our troth.

Many AFA leaders, including Founder Stephen McNallen, Alsherjargothi Matt Flavel, and Witan Brandy Callahan, will join us at this family-friendly event. Gythia Sheila McNallen will host a Ladies' Moot to honor our women, with topics related to community-building, family relationships, and the nature of our goddesses.

This private lodge Includes eight deluxe cabins, with bathrooms and kitchenettes, each sleeping six people. The main lodge has a game room, a rock fireplace, a gourmet kitchen, and a hot tub just to name a few of the amenities! There will be powerful blóts,

engaging talks, games, and a trip into Leavenworth, a Bavarian-style village, to visit the Bierstube! Beneath snowy crags and twinkling stars, we'll take part in the hustle and bustle of this popular destination. For those who love German culture – and who doesn't? – you will find traditional German fare, costumes, and music. (Did I mention the Bierstube?)

Your ticket includes four delicious meals plus beverages, and two nights of lodging.

Back at our lodge, you can cozy up around the fire, enjoy some mulled wine or tasty spirits, tell stories, and build the bonds of kinship and troth that bind us. Towels and linens are provided. Be sure to make your reservation early! Notify Gothi Joe Rozanek if you are thinking of bringing a dog.

Children attend free, but we will hold an auction to help cover our expenses and to help make this the premier national AFA event in the Pacific Northwest!

### **Ostara at Þórshof**



<https://runestone.org/product/ostara/>

Ostara at Þórshof, an Asatru Folk Assembly national event, is scheduled for March 11 – 13 at our very own Þórshof!

There will be fun and games for the children, classes for the adults, and good memories to be made. We have an assortment of different activities for people of all ages in attendance. Classes to be held will cover a wide range of topics.

As always, we will be having an auction of unique and one-of-a-kind Asatru-related

items. All auction proceeds go to help fund these amazing events. We ask anyone who would like to donate to this great cause to please donate an item to the auction or bring your cash to bid! Anyone wanting to set up a vendor table at this event please feel free, all we ask is a donation of a substantial item to the auction.



Witan Clifford Erickson  
[cerickson@runestone.org](mailto:cerickson@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 [volunteer@runestone.org](mailto:volunteer@runestone.org) 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](mailto:babyblanket@runestone.org) today!

## Youth Program



The AFA Youth Program is now halfway through a very successful year! We had high hopes when this program started in January and the kids have surpassed all of our expectations and goals. Our youth have been working on monthly assignments and fun projects centered around Lore, Days of Remembrance, Holidays, AFA Culture, and monthly themes based on the Nine Noble Virtues.

Registration for the Youth Program is open year-round and open to youth ages 6 to 18. Our program is currently e-mail based. Parents receive their assignments through e-mail on the first of each month. The Youth Program is free and open to all of our AFA families!

If you are interested in registering your child for the AFA Youth Program, send an e-mail to [youth@runestone.org](mailto:youth@runestone.org) to get started.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 [EirsBlessings@runestone.org](mailto:EirsBlessings@runestone.org)

## 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

**The Artisans of the AFA  
Support Our Folk**

**Schattenforst Schneiderei**



We do custom embroidery on your items as well as thrift store finds that have been embroidered.

Visit my page on Facebook, Schattenforst Schneiderei.

I can also be contacted via email with any questions, pricing and to place a custom order.

My email is [mirandalynn1800@gmail.com](mailto:mirandalynn1800@gmail.com).

If you would like to advertise your business please contact me !!!



Jessica Lambert  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[jlambert@runestone.org](mailto:jlambert@runestone.org)

**Now Available in the AFA Store**

**Official AFA 2022 Calendar  
Buy Now Only \$15.00**



<https://runestone.org/product/official-2021-afa-calender/>

**Óðinshof**



## First Hof of the Asatru Folk Assembly

### Alaska



Michael Conner  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[mconner@runestone.org](mailto:mconner@runestone.org)



Folkbuilder Eric Whisman  
[ewhisman@runestone.org](mailto:ewhisman@runestone.org)



Gothi Steven Morrell  
[smorrell@runestone.org](mailto:smorrell@runestone.org)

---

## Alberta (Canada)

### *Welcoming a New Apprentice Folkbuilder*

Please welcome Cory DeMars of Alberta as the AFA's newest Apprentice Folkbuilder for the Óðinshof District! It is exciting to see the growth and enthusiasm from our Folk in Canada. We are looking forward to the tremendous success Cory and Alberta will see in the coming months and years.

Hail Cory DeMars!

Hail the AFA!

Hail Óðinn!

### *Strength in New Beginnings*



Greetings to all and Happy Yule. This is my first submission to the Runestone, so introductions are necessary. My name is Cory DeMars, and we live in chilly Edmonton, Alberta. I've been married for 23 years, and we have 2 daughters. Our family is from Alberta which is a rarity considering a lot of people move here from eastern Canada.

One of the things I like about living here is the similarities to the European lands our ancestors came from. From the cold mountains of the Norse lands to the vast forests of Norway we too see these visions outside our own door. One of the trees we share with the European lands is the Rowan tree mentioned by Snorris Skáldskaparmál . Here they are called the Ash Mountain tree. These hardy trees grow everywhere in Edmonton. As a matter of fact, the pictures you see are a block away from where I live.

In the Skáldskaparmál Thor needed to cross the Vimur on his way to Geirrod's abode. The force of the river threatened to sweep Thor away. Geirrod's daughter, Gjalp, tried to drown them by urinating in the river causing it to rapidly overflow. Thor hurled a rock into the river, effectively stopping the flow. This, together with the help of a rowan tree, allowed Thor to cross the river.

When I see these trees, it reminds me of the mighty Thor and his need for help. Even the strongest need help from time to time. So, we too must help each other, especially in these times where our folk seems to be attacked from all corners of the world.

As a new apprentice Folkbuilder I hope to serve as best as I can and help the AFA family grow in the cold north.

Hail the Folk!

Hail the AFA!



Cory DeMars  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[cdemars@runestone.org](mailto:cdemars@runestone.org)

---

**Arizona**



As we come to the new year and the end of the year cycle, I want to say how blessed and honored I am to be a part of the AFA. We have such an amazing community. Also our group of Folks here in Arizona, I'm proud to say this is my family. Our frith is stronger than ever and will continue to grow. It has been such a great honor and couldn't be more proud. I definitely look forward to the new year and the great things it will bring. May the Gods shine their light and glory on us all. Here's to the new year.



Samuel Ramsey  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[sramsey@runestone.org](mailto:sramsey@runestone.org)

---

## California

*Welcoming a New Apprentice Folkbuilder*



Please join me in welcoming Ashley Stockton of California as the AFA's newest Apprentice Folkbuilder for the Óðinshof District. Ashley is a regular at Óðinshof and will do an amazing job building the Folk and helping the hof be successful.

Hail Ashley Stockton!

Hail the AFA!

Hail Óðinn!

# WHISKEYTOWN HIKE & MOOT

Guardian Rock morning hike followed by a  
late lunch at Shameless O'leary's in  
downtown Redding, CA

MEET AT THE TRAILHEAD  
JAN 29TH @10AM



FOR QUESTIONS OR TO RSVP CALL ASHLEY  
707.800.5333



Ashley Stockton  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[astockton@runestone.org](mailto:astockton@runestone.org)

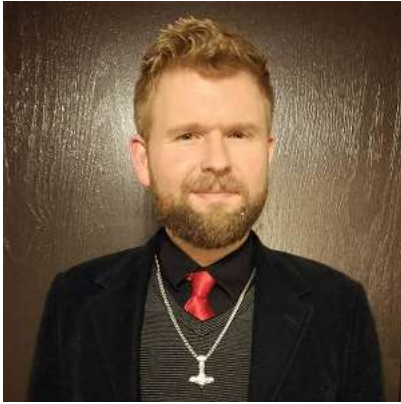


Daniel Odom  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[dodom@runestone.org](mailto:dodom@runestone.org)

### *Upcoming Event*



Join us on Friday, January 28th for dinner at 6 PM at Teske's Germania in San Jose, California for a South Bay Area Moot and Boot! Enjoy delicious traditional German food, perhaps a boot of beer, and the company of the local Bay Area folk. Contact me at [cnorris@runestone.org](mailto:cnorris@runestone.org) with any questions. We hope to see you there!



Connor Norris  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[cnorris@runestone.org](mailto:cnorris@runestone.org)



Victor Podbreger  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[vpodbreger@runestone.org](mailto:vpodbreger@runestone.org)



Sierra Chapman  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[schapman@runestone.org](mailto:schapman@runestone.org)

*2021 A Year of Gratitude*



2021 was quite the blur. While I am more than happy to bid this year farewell, there was much to be grateful for.

Thank you so much to all our Doers. Thank you for making time for workdays, assisting with events, and other behind the scene projects. Our events and Hof would not be the same without your sacrifice.

I would also like to thank the Apprentice Folkbuilders who have stepped up and helped

spread the workload and take on responsibility. I think your individual talents and specialties will be a great asset to our region.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Sheila McNallen for being a major driving force behind many things but especially our community outreach. I have no idea how you find the time and energy to help not only our AFA family but the community at large.

I look forward to all the great things to come in the New Year! Thanks again!



Folkbuilder Krystal Bailey  
[kbailey@runestone.org](mailto:kbailey@runestone.org)

*Var, Goddess of the Oath*



Var is the Goddess that was known throughout Germania and Scandinavia a thousand years ago.

The Norse that found a way to trade with the Middle East through what became Russia, found a trade route from the headwaters of the Volga River to the Black Sea that is; from what today is known as Ukraine to Crimea, where the Volga River empties into the Black Sea.

It is speculated the reason that the Norse used this trade route was due to the loss of old trade routes through central Europe that were closed to non-Christians, the old routes were used for centuries to trade goods from the North to Rome, however, the elder routes were later dominated by Christian Rulers.

The Norse from Sweden, Denmark, and Norway that developed this route to the large metropolitan center called at the time, Byzantium, later known as Constantinople, also brought law to what became Russia. These were warriors that held the Oath as inviolate, and the Goddess of the Oath in the Elder religion of the North was/is called VAR. Hence, these warriors were known as Varangians.

Byzantium was ruled by a Royal Family it was an Empire and required an army, security forces, and especially a Royal Guard.

Byzantium was politically corrupt and the culture seemingly, degenerate. Assassination was always a threat, and the Palace Guard was corrupt. Into this giant ancient city that the Norse named, Mikligaard, came the Varangians. Due to these Warriors, not corruptible due to their Oath to Var, that is, their mores and spiritual beliefs, they made excellent Palace Guards and did so as mercenaries for generations. Today there can be seen Runes carved into marble posts, much like graffiti, reminding us of their presence.

The long and dangerous Route to the Silver/ Silk trade and from the North, such as Amber/fur/ ivory (Ivory only came from the North at that time), so the trade was prosperous, and the Silver Hoards in Scandinavia can attest.

Hail VAR! Goddess of the Oath

Gothi Thorgrun Odden  
[todden@runestone.org](mailto:todden@runestone.org)



*A Yuletide to Remember, for All Sorts of Reasons*



I could tell this December would be the busiest by far. Multiple Yule events were being planned in the Odinshof District as many new families had found their way home.

Sharing four Folkway and new experiences with our folk would be a joy. If done well, it would also add to the haminja of the AFA.





For many days I crisscrossed this region gathering food and toys for needy Brownsville residents. All items would be distributed on December 18th at our annual Yuletide Toy Giveaway, along with our monthly Food Pantry.



The weather was wintery and wonderful as our AFA kin arrived at Odinhof throughout the day. Our annual Yule Celebration had begun. I finally joined our gathered folk as the last of the locals drove off with cars full of toys and groceries, all expressing their thanks for Odinhof's generosity.

The day already felt full. Live music and fine feasting were yet to come. The Hall was lovely with its white lights and stately Yule tree at the end of the room. After dinner,

we were led into the darkness for the exchange of offerings and blessings with the Holy Powers. The Hof sun wheel was then set ablaze to remind us of the power and potential that comes with the returning sun.

A different kind of magic was infused for our children. The biggest delight was a special visit by Papa Yule who had a gift for each one. All of the preparations by Hof leaders and members led to a feeling of wholesomeness -- and Home.



Though others engaged in a gift exchange and holiday revelry, my husband Steve and I had to leave the event early. At 4 am Sunday morning, we'd be on our way to the airport for Yule gathering # 2, in Aberdeen, Washington.

The venue was located on the waterfront and was an impressive timber structure. Inside, the friendliest of atmospheres prevailed. Our enterprising young Folkbuilders made this first AFA Northwest Yule a complete success. Steve and I both gave short talks and Gothi Rozanek led us in a special "Greeting to the Gods." What an

outstanding day! Kudos to those who planned it.

Doing so much over a few short weeks was exhausting, as you might have guessed. Now it was time for simplicity and solitude as we began the Twelve Days of Yule. And we got it -- with a freak snowstorm that has kept us isolated and without power for five days and counting. This has allowed me to fully reflect on the magnificence of Yuletide traditions and the people we care for, who are blessings in our lives.



Gythia Sheila McNallen  
[sheila@runestone.org](mailto:sheila@runestone.org)

---

## Montana

### *Winter Weather Puts a Hold on Yule Gatherings*



With the massive change in weather here to snow and subzero temperatures, travel is proving difficult. My family spent Yule by ourselves, as I'm sure many of our Montana members did. My personal work schedule, threw some kinks into our Yule plans, as did the fact that we are still unpacking boxes into our new home, but we made the most of it.

Instead, we shot for a New Year's get-together here locally with the Greaney family. Our local ski resort planned a torchlight ski run and fireworks for New Year's Eve. Great! Well, the weather stepped in again and decided that it would be -34 on the mountain that night, so it was postponed until the next day. So instead of celebrating the new year at midnight on December 31st, we celebrated at about 7:30 pm on January 1st. The torches made an awesome string of lights coming down the mountain and were capped off by some fireworks going overhead, as the skiers reached the bottom of the slope. The Harlan and Greaney families finished the night with a quick Sumble, honoring our Gods, ancestors, and heroes, before returning home to warm our bones beside the hearth.



Folkbuilder Ryan Harlan

[rharlan@runestone.org](mailto:rharlan@runestone.org)

---

## Nevada

*Food with Folk*



Always great to have my AFA family over for a meal! We had delicious eggnog (it is eggs and cream so one should not drink a half-gallon of it...maybe I just learned this from experience), ham, green beans, and chicken thighs with a gingerbread cake with eggnog frosting for dessert. Thank you to all the amazing people who attended!

On January 8th, Dan and his lovely family will have AFA folks over for this month's meal. I am excited and I hope to see you all there!



Matthew D. Flavel  
Alsherjargothi, Asatru Folk Assembly  
[mattflavel@runestone.org](mailto:mattflavel@runestone.org)

---

## Oregon

*Welcoming a New Apprentice Folkbuilder*

Please welcome Joshua Aadams of Oregon as the AFA's newest Apprentice Folkbuilder for the Óðinshof District. We have great momentum in the Northwest and we are very excited to see the results of Josh's hard work in the coming years and months.

Hail Joshua Aadams!

Hail the AFA!

Hail Óðinn!

Hailsa AFA Family,

I'm the new Apprentice Folkbuilder out here in Oregon, I stepped up about two weeks ago, and at this point, I don't really have anything to report on. It was suggested that I just introduce myself for my first submission, so that's what I'm going to do.

My first name is Josh, but I prefer to use my middle name, Anthony. While I'm fairly new to the AFA I have been a practicing Asatru for about 8 years now.

Really looking forward to continuing the work Gothi Joe has done in the area and getting to know everyone.

In frith,  
Anthony



Joshua Aadams  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[jaadams@runestone.org](mailto:jaadams@runestone.org)

***4th Annual Gathering to Celebrate Charming of the Plow  
Get Your Tickets Now!***



We will come together for three magnificent days at the base of Washington's dramatic Cascade Range – February 4-6, 2022 – to celebrate the pre-Spring festival called Charming of the Plow. Join us as we Blót to the Aesir and Vanir for new growth and plenty in the coming year and share our troth.



Many AFA leaders, to include Founder Stephen McNallen, Alsherjagothi Matt Flavel,

and Witan Brandy Callahan, will join us at this family-friendly event. Gythia Sheila McNallen will host a Ladies' Moot to honor our women, with topics related to community-building, family relationships, and the nature of our goddesses.

This private lodge Includes eight deluxe cabins, with bathrooms and kitchenettes, each sleeping six people. The main lodge has a game room, a rock fireplace, a gourmet kitchen, and a hot tub just to name a few of the amenities! There will be powerful blóts, engaging talks, games, and a trip into Leavenworth, a Bavarian-style village, to visit the Bierstube! Beneath snowy crags and twinkling stars, we'll take part in the hustle and bustle of this popular destination. For those who love German culture - and who doesn't? - you will find traditional German fare, costumes, and music. (Did I mention the Bierstube?)



Your ticket includes four delicious meals plus beverages, and two nights of lodging. Back at our lodge, you can cozy up around the fire, enjoy some mulled wine or tasty spirits, tell stories, and build the bonds of kinship and troth that bind us. Towels and linens are provided. Be sure to make your reservation early! Notify me if you are thinking of bringing a dog. Children attend free, and we will hold an auction to help cover our expenses and to help continue to make this the premier national AFA event in the Pacific Northwest!

[4th Annual Charming of the Plow – Asatru Folk Assembly \(runestone.org\)](http://runestone.org)

*Using Fehu, Uruz and Thurisaz*





In this installment of my series on activating the energy body, we will be utilizing the Elder Futhark Runes Uruz and Thurisaz. As part of this next step, I believe it is important that we look at the lore in reference to our souls and the infinite knowledge that can be accessed by us. Two books that have been invaluable references to discovering the fact that we truly are spiritual beings in a material existence are “The road to Hel” by Hilda Roderick Ellis M.A., Ph.D. and “The Asatru’ Edda”, by Mark Puryear. “The road to Hel”, correlates several excerpts from our sacred lore as to the immortal nature of our souls and the cycle of re-birth that our ancestors knew of. “The Asatru’ Edda”, has combined, referenced, and sequenced the stories of the Elder Edda into a readable text.

The many examples from the Sagas and Lore of rebirth that are given in the chapter “THE CONCEPTION OF THE SOUL” from “The Road to Hel”, establish that we are more than our physical bodies. Rebirth among the Gods includes the Jotun maid Gullveig who was killed and burned by the Aesir 3 times. The third and final time she was determined by the Gods to be Gullveig incarnate, Thor killed her with his hammer without hesitation. Gullveig at this time was Freyr’s Mother-in-law and this action caused a war between the Vanir and Aesir resulting in the decapitation of Mímir and the banishment of Odin from Asgard. When Odin was finally restored and peace between the Aesir and Vanir was again established, the Aesir had to swear not to kill Gullveig should she be reborn again and show herself, but instead to banish her to Járniðr.

So now armed with this knowledge of your own immortality and the cycle of rebirth, which you must know as a FACT, not a belief. We may start to seek access to the knowledge contained in Mímir’s well as Odin himself had done. Mímir is a Thurs and the knowledge he shares is invaluable if you are wanting to learn the true nature of Midgard. However, keep in mind this verse from the Hávamál before embarking on this path:

It is best for man to be middle-wise,

Not over cunning and clever:

The learned man whose lore is deep

Is seldom happy at heart.

From the lore we know that Mímir was a giant, son of Ymir and the description of Mímisbrunnr as compiled in the Asatru' Edda:

“Next, there is that land, which is owned by Mímir, called Glasisvellir or Ókolnir. This is a place of indescribable magnificence, with flower fields and groves that are never ravaged by frost or winter. Here is also where Mímir's hall is located. That wonderful hall that the Æsir call Brimir's hall, was owned by Mímir. After his birth, Mímir became the guardian of the central well, Óðrœrir, or Mímisbrunnr, and the root of Yggdrasill borne out of it. Because this wellbore Yggdrasill's seed, the great ash is called Mímameiðr as well. Hidden in the glorious well of Mímir lies all knowledge, and wisdom and intelligence are also hidden there. He is full of wisdom because each morning he drinks his mead from the Gjallarhorn. It is from him and his well that the rúnar and Galdr have their origin. “

The third rune in the Elder Futhark is Thurisaz. Thurisaz is known as a Thurs, which means giant and this giant is Mímir the guardian of Mímisbrunnr. Meditation on this rune will bring about an awakening, however, it is not free. Mímir demands a sacrifice as related to us from the Lore:

“One drink from Mímisbrunnr could help him; but Mímir, the well's deep-minded guardian, refused him the drink before he would prove himself worthy through self-sacrifice. Then Óðinn gave himself as the sacrifice for his life task, which he described in his own words:

I know that I hung on the wind-tossed tree nine nights,

wounded by my spear, given to Óðinn, myself given to myself.

on that tree of which no one knows from what root it springs.

No one gave me bread, nor a horn of drink,

I peered downward, I took up the rúnar, wailing I learned them,

then fell down thence.

I obtained nine Fimbulljóðar from Bölporn-Ymir's, Bestla's father's, celebrated son, Mímir, and I got a drink of the precious mead drawn from Óðrœrir.

Then I began to quicken, and to become wise, and to grow and to prosper.

each word I sought resulted in a new word.

each deed I sought resulted in a new deed.

We must give a sacrifice for this knowledge, and the sacrifice that must be given is only known by you. It must hurt, it has to count, it must be difficult, it is not something that is easy. Odin did not eat or drink for 9 days and was shown the runes. There is this passage that may help from Havamal Stanza 68:

“Fire is best among the sons of men,

and the sight of the sun,

if a man can have his health with a life free from vice”

There are countless ways to interpret these Kennings, perhaps this Stanza is telling us that fire (Fehu) is more active when you conquer your vices. The point is you must look inside and know what is difficult for you and rise above it, putting your mind to the test. Control your appetite,

Change your diet, conquer your vices and make that sacrifice. At the very least you will build your will and become a healthier stronger person for pushing the limits of your body.

For this month, take the Fehu energy that you have been cultivating from last month's exercise and move it up to your spine and center it between your eyes. This energy is moving in the form of the rune Uruz and can be equated as kundalini, Chi, or Prana. The rune Uruz is described as a mighty Auroch that bursts down barriers and this energy is being used to ignite the Third Eye, the eye that Odin placed into Mímir's well. Meditate upon the rune Thurisaz, carve the rune in your mind, draw it in red on a card and stare at the shape and quiet your mind. Read everything possible relating to Thurisaz and its meaning, practice austerity. Austerity is your sacrifice; it is not denying

yourself pleasure but removing obstacles that are preventing you from becoming who you really are.



Gothi Joe Rozanek  
[jrozanek@runestone.org](mailto:jrozanek@runestone.org)

---

## Washington

### *Yule Event in the PNW*



On the 19th the Folk gathered in Aberdeen, WA to celebrate the coming 12 days of Yule. We were very fortunate to have amazing kin join us in this Yule primer.



Speeches were shared, a feast was had, activities set towards the growth and development as individuals and as a community were executed and many bonds of frith were formed and strengthened.

A beautiful ritual by my friend and Mentor Gothi Rozanek was conducted to welcome Our Gods, Goddesses, and Ancestors to join us on this glorious day!



The children enjoyed rune lore with our women folk and story time with Gythia Mcnallen.

Many of the adults participated in the largest telephone game I've ever seen highlighting the importance of direct communication while building such a large community.

Later we shared how we have maintained our virtues through the past year and what we will do to continue virtuous growth in the coming year.

By the end of the night, a short Sumble highlighting the gratitude we have for the blessings received from our Gods and the community we are so proudly a part of was performed and then we said our fair wells.

I want to thank everyone who took part in this phenomenal experience and wish everyone a glad Yule!

HAIL THE GODS!  
HAIL THE ANCESTORS!  
HAIL THE AFA!

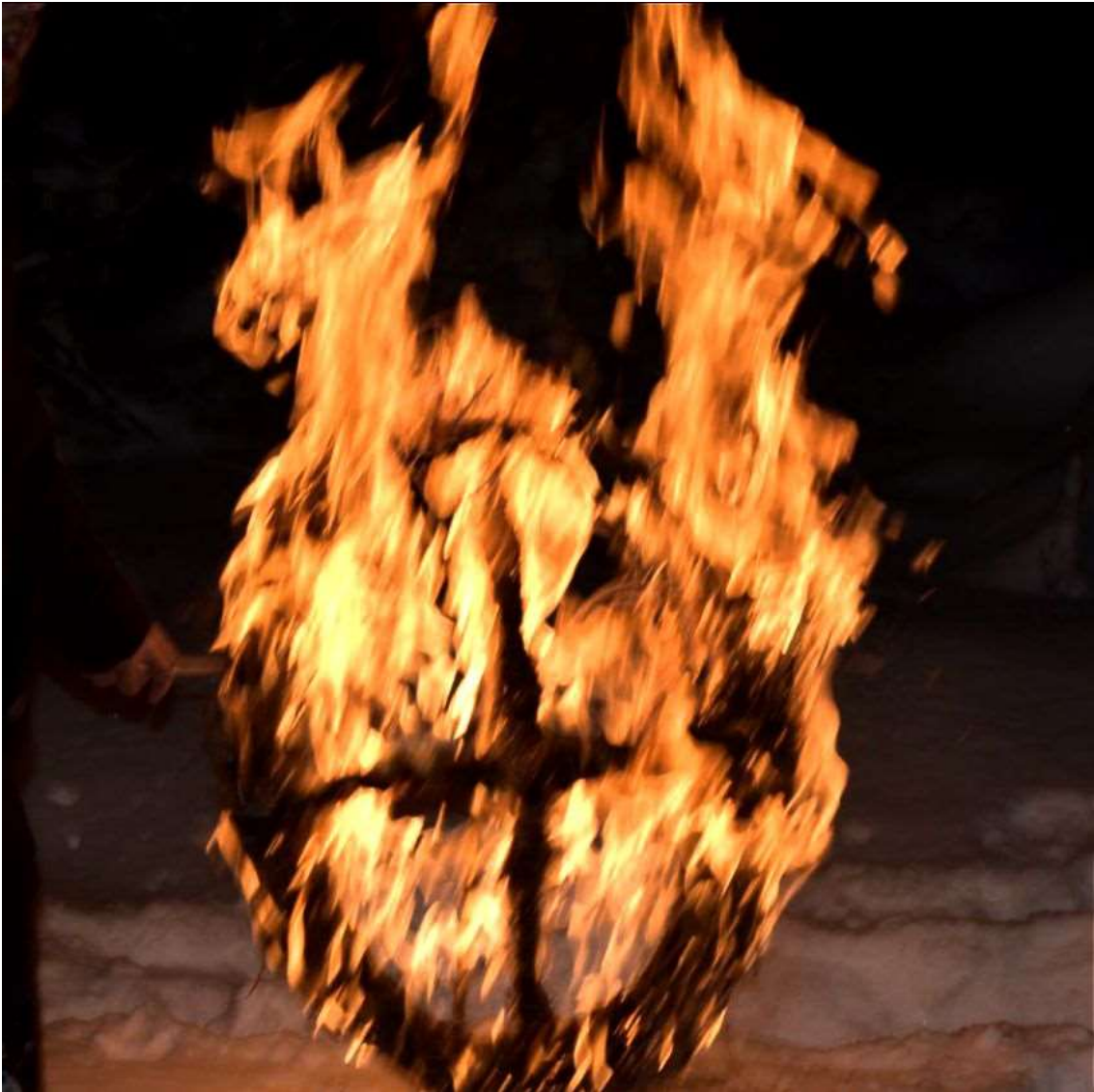
*12th Night*



On this glorious twelfth night of Yule, the Nordvestri Kindred gathered late into the night until the early morning to honor the sacred Gods of our folk!

Great stew, strong coffee and good mead was shared with our Gods, Ancestors and Folk.





Our lovely host's great kin of ours helped put on an amazing event bringing a glorious end to Yule and ushering in the new year!

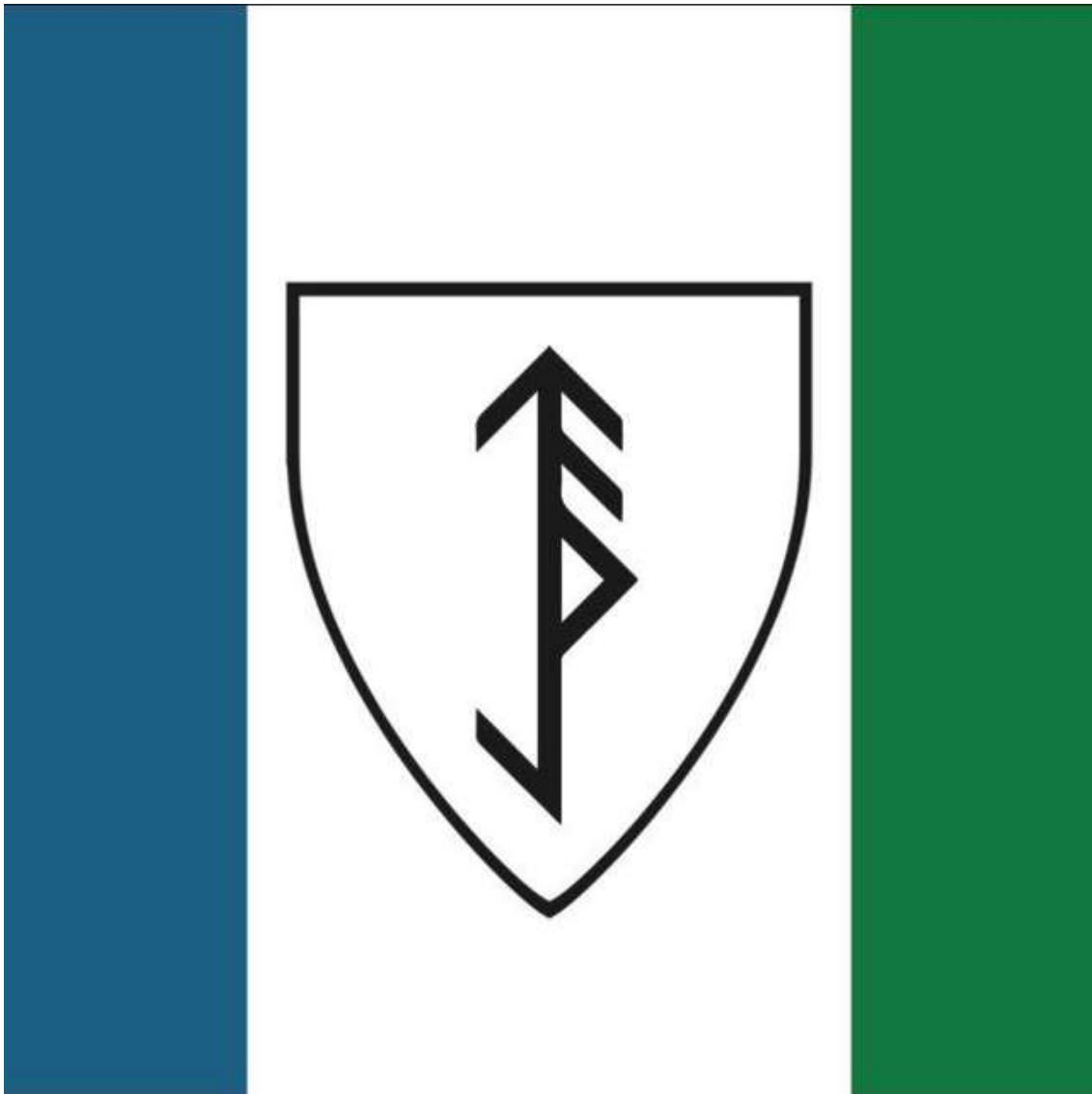
The sacred sun wheel was set ablaze after blot bringing great warmth to our souls and light to our paths.

This rite closed up December for us in Washington and we look forward to the many victories to come!

HAIL THE GODS!  
HAIL THE ANCESTORS!  
HAIL THE AFA!

*Iron Club*





Through this festive month, we have maintained growth and dedication with regular rituals to Thor in the temple of iron. Members from all over Washington state gathered multiple times a week to lift weights, feast, and share frith.

On December 21st iron club included a Yule potluck where we shared clam chowder and exchanged gifts.

Iron Club has become a cornerstone in our local community providing members with the opportunity to be held accountable in their pursuits of physical well-being and to build relationships with weekly fellowship.

If you are an AFA member passing through WA, our doors are open every Tuesday and Thursday. please feel free to stop in and honor Thor with us as we strive to better ourselves and achieve feats of strength worthy of Thunar!

**HAIL THE GODS!**

HAIL THE ANCESTORS!  
HAIL THE AFA!



Mason Johnson  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[mjohnson@runestone.org](mailto:mjohnson@runestone.org)

*The Great Pacific Northwest Resurgence*



North Idaho has seen massive growth as the Couer D'Alene are forming tight bonds of frith. Our North Idaho folk took a journey over to the coast to join us in celebration of the Yuletide despite the difficulties of travel through the passes in this weather we are experiencing. They've been keeping their strong pursuit of geological study and have been reading together as well. They are dedicated, growing, and determined and I am proud to have had the honor of meeting each and every one of them.

If anyone in the area would like to be linked up to this fine group of folk reach out

Southern Idaho has begun the process of coming together as well. The first moot of the area will be in January of the new year with many more to come!

Fólkvangr Cascadia is proud to announce its formal application as an AFA Kindred is submitted. We in northwest Washington are eager to grow, learn and be a Bastion for our folk in our region.

Our Kindred is focusing on self-sufficiency these next few months and I am pleased to say that our kinsmen are on average growing eighty percent of their own food.

The PNW's spirit of homesteading is still very much alive as is the love of the outdoors. Fólkvangr's men gathered together during the Yuletide on Thor's day and took on the Oyster Dome trail at night. We climbed 2000 feet on 7 miles of switchbacks and cliff faces to be greeted with the sight of the puget sound spread out in the darkness below. The hike concluded in blot to Thor in a very profound experience.

If you wish to be linked up to any of these areas don't hesitate to reach out. Hail the Gods! Hail the Folk!



Tyler Heinlein  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[theinlein@runestone.org](mailto:theinlein@runestone.org)



## Florida

### *Yuletide in Florida*



The American Crow Kindred hosted its third and largest Yule celebration yet. In fact, this was the largest event to date in Florida. The ladies really showed up for this one and we had nearly a dozen children running around enjoying the large backyard. We also had the honor of introducing several new AFA members to our regulars. Our resident grill-meister smoked the hog this year and it was delicious... as always.





After dessert, the sacred space was prepared, and we held a blot to Pórr where we made an offering for the strength to triumph over the challenges in the coming year. There was ax throwing for the adults. Children enjoyed velcro ax throwing and decorating cookies. We spent the rest of the afternoon renewing our bonds with old friends and getting to know new ones. The excitement for 2022 was palpable all day.



In the evening we held Sumbel. We opened raising a horn for the Folk we have lost this year, for those that could not attend due to a funeral that day. Before everyone left, we held a drawing for prizes (Santa hat and all). It's always hard saying good-bye at these events, but this time it was different. We parted with a purpose. We parted filled with the potential of the new year; filled with an electricity that connects us still. 2022 is going to be a glorious year.

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



Folkbuilder Lane Ashby  
[lashby@runestone.org](mailto:lashby@runestone.org)

### *Ladies Rune Study Group*



Hello from sunny Florida!

I am excited to announce that we will be offering a ladies Rune Study starting this month. We will begin with the Elder Futhark. This will be done via Zoom, so nobody even has to leave their house.

I will post details in the Ladies' group on MeWe. If you do not use MeWe, please email me directly so that I can get the information out to you.

I hope to see you there!

Hail the Folk!



Gythia Anna Plourde

[aszczepanski@runestone.org](mailto:aszczepanski@runestone.org)

*From Ve to Church: Evolution of the Hof*



As the Asatru Folk Assembly continues to grow and solidify Asatru into the 21st century and beyond, we will continue to see natural evolutions take place that would have occurred the same as if our ancestors had never let Christianity take root.

One of the biggest throughout 2021 has been the establishment of 2 more hofs and many more kindreds. In nature when adversity, growth, or natural selection occurs the strong, the right and the true survive and claim the right to lead and establish a legacy. In this truth and spirit, I find immense value in taking a moment to reflect on how our ancestors went to the hills, forests, and cliffs, to beseech the gods & wights for their blessings & favor. Back then our ancestors, started in the same "back yard Asatru" fashion as many folks today have in beginning their journey home. Over time a truly powerful & holy place would be found or established, a Ve would be established to mark the area off and provide a place to engage in sacred works. Much like any other civilization, this act is a cornerstone in establishing the permanence, of a community. Where we diverge in 2022 in this progression, is in our already having developed countries and cities. Where our ancestors would have likely built around a holy place or took into consideration access and travel to a holy site, in building their municipality, we already have these things established. As such we build an area up where a divine spark has taken root instead. However, the evolution is the same. As Frith and Wyrð become more woven together, and luck grows typically a shrine would be built around a Ve or several throughout the community to honor heroes, ancestors, and the gods. These shrines become more narrow or specialized in their sacred works, in the case of a Ve or shrine dedicated to one of our gods, a place for blot tools, and shelter from the elements may be necessary for both utility and piety's sake. This progression begins to start taking on the resemblance of a "bare-bones" or "proto-type" hof. The final step in this evolution is the most powerful one that declares "This is our foundation and we are unwavering!". This step brings us forward out of the fringes and shadows, and in the light among other recognized religions and it is the building of a hof reflecting in structure the same care (or more) that we have in the building of homes, centers of commerce or even municipal building. In our ancestor's time this would have built up around the Ve, and then shrine itself. Today we respond in like-kind to foreign invaders who repurposed or holy places as their own and move the Ve into them.

As with many other things in our lore and in nature, even when the mediums change, the law & flow of nature does not. As our Tru & righteous church grows it's always due to the devotion, piety, and generous gifts of our kindreds, and individuals throughout the AFA who come together and pour the soul out in each of these areas. As we continue there may come a time where another stage of evolution manifests. After all, the hof is the outermost expression of the innermost part of our folk soul. It's only natural, that like us, it too should grow and evolve so it succeeds where even Thor



could not in wrestling old age. With Hof not far off we shall get to see this cycle once again blossom into fruition and take further note, of how the divine manifests itself in 2022



Gothi Jason Plourde  
[jplourde@runestone.org](mailto:jplourde@runestone.org)

### *Meditation*



Two years before my divorce I discovered meditation, enrolling in a teacher's certification class for kundalini yoga. Good thing, too; without meditation, I could easily have fallen into alcoholism, depression, or worse.

The benefits of meditation are many and I won't bore you with those here, I will wait until I see you in person. Instead, I will review a few meditation methods that incorporate our way--runic meditations, or galdr, along with a few pointers to get your own practice going. This first in a series covers a few basics.

Meditation can be practiced in dozens of ways, and all of them have good points about their method. Luckily by the time I began meditating diligently I was well-grounded in my faith in the Aesir, so I was able to use my practice as a supplement to my faith. I

found many ways in which meditation fits neatly with the beliefs and practices of The Folk.

You can meditate any time of the day or night, but I find it is best in the early morning before breakfast. Get up earlier than usual (I know, it was difficult at first), go to your quiet place (mine is in front of my altar) and sit. To begin with, let's do something simple, and do just that: just sit. Your squirrel-mind will panic and begin flailing around looking for something-ANYTHING to do to fill its need for busyness. Ignore that as best you can; don't force it down or suppress it though. My favorite technique is to just say to myself, "I'm not doing that right now," and let the thought drift away.

Find a timer, like an electronic kitchen timer. Yes, you can use your phone, but your phone has is the distraction and its presence does not lend focus. Start with fifteen minutes; yes, it will seem like fifteen hours, but believe me, the timer is not broken. Your mind will begin to heal itself from that first session.

Yes, it is hard to sit on the floor, but that is best. Find a small rug or even a large sofa cushion so you are not on the bare floor, and a firm, medium-sized cushion to put under your butt. Start with a simple cross-legged sit; try a quarter-lotus, placing your right foot up on your left calf. I prefer the adept's posture, with the left foot tucked into the fold of the right knee and the right heel against the perineum. Place your hands in your lap, right hand in the left hand, left fingertips on right knuckles, thumbs gently touching. Breathe deeply from the diaphragm; hold a moment, then relax. Repeat until the timer interrupts.

For this month, this is the exercise: sit. Fifteen minutes, every day. Allow your mind to relax, or wander, or consider the beauty of your altar.

This is the beginning; forming the world from the magically charged gap. Odin is the god of consciousness; he seeks for us not to worship him but to emulate him. We start with fifteen minutes.



Lawspeaker Allen Turnage

[turnage@runestone.org](mailto:turnage@runestone.org)

---

## Georgia

### *Among the Ruins*



In keeping with our theme of occasionally borrowing Julius Evola's book titles for our purposes, let's talk about being "Men (and Women) Among the Ruins"!

In the Wolf Age, we may sometimes run into a sense of hopelessness, or a feeling that all the good in the world has been turned into decadence and degeneracy. This feeling is not one you should entertain, of course, but it is not uncommon. Most of us are aware

that things just are not right nowadays, but many of us are going through the motions, perhaps waiting for a leader or a hero to show us that there IS a way through this spiritual darkness.

With that being said, I encourage each and every person reading this to BE the hero you're waiting for! Rise above the degeneracy! Stand among the ruins, so to speak! Be a shining example to our people of how to stay positive and healthy in these times! Climb mountains, eat good food, speak to your Ancestors, worship our Gods, and live a life of spiritual might among the ruins!

To make a long post short, "be the change you wish to see in the world"!

And always keep in mind, DO RIGHT AND FEAR NO ONE!

### *Reclaiming Nobility: Oaths*



Let's talk about something that we often take for granted, but was deadly serious to our ancestors:

Oaths.

Promises or vows made before the Gods, and before any Folk gathered to witness them. These promises are often spoken of in Asatru circles, and they are often made loosely with little to no follow-through... This is wrong on a multitude of levels.

First, it is obviously not good to be known to the Gods as an oath-breaker. Nastrond is said to await those who break their oaths.

Second, the luck of the witnessing Folk is tied into the luck of the individual taking an oath. This is why, in the AFA, oaths during High Sumbel must be cleared with leadership before being made over the horn. Everyone who holds that horn in that ritual will be tied into any and all oaths that are taken. If the individual fails in their oath, the luck of everyone at that Sumbel is affected.

Lastly, when you walk the road to Hella's Home, to return to your ancestors, do you want to be greeted as someone who spoke their words with carelessness?

Remember that when you speak words at all, you are speaking with the Breath of Life given to you by the All-Father. Over the horn, or when taking an oath, these words spoken with Ond should be spoken bright and true and should be backed up by right action.

“Words are Wind, Deeds are Iron”.



Gothi Trent East  
[teast@runestone.org](mailto:teast@runestone.org)

---

**Indiana**

*Yule Never Regret Using Seasonal Dad-Puns*

---



This December our standard first-weekend gathering took the form of a moot. We shared a meal of ham and beans (because I'm a cheapskate) and cornbread (because that's what rational people eat with ham and beans.) Central Indiana is still somewhat in our infancy and this was the first opportunity a number of our Folk had to meet and begin forming bonds with one another. I find myself consistently encouraged by the quality of my Hoosierborean brethren and I am confident that we are all legitimately looking forward to seeing one another again.

We shared an evening recounting the death-march of high school wrestling conditioning, embarrassing stories (unfit for print), and tales of the macabre (thanks largely to our firefighters and a coroner in attendance). We closed our evening as all True and Goodly Folk do; by coming together and watching Ace Ventura Pet Detective before falling asleep on mismatched couches and chairs.



In the middle of the month, I also had the good fortune to attend a Yule gathering in the savage wilds of Ohio hosted by the Dumas family. It was a large event and I'm sure a number of Folks will be writing about it in this newsletter so I'll keep my recap brief.

I grew up with (on my Father's side) a large Catholic family. The resulting hustle and bustle of having a million relations crammed into one home celebrating the holidays were idyllic. Upon the death of my grandmother, I learned she was the lynchpin in this family dynamic when those gatherings came to an abrupt halt.

Not since the death of my grandmother (now over twenty years ago) had I felt the joyful chaos of the once-familiar family dynamic present at this Yule celebration; old friends, young love, children underfoot followed by exasperated moms with brooms, tables filled with food better than you deserve; this event was a perfect microcosm of the society we are working to build. I count myself truly fortunate to have experienced it.

Also, though there has been much drunken speculation and baseless accusations made regarding the lawless dog who utterly destroyed one of our host's fine dining room chairs; this Yule season I think we can all take solace in the knowledge that my attorneys have assured me that none of you can prove anything and that it is ultimately your word against mine.

Because I feel like it's a bit of a stolen valor move to use pictures from someone else's event, I'm only going to include a photo of the dessert/charcuterie tables. I feel that's just as I was personally responsible for devouring the majority of it while everyone else's backs were turned.



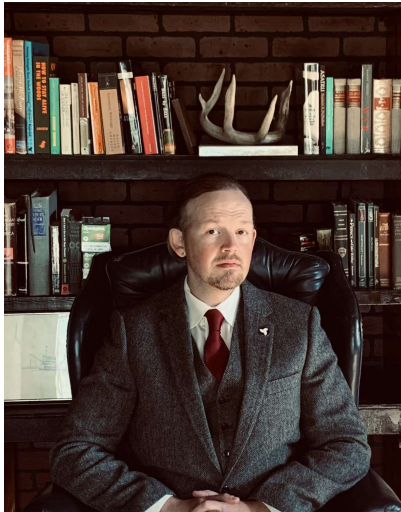
In closing, I hope that all of you had a wonderful Yule. As always, if any of you are passing through the area and have an interest in attending one of our Central Indiana events (typically held the first weekend of each month) feel free to reach out, we'd love



to have you.

In Frith,

Jon-nar Chair-Wrecker



Johnathan Rock  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[jrock@runestone.org](mailto:jrock@runestone.org)

*Yule with Heimdall's Midgard*



It has been a great year for Heimdall's Midgard as well as the AFA. The AFA just keeps on being awesome while others fail and fall in a landslide. It's a wonderful time to be a

part of the AFA.

Heimdall's Midgard got together for Yule just before Mother Night. We went through my 12 Days of Yule which uses the Ancestral Veneration Board. It covers a 12-day rite covering six generations of the family. It calls us back to a time where our families didn't sit around watching TV but spoke of family history and deeds for the adults to remember and children to learn and in turn pass on.

We had a nice moot. Plenty of food, gifts exchanged, hails to the Gods and Ancestors. It was our 4th Annual Yule together and it won't be our last.

If you are in the area and/or would like to attend one of our Moots or for more information about the Ancestral Veneration 12 Days of Yule, feel free to email me. If you're into Genealogy and have gotten back to your Great-grandparents and/or 2nd Great-Grandparents, you're set! Until next time...

Hail the Gods!

Hail his Folk!

Hail the AFA!



Folkbuilder Zach Cato

[zcato@runestone.org](mailto:zcato@runestone.org)

---

## Italy

Francesco Morese



Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[fmorese@runestone.org](mailto:fmorese@runestone.org)

---

## Maine

### *Welcoming a New Apprentice Folkbuilder*

Please welcome Daniel Mason of Maine as the AFA's newest Apprentice Folkbuilder for the Þórshof District! We are very excited to have someone folkbuilding in Maine. We have a large and growing membership in the Northeastern United States and we are eager to watch this place thrive with Daniel's hard work!

Hail Daniel Mason!

Hail the AFA!

Hail Þórr!



Daniel Mason  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[dmason@runestone.org](mailto:dmason@runestone.org)

---

## Ohio

*To Live Honorably*

---



One of the most difficult to grasp and maintain noble virtues in my opinion is Honor. Many struggle to even adequately give a definition of the word. I personally have found that it can be most easily explained as a PERSONAL or Tribal code of ethics one follows. This often has nothing to do with clearly written or defined laws. Furthermore, in some cases, it can be against written or defined laws. That is to say, Honor is not black and white as laws are but instead fluid, how one adheres to a moral code. Punching the guy in the bar that grabs at your woman is illegal. However, it is honorable. Lying or failing to disclose details of an incriminating incident at work might not be illegal but would be dishonorable. Honor is hard and difficult, to maintain it could cost you financially or in status. However, it is wildly valuable to the spiritual wellbeing and how our gods and ancestors see us and our actions during our time here on Midgard. So next time you ponder on "Bro Code" or "Girl code" realize you are seeing the most basic form of honor.

Hail the Folk,  
Hail the Asatru Folk Assembly.

*Upcoming Events in Northern Ohio*

---



*Come Join The Ohio AFA For  
Wintercamp Moot In  
Middlefield OH, Jan 22-23,  
Message Apprentice Folk  
Builder Chris Williams For  
More Info*



Christian Williams  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[cwilliams@runestone.org](mailto:cwilliams@runestone.org)

*New Kindred Fallen Timbers*



The new year looks hopeful for the folk of Ohio. The more time goes on the more wonderful people grace my home and gatherings with their presence. Old bonds are strengthening, and new ties are being made. A milestone took place at my home just before this new turn of the sun, a kindred was born, and our fates intertwined in the glorious web of wyrd. We are not yet AFA official but with hope and hard work, a new flag will be hanging in the Hoff's bearing the name Fallen Timbers with honor and solidarity. Newer members and those I consider family gathered at my home at the end of December for a gathering that will be remembered for years to come.



The northern folk of Ohio has finally taken their oath to one another witnessed by new prospects and folk I hope to continue to share my time with and hopefully one day oath into our young kindred. It goes without saying new and old faces alike had a wonderful time together. Aside from our oathing, a game made by our own kindred member Scott was enjoyed, wonderful food and drink were present thanks to our wonderful new and old friends alike, and as always great conversation and musing took place. Ohio folk have worked hard to forge something the ancestors would be proud of. Between the work of Tim and Christine Dumas, Jessica Lambert, Chris Williams, and myself I believe Ohio will be a guiding light to the folk in our area to help create something the world has not seen in quite some time. Hoff's community and values are rooted in our gods and ancestors on a massive scale. All of us in our respective areas are helping to create unprecedented things here on Midgard all throughout the AFA and I am honored to help you all in our efforts. We are doing something wonderful, and I wish all of you from the Alshergothi down to the newest of members a wonderful new year and strength forward to accomplish great deeds for our folk and our Gods Hail!

Join your folk Sunday January 16th at 1:00 pm at the Christmas story house for one last jolt of yule spirit for the new year. We'll tour the home of a beloved family movie, visit the gift shop, then go out for a bite to eat together after. I hope to see you there. 3159 West 11th Street Cleveland Ohio 44109. We'll make our food choices after the tour based on the groups taste that day.



Joe Drotos  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[jdrotos@runestone.org](mailto:jdrotos@runestone.org)





I personally was hoping for snow during our Yuletide celebration in Ohio. Days before the event I vigilantly checked the weather only to be disappointed with rain, all day. As our event crept closer the rain was still predicted. As our folk arrived the sky remained clear.



Under Ash + Oak Kindred completed an oathing ceremony with a silver oath ring crafted by a kindred member, We were very proud and elated to hold our first Yule Celebration incorporated AFA members from OH, PA, IN, and KY.



The women enjoyed making traditional Yule logs made of birch trees. Many were decorated in holly, pinecones and evergreen.



While the sky remained clear, the ritual fire was constructed and lit. Inside our home, I began the ritual with a guided meditation that transitioned into galdr. The men processed out to the ritual fire galdring Gebo by the beating of a drum, while the women blessed the mead. Blot was held honoring the Gods, our ancestors, and folk, ending with an offering to each entity.



As soon as Blot ended the rain began to fall. The feast of German potluck was blessed. We all enjoyed the spread of roasted duck, a raised ham, goulash soup, homemade sauerkraut, red cabbage, cucumber salad, stuffed cheese, and sauerkraut jalapeño,

baked spaetzle with cheese and ham, homemade bread and various German desserts served with freshly made Wassail.



We enjoyed the gift-giving exchange of homemade gifts and meaningful presents. We enjoyed a good laugh during the gift exchange. Then winded down the night with meaningful conversation and plans for the upcoming year.

### *Upcoming Events*

**Under Ash + Oak invites you to**

**Wassail!**

**January 15th 2pm Northern Kentucky**

**Contact Apprentice Folkbuilder**

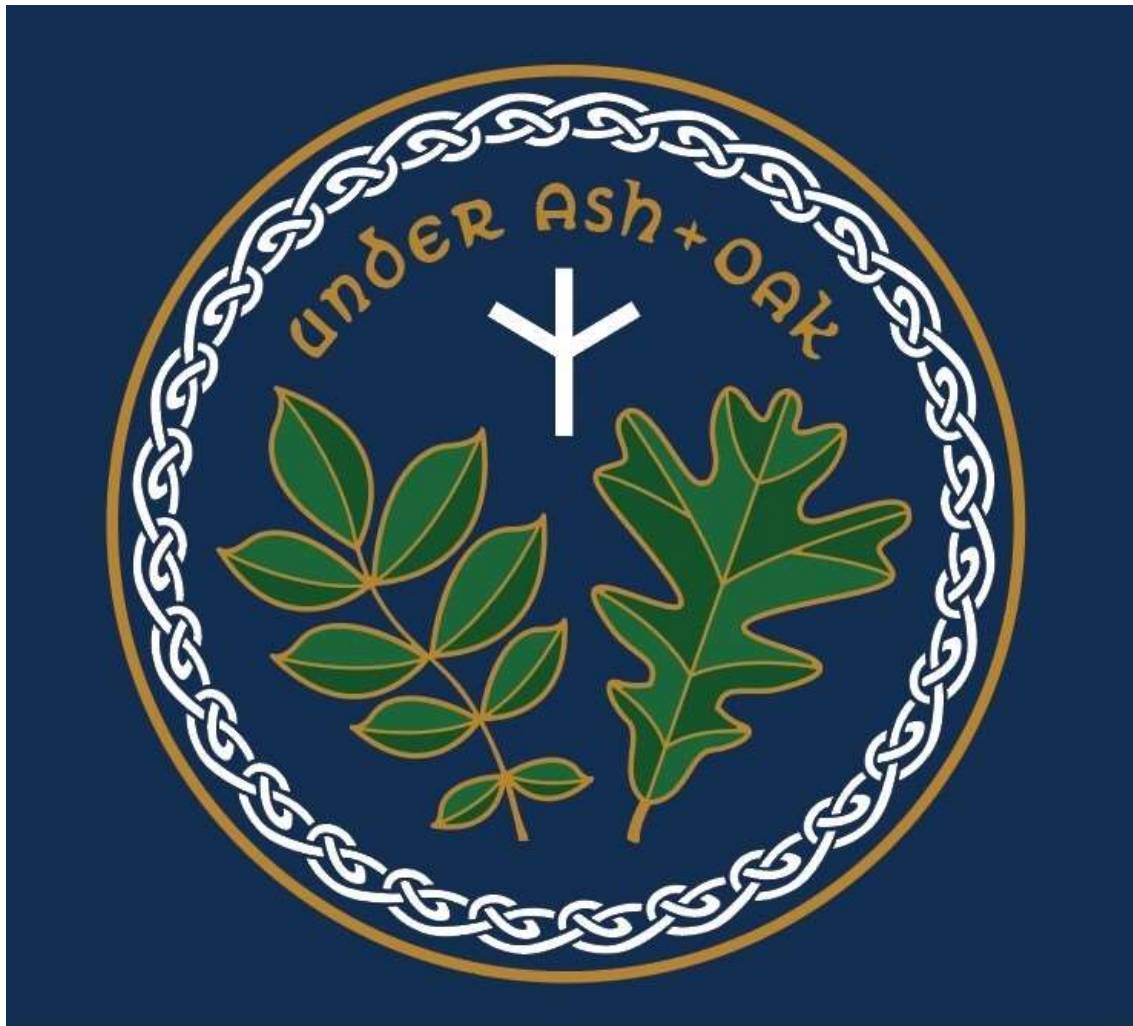
**Christine Dumas for details**

**[cdumas@runestone.org](mailto:cdumas@runestone.org)**



Christine Dumas  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[cdumas@runestone.org](mailto:cdumas@runestone.org)

### *Under Ash + Oak*



Before our Yule event kicked off, the members of Under Ash + Oak took our official oath to each other as a Kindred on a beautiful oath ring fabricated by one of our kindred brothers. I was asked at Winternights by our Alsherjarhgothi why "Under Ash + Oak"? I explained then, but thanks to the Runestone's format I can now thoroughly explain the importance of these two trees to our Pan European Folk and why this name was so important to us.

## The Ash Tree

The words for ash and spear seem to be related in that a poetic Anglo-Saxon word for the spear was aesc and the Norse word for ash was ask. These words influenced Highland place names such as Port Askaig. The Vikings were also referred to as the Aescling meaning 'Men of Ash'. Like the Vikings, the Gaels also thought of the ash tree as protective. In some Celtic legends, it is also seen as a tree sacred to the god Lugh, who is celebrated at Lughnasadh. Lugh and his warriors carried spears made of ash in some folktales.

Due to its close association not only with the Divine, but with knowledge, Ash can be worked with for any number of spells, rituals, and other workings. The Ash appears as Nion in the Celtic Ogham alphabet, a system also used for divination. Ash is one of three trees that were sacred to the Druids (Ash, Oak, and Thorn), and connects the inner self to the outer worlds. This is a symbol of connections and creativity, and of transitions between the worlds.

In British folklore, the ash was credited with a range of protective and healing properties. Most of these were related to child health. Newborn babies were popularly given a teaspoon of ash sap. Ailing children, especially those suffering from rupture or weak limbs, would be passed naked through a cleft in an ash tree or ash sapling, to cure them. The cleft was often made for the purpose and bound together again after the ceremony to heal over as the child also healed. Some folklore then suggested an intimate bond between the welfare and fate of the tree and person. Harm to the tree was reflected in the healed person's life, leading people to become understandably protective of 'their' ash tree.

Ashwood is very strong, tough, and elastic. It is said that a joint of ash will bear more weight than any other wood. Chariot and coach axles were made of ash as were oars, tool handles, and the weaponry already mentioned. The tree coppices well, giving strong straight poles for bean poles after five years or oars after twenty. Ash coppice stools seem to be able to go on producing poles almost indefinitely. An eighteen-foot-diameter stool in Suffolk has been estimated to be over a thousand years old. The density of the wood also makes it an ideal fuel. This is reflected in its Latin species name *Fraxinus* meaning firelight. One of the traditional woods used as the Yule log was ash. To this day ash is the most highly valued firewood, burning for a long time with intense heat, whether seasoned or green.

## The Oak Tree

Throughout the major cultures of Europe people have held the oak tree in high esteem. To the Greeks, Romans, Celts, Slavs, and Teutonic tribes the oak was foremost amongst venerated trees. In each case associated with the supreme god in their pantheon, oak being sacred to Zeus, Jupiter, Dagda, Perun, and Thor, respectively. Each of these gods also had dominion over rain, thunder, and lightning. It is no coincidence that oak trees are more prone to lightning strikes than many other trees. This is because of the tree's high-water content and the fact that they are frequently the tallest living things in the landscape.

The Druids frequently worshipped and practiced their rites in oak groves. The word Druid may derive from a Celtic word meaning "knower of the oak tree". The Gaelic word for oak is darach and remains in place names such as Glac Daraich (oak hollow/small valley) in Glen Affric.

Mistletoe, probably the Druids' most potent and magical plant, frequently grew on oak trees. Its presence was believed to indicate the hand of God having placed it there in a lightning strike. Ancient kings presented themselves as the personifications of these gods. They took on the responsibility not only for success in battle but also for the fertility of the land, which relied on rainfall. They wore crowns of oak leaves, as a symbol of the god they represented as kings on Earth. Similarly, successful Roman commanders were presented with crowns of oak leaves during their victory parades. Oak leaves have continued as decorative icons of military prowess to the present day.

To further explain the flag design, we put the Algiz or 'Man' rune in the Armanen futhark. This rune and its positioning symbolize us working towards ascension, overcoming earthly trappings on the quest for the grail. The blue and gold are matching the colors of the AFA tri horn, to which we owe our existence, if it wasn't for the AFA we would not be here together. The Celtic knot is not only aesthetically pleasing, but it symbolizes our unity and frith towards one another.

I hope that was worth the read and you can all see how proud I am to share our kindred's etymology as we live and die under the Ash and the Oak.

*Upcoming Events*



**Join Under Ash + Oak  
Saturday January 29th 2pm  
for an anniversary meal at  
Kreimers Bier Haus  
Cleves, Ohio**

Folkbuilder Timothy Dumas

[tdumas@runestone.org](mailto:tdumas@runestone.org)





*Cleaning Midgard*



Northeast Ohio has gotten our gears in motion for some great things to come in 2022.

We started the month off with the approval of our Adopt-A-Highway application. On December 4th we went right to work with our first cleanup, trying to tidy things up before a blanket of snow covered the region.

*Yule with Under Ash + Oak*

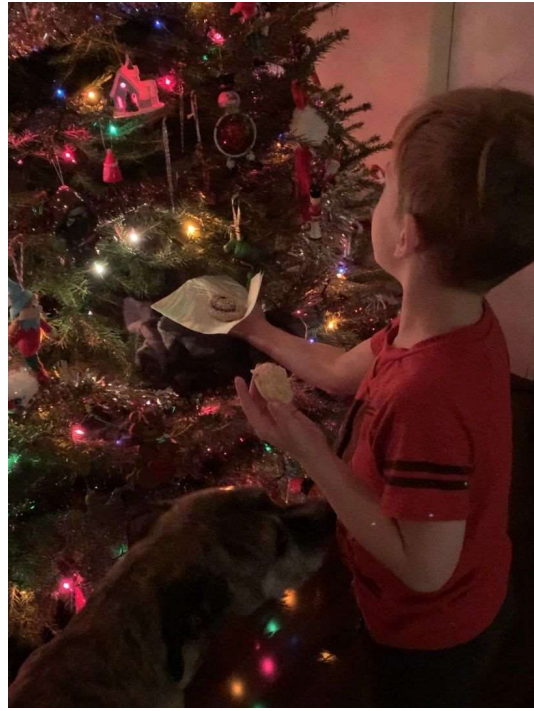


Then on December 18th, we traveled south to spend Yule with Under Ash + Oak kindred and friends. We always cherish our time with our southern kin since we do not get to see each other often enough. This is especially important to do before travel becomes difficult and we are buried in snow.

Christine Dumas outdid herself as always. Their home is decorated beautifully for the Yuletide season. The food was outstanding! The babies were adorable and a beautiful reminder of how important this all is. Celebrating with your family during this sacred time and honoring the Gods together are the traditions we want our children to grow up into and have them pass these traditions onto their children.

My son learned a valuable tool during Christine's pre-blot meditation. After we returned from our trip he was having a meltdown about something (he is 5, so this is common as any mom knows). I asked him to put his hands on mine and breathe together. He did and as he was breathing out he started to galdr. He was galdering Gebo just like Christine did at Yule! I was so impressed I galdred with him. We did that for 5 minutes, he looked at me and thanked me, and said he felt much better. This is now our new coping method for when he gets frustrated! I am so beyond proud of him that he took that from our gathering with folk.

### *Yule at Home*



This really is the busiest time of the year. Not only are we busy with our AFA family and gatherings, but we have our families at home that we celebrate this holiday time with.

Something we have started this year is building new Yule traditions that are done at home with the family. And this year the biggest lesson to my son was the gift cycle.

This started when we got our tree. Before we cut it down Drayk had asked the land wight if we can have the tree. He put his head to a branch and said "It said yes". He then asked the wight of the tree if it would like to be our Yule Lad, he again put his face to a branch and listened and said "it has accepted". So daddy worked hard to saw the tree down and after it was cut Drayk dug a hole near the tree stump. He placed an orange in the hole and covered it up and said "A gift for a gift". This made me a proud mamma. After a week went by it was Yule! We already had a tree strung with lights but we decorated it as a family with ornaments that every single one meant something. Many are from when I was little so I told a story with each ornament and the ones I've collected since Drayk was born I was able to tell him about each of his Christmas of the past with each decoration. This is a true test of my memory abilities!

Every night during Yule Drayk brings our Yule Lad a gift. This is a cookie or a piece of candy or part of the dessert he had during dinner. Every night he thanks the Yule Lad for the gift and he tells him that he appreciates it. Then every morning, Drayk rushes downstairs with excitement, and where he left his gift is a present from the Yule Lad!! This lesson of gifting is vital for him to comprehend for this is something we practice every day. I am proud to raise my son learning these traditions and I so look forward to

seeing my grandchildren have the same excitement.

I hope everyone had a very lovely Yule!

And here's to a very productive 2022 !!

Hail the Folk!

Hail the Asatru Folk Assembly!!!

### *Upcoming Events*

January 29th

Mansfield Ohio

Snow Trails for a snow tubing adventure! Tickets are \$25 for two hours. Please contact Jessica Lambert to coordinate the time your booking for.

February 26th

Cleveland Ohio

10th Annual Kurentovanje Festival and Parade

Join us for a "Slovenian Mardi Gras" celebrating the end of winter and the beginning of spring. More information is to come once they post their itinerary.

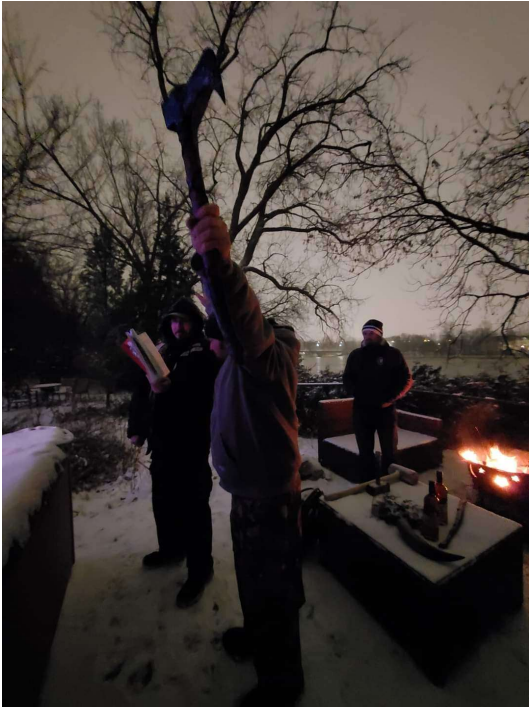


Folkbuilder Jessica Lambert

[jlambert@runestone.org](mailto:jlambert@runestone.org)

---

**Ontario (Canada)**



The Ontario AFA attended a Yule Moot with sympathetic folkish Asatruar to welcome the new year, share in Frith, and optimism for the year ahead.

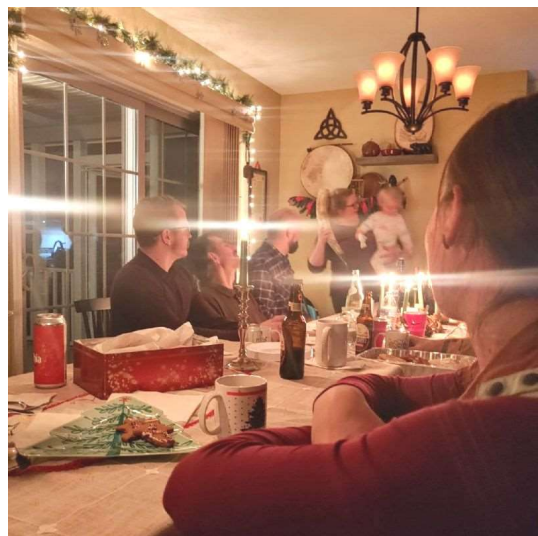
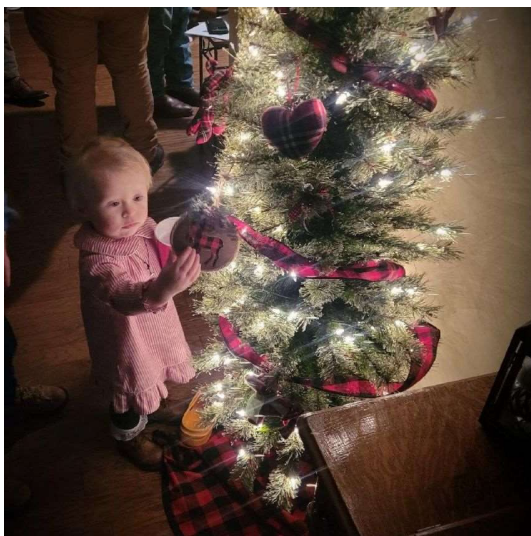
---

## Pennsylvania

*Gemütlichkeit in Pennsylvania*



Gemütlichkeit is one of those German words that do not have a perfect English translation. According to the dictionary, its basic meaning is a feeling of friendliness, but in reality, it is so much more. It is the feeling of relaxing with friends, the warmth of your grandmother's house, a hug from your mother, sipping a warm drink, and being surrounded by all of your loved ones with a dash of magic added in. That is the best definition I could come up with. December 26th was a near-perfect example of this beautiful German word. Our kindred and our friends gathered at our home for a wonderful, warm, comforting evening of frith. We shared laughter, had great conversations, had a delicious feast, and caught up with our AFA family who traveled both near and far. These events make our home buzz with warmth and love.





We shared scrumptious appetizers generously hand-made by Gythia Catie and sipped on Glühwein before it was time to start ritual. The sun set and a fire was lit in our ritual space. We gathered around the yule log and wrote our aspirations and hopes for 2022 and tucked them into the log. Galdring Gebo we trekked down into the woods and gathered into a circle where Gythia Catie led our ritual by the glow of our fire. The blessed Yule log was offered to the Allfather and was well received. After ritual, it was time for our feast! We had the best problem; we had run out of space around the children's table and our adults' table took the entire width of our living space almost! It was a beautiful evening, filled with new lasting Yuletide memories and Gemütlichkeit. Now the Yule tree is taken down and the feasts are over. Until next year, where we will enjoy another magical evening with our family.

Hail the folk!

Hail the future Folk!

Hail the Ancestors!

Hail the AFA!

*Upcoming Events*





**Maple Moot**

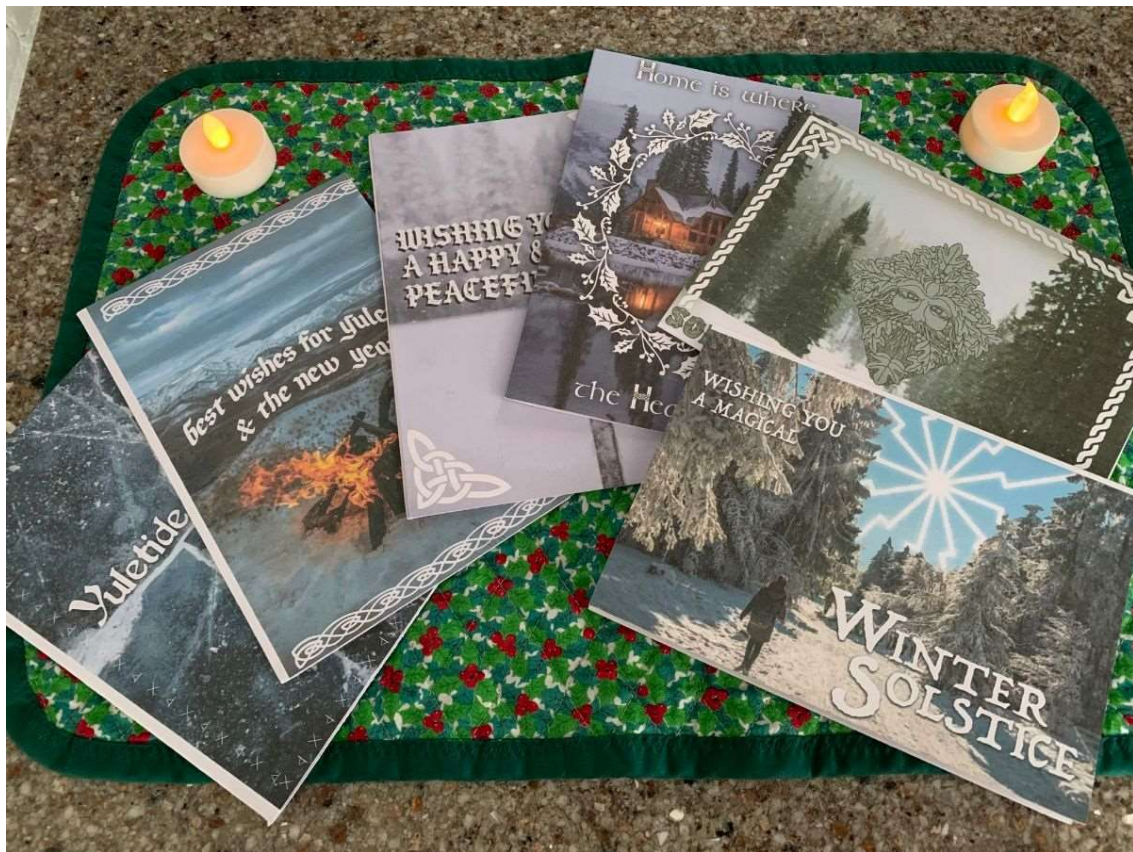
Join us for a delicious lunch at America's largest buffet filled with authentic PA Dutch foods. There is a gift shop and Amish farm market here as well!

**Shady Maple Smorgasbord  
Saturday January 15th, 12 pm  
129 Toddy Dr, East Earl, PA 17519**



Jane Malseed  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[jmalseed@runestone.org](mailto:jmalseed@runestone.org)

*Yule Card Fundraiser*



As Yule comes to an end, and we have taken the time to reflect on what is important, the year that has passed, and the new year that is upon us. Taking time to manifest the strengths within you to do great things has much power behind your intentions, more than you may even realize! An idea often when shared with others has been the ability to ignite a spark within our folk, which can then lead to an even greater impact on your folk at large. Nothing is ever too simple or too small, it just takes the intuitive to make things happen. The community of our folk is full of people who are equipped with a multitude of talents, help each other help our folk. Inspire, encourage, be responsible and reliable, give credit where it is due, and watch what happens, watch what you can do, and build within yourself, and with your folk.

I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you the power of what community is capable of by reflecting on the Yule Card Fundraiser that took place this past Yule. Members of the AFA put their talents together to bring you folkish Yuletide and Winter Solstice stationary, something specific for our people so that you weren't stuck with the generic winter scene cards from your local paper market. Although we endured a few obstacles, we all worked through them together, which built strength among us. We were able to raise \$603 out of this fundraiser, which was done solely on a volunteer basis. This special project was brought to you by Jessica Keller, Madison East, and Ashley Stockton.

All's it takes is one step to get things moving in forward momentum. What will you do

in 2022?!

Hail the Gods!

Hail the AFA!

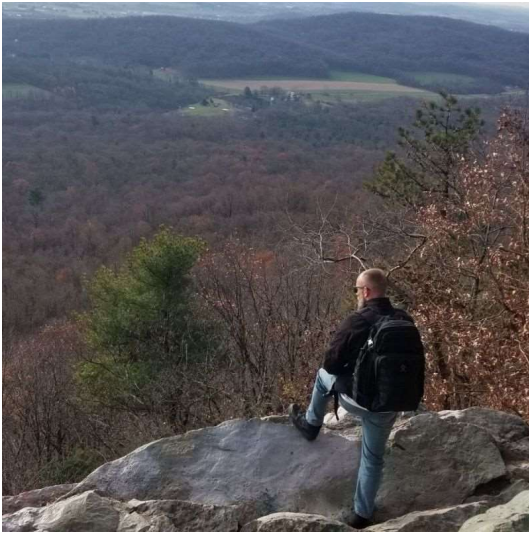
Hail the Doers!

By Jessica Keller

*Wotan on the Peaks*



In early December, we met early for a hike in the Pennsylvania mountains. For me, it was nice to get out again and do one of these hikes. I will never feel more at "home" than in places like these. The ruggedness of the terrain, the challenge but also the solitude and beauty of it all calls deep in my soul. A memory returns within like I have been here before looking off the same peaks and walking the same place. I'll be here again too. I'm sure all of you understand these feelings.



We made our way up the Appalachian trail not knowing exactly where it would take us but ended up at a good place to say a few good words to our High God. We thanked him for being some of the chosen few who have found themselves again but more importantly in hopes that our Holy Race may do the same. Many of them have no idea how special they are. Not only to us but to Nature herself. Much depends on us doing our part. Going forward please show compassion and love towards those lost souls because we were once lost too and understand their pain. Don't pass judgment too easily either. We all have made mistakes but look at us now. Our lost folk can do the same. Show them the way to health. Show them their Gods. Show them Asatru.



Coming up: Wotan on the Peaks  
The Pinnacle, Hamburg, PA  
January 9th, 10:00 am

If you would like to attend email me, [ahudak@runestone.org](mailto:ahudak@runestone.org)

*Runic Yoga Part Two*



Odin: Valhalla's Queen! I pray thee say  
Which to Vafthrudnis Hall the way:  
For I with him intend to try  
My skill in ancient mystery.

Frigga: Do not leave thy native skies,  
Source of Heroes! I advise:  
For well I know no giant might,  
Ever witnessed in the fight,  
With his prowess can compare.

Odin: Mysteries divine and rare  
I've often seen, I've often known,  
And now am bent to make my own  
All from mortals can I learn.

Frigga: Safe mayest thou go, and safe return,  
And, for each Goddess, may thy life  
Be safe from every mortal strife.

Let prudence on thy steps attend,  
Thus, doubly guarded, Chief! advance  
Thro' fate's elaborate mystic dance.

And so, we continue.....

Last month we covered the IS and KA runes. I hope some of you have gotten something out of what was discussed and perhaps given it a try yourselves. One thing I have noticed is that our spiritual practice is no different than for instance our physical. Sometimes we will see great results and sometimes for long periods it's just going through the motions, not seeing or feeling much of anything. We yearn for that lightning bolt of inspiration to hit us again where we become something else for a few brief periods of time and understand it all. Unfortunately, it doesn't always come so easy. It is through continuous effort just like anything else that breeds our results. To add once again positive thinking always. I cannot stress this enough.

Let's summarize a little on the IS and KA rune before we begin what will be covered this month. Previously we talked about the importance of the sound when we sing the rune. This is very apparent, especially in the IS rune. Depending on the sound sung is where we will feel it in ourselves. We talked about keeping a steady 7-second breath, in and out, during each practice as well as visualization. Also, the importance of doing the exercises facing North unless instructed otherwise. IS can be looked at as separating from time and space, being the pillar, and realizing our divinity. KA on the other hand has both physical and spiritual effects, preparing us as we move ahead but, in the end, I will say once again find your own understanding of all of this. It will come. Now let's look at the MAN rune practice.

#### MAN Rune

Like all exercises begin in the IS rune stance. 3 to 7 breaths taken.

Raise your arms and the palms of your hands facing up.

3 breathes and on the 3rd exhale hum (mmmmmm) and while doing that rotate in a clockwise position, slower to the North and to East and spinning faster South/West. Do this for a minimum of 9 breaths/3 rotations.

During the practice also try to picture energy coming down from above, entering your hands and back of your head, and finally going through the body until it hits the ground. Note: looking upwards while doing this I have noticed some results like a stream of light entering my forehead and exiting out the back.

When complete and back in the IS rune position say a few positive words to yourself like " I am now charged with the power of my Guides. May I be a representation of the God-Man, the Spirit Man here." But once again this is an example and use something

that has significance for you.

After the practice, you will notice in your head area a feeling of lightness. Like the upper part of your "tree" has absorbed what many of us seek, higher consciousness.

Lastly in my own personal practice, I don't always picture energy coming down into me but instead me in a way disintegrating and rising up. Resurrecting if you will, breaking free from matter, and leaving this place for a moment to another.

#### UR Rune

Begin in I rune stance and take 3 to 7 breaths.

Now bend down, legs straight, arms to the floor like the picture provided. 3 breaths and on the 3rd sing (uuuuuuu) deeply. Also, try to picture pulling energy from the earth's floor through your body and out your hands back to the earth. For me, I picture a pulsating, cool energy but use what works best for you.

Repeat the above 3 times, alternating between the IS and UR positions, with 3 breaths on each. After the third is complete lay on your back, head facing North, and try to feel the earth waves pulling through you. It's been said to feel like a drifting or floating sensation. I generally don't get that and instead picture myself as a being of light and one with the source, the Black Sun. Remain in this position for a minute or so but you can do it longer.

Probably one of my favorite things about this exercise is the feeling of quietness that comes from it. It's almost like everything else around you stops for a moment. You stand still in creation in a way, not here nor there. If you try it, over time you'll see what I mean. Lastly and perhaps a topic that some will shy away from, but I will not, and it correlates to UR and life energy. For us men, creation lives in us, and I am sure you know what I am referring to. When wasted not only do we lose physical strength, and our moods change for the worse, but it affects the path we are trying to take spiritually.

We lose our willpower and a greater connection to the subtle energies/bodies. I am not saying do not have children.... HAVE children and love your wives/girlfriends but know that each time you give it away and the more you do, there is a price to pay if you choose to walk this path. Use it wisely and to add to my own path not only have I gained a stronger will by practicing this but a greater love for my wife. Seeing beauty far beyond what meets the earthly eye. We'll cover more of this in the EH rune.

Thanks for listening and we'll pick this up again next month.





Folkbuilder Adam Hudak

[ahudak@runestone.org](mailto:ahudak@runestone.org)



Gythia Catie Erickson

[cm.erickson@runestone.org](mailto:cm.erickson@runestone.org)

*Lansdale Tru Folk is Now Keystone Tru Folk*



Keystone Tru Folk started with pub moots and hike moots, which eventually led to an informal blot group in 2014. After the Asatru Folk Assembly instituted its kindred program, this informal blot group adopted bylaws as Lansdale Tru Folk on Freyfaxi 2017 and was recognized as an AFA Kindred in October 2017.



On December 26, 2021, at our Yuletide gathering, the Lansdale Tru Folk formally adopted revisions to our bylaws. Among other things, these revisions renamed the kindred to Keystone Tru Folk. This was done in recognition of our families moving throughout the state of Pennsylvania and that we are no longer limited to a particular town or county but are a state-wide AFA kindred.

Hail Keystone Tru Folk!



Witan Clifford Erickson  
[cerickson@runestone.org](mailto:cerickson@runestone.org)

---

## South Carolina

Harry Clarke



Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[hclarke@runestone.org](mailto:hclarke@runestone.org)

*Thorshof Update*



As we have begun our push toward Ostara In the South 2022, lots of beautification projects are underway. If you haven't been to Thorshof since October, we have made several aesthetic improvements in the Ve and in Rumph Hall. A lot of effort from our volunteers has made those buildings shine. And a big thank you to all who have dedicated their time and effort to these projects!



While we have made strides in the appearance of Thorshof, we are lacking in volunteers who have skills in the trades. If you are a carpenter, an electrician, or an HVAC technician, we could really use your help. There are some repairs needed that exceed our areas of expertise. If you find yourself skilled in the aforementioned trades, please reach out to Folkbuilder Heather Young, Gothi Daniel Young, or Witan Svan Herul, we'd love to see you on our workdays.

Thorshof is a very special place to my family and so many others, and we would love to

see you at our upcoming events, starting with Thorrablot which will be held on January 29th starting at 12:00 PM.

Hail Thor!

Hail the Doers!



Folkbuilder Heather Young

[hyoung@runestone.org](mailto:hyoung@runestone.org)

### *Yule At Þórshof 2021*



December 19, 2021, we hosted the 2nd Yule at Þórshof. We had a record turnout. Folks from the Carolinas, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland arrived at the Thunderer's Hof with gladness in their hearts, plenty of delicious food and drink. Witan Herul gave a great class on Yule traditions, while the ham and the fixins filled Rumph Hall with a wonderful aroma.

As we began our Yule blot in the Vé, children were running about and laughing, mothers and fathers were looking on with radiant smiles. We all placed lit candles on the Yule log and said names of folks we wished could be with us on this Yuletide. Witan Herul distributed the blessings of our High and Holy Gods upon the folk, with runes upon the foreheads of the gathered folk.

After Yule Blot, we stayed in the temple for an emotional and powerful Sumbel. There were very few dry eyes in that room. Thank you to all who shared with us stories of their ancestors, and their accomplishments in the third round and frith with us all. Also, to begin the third round of Sumbel, oaths were taken to Þórshof. Included were Brian and Tiana Smoak, Eli Harman, Veronica DeVanzo, Witan Svan Herul, Gothi Daniel Young, Folkbuilder Heather Young, Folkbuilder Cody Raynard, and Apprentice Folkbuilder Harry Clarke.

If this was your first time at Þórshof, don't let it be the last. If you were a guest of one of our members, go ahead and commit to what we do by joining our ranks. Our beloved Assembly is growing by the day, why not count yourself among the growing tribe dedicated to the worship of our forebears and Aesir?

We're accomplishing great things in the Asatru Folk Assembly. This weekend's Yule celebrations across Midgard are a testament to that.

We would like to thank Witan Svan Herul, Katherine Herul, and Folkbuilder Heather Young, as well as all the volunteers who helped put together such a successful event this Yule!

Hail The Gods

Hail The Folk

Hail the Asatru Folk Assembly!

And a Glad Yule to you all!



Gothi Daniel Young

[dyoung@runestone.org](mailto:dyoung@runestone.org)

---

## Sweden

### *The Sun is Victorious*



It has become a family tradition for us to burn a Sunwheel every winter solstice. Life in northern Scandinavia serves up the most radical seasonal changes. Now is the season of darkness and cold. The land slumbers and the beings still awake struggle to make it another day.

But the Solstice has come and gone! Once more, the Sun is victorious and claims its territory day by day. Some people might call me crazy, and perhaps rightly so, but I can already feel the pull of spring, despite the freezing temperature and the very short days. The new year has begun and within its cradle lies promises of great things.





Our family is setting out to make 2022 a year of greatness. Of overcoming boundaries, of beating the odds, and coming out on top in life. We remind ourselves that life is rife with struggle and setbacks, and as sons and daughters of the Allfader, it is up to us to face these trials head-on. And to do so with a serene mind, with fire in our eyes and with hearts beating with passion.

We encourage our brothers and sisters in faith, to make the year 2022 a glorious year for the AFA. Let us claim victory in both private and communal life so that we make worthy Ancestors ourselves!

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

### *Upcoming Events*

Join the Lugnets up north as we Blot to the Thunderer this January 22nd.

Erik Lugnet



Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[elugnet@runestone.org](mailto:elugnet@runestone.org)

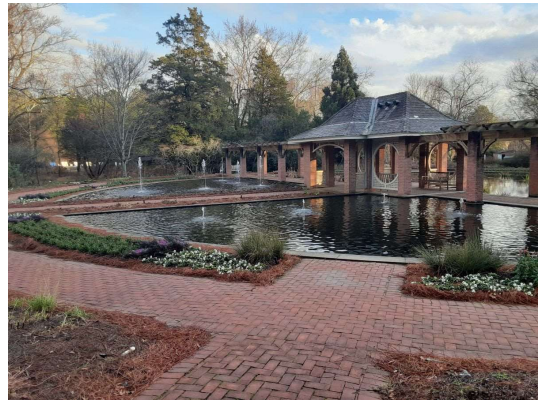
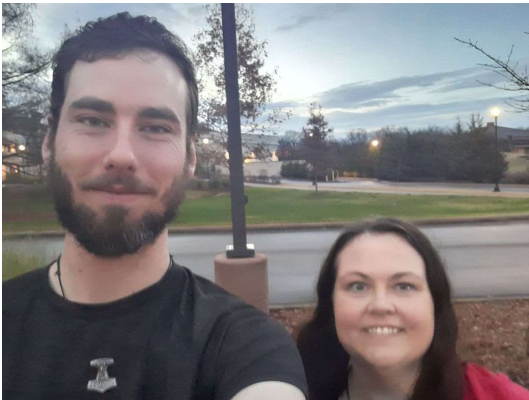
---

## Tennessee



Jason Lanning  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[jlanning@runestone.org](mailto:jlanning@runestone.org)

### *Madison/Huntsville Alabama Moot*





Today we met at a store in Madison, bought a few things, and talked with the people who owned it. Then we went to the Botanical Gardens in Huntsville Alabama. We walked the gardens and discovered the butterfly exhibit, Yule lights, and a statue of Nertha.

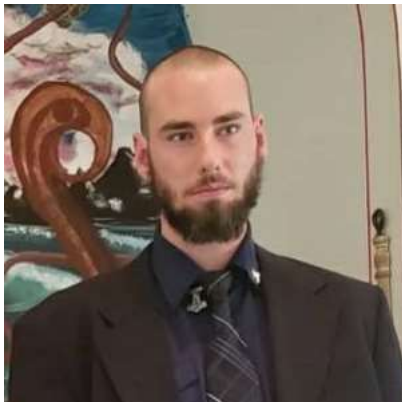
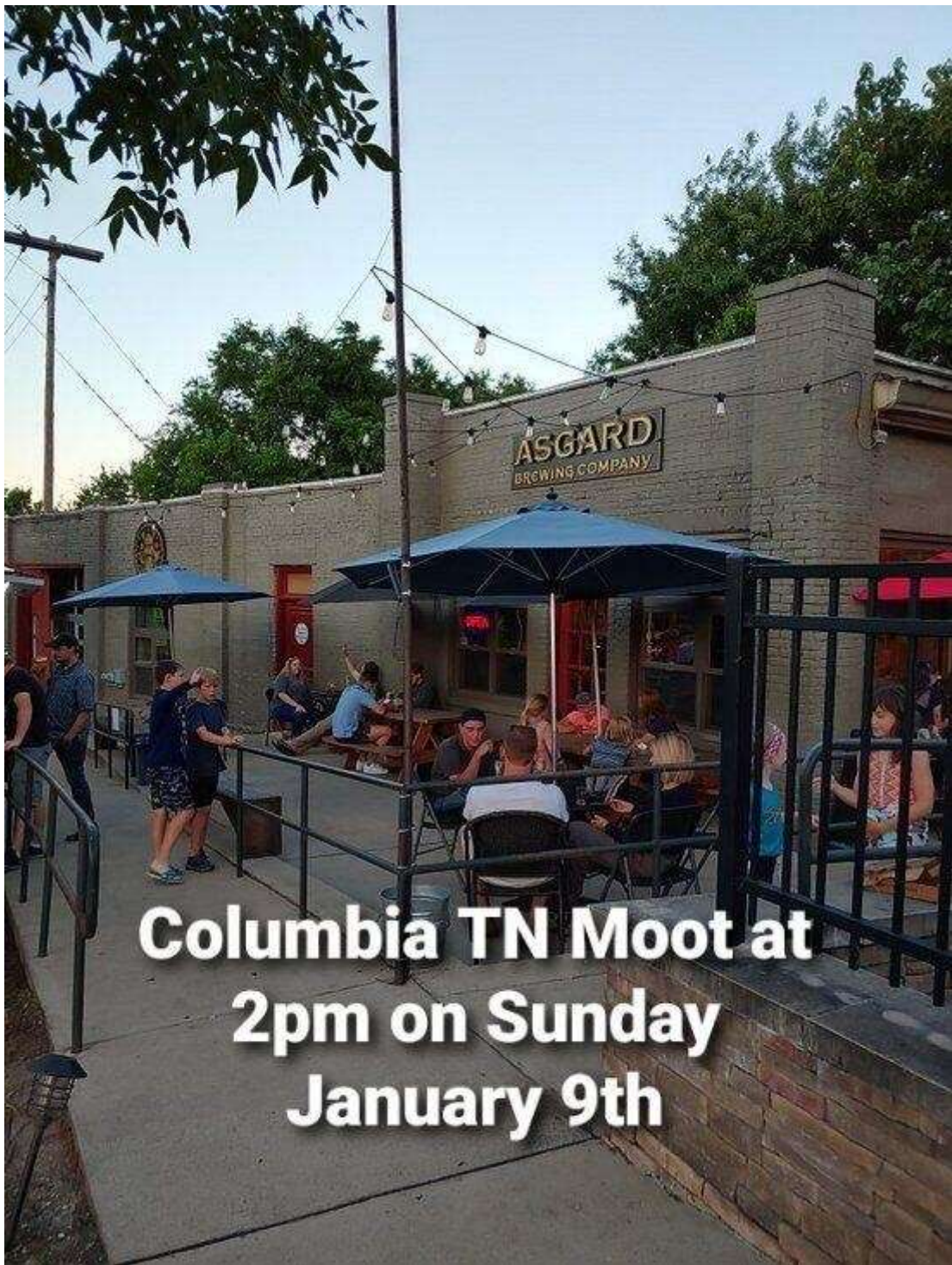
### *Columbia Moot*



I took a small walk on a trail by the river, a cool place to take a stroll. We have paths through the woods and paths through the town. We met up on the square and went to a restaurant called Puckett that was right on the square. The food was very good. Then, we headed over to the Asgard Brewery, where a Norse friend came by and talked with us.

There are many great things to do in Columbia, TN. Ranging from the square, places to walk, the Brewery, and living Asatru. We will be meeting here every 2nd Sunday of the month in hopes to build a larger Asatru community in Columbia.

### *Upcoming Events*



Jesse Parton  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[jparton@runestone.org](mailto:jparton@runestone.org)

---

## Virginia



Heather Bedford  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[hbedford@runestone.org](mailto:hbedford@runestone.org)

### *Alfarblot 2021*



Last night we celebrated Alfarblot for the 11th Day of Yule. Many gathered in my hall to share with us to honor the Alfar. The laughter of children, the great memories made, and the good food shared amongst the Folk built upon the Frith of those gathered. There was a great feeling of kinship shared between those present, laughter and bells ringing heard from little feet running through the house while we all looked at the kids playing. It was a night I will always treasure, and keep the fire lit for those of the Folk to know the welcoming beacon of a friend is always nearby.



Folkbuilder Cody Raynard  
[craynard@runestone.org](mailto:craynard@runestone.org)

### *South German 12th Night Tradition*



Greetings all! I hope everyone has had a wonderful Yuletide!

So, this month I wanted to keep it lighthearted and share with you a fine Bavarian tradition. On New Year's day, the local gun club goes out and rings in the new year by firing black powder blunderbusses. The first recorded instance of this is in the 1600s, however, it is generally believed to be much older and harken back to pagan times when German men would make noise with cowbells and drums to wake up spring from her slumber. This of course occurs at the end of Yuletide when the Germanic new year begins. Many Bavarian traditions still practiced to this very day have their origins in pre-Christian times. Another Bavarian tradition for New Year's Eve is giant bonfires. Another fun tradition from elder times was that no clothes washing is done during Yule, and especially on the 12th night. This is still a folk custom in much of Germany. It was believed that if you have clothes on the line on New Year's Eve, Wotan would get

tangled in the clothesline on his way back from the wild hunt, and you would have bad luck the rest of the year. Even with modern electric dryers, the superstition is observed by many.

Happy new year to you all, and I hope we see many of you for Ostara in the south at Thorshof! It promises to be a grand event!



Gothi Rob Stamm  
[rstamm@runestone.org](mailto:rstamm@runestone.org)



Witan Svan Herul  
[sherul@runestone.org](mailto:sherul@runestone.org)

---

## West Virginia

*Grandmom's Springerle Recipe*





Springerle is a traditional German pastry made around yuletide and enjoyed through January. Flavored with anise oil for its distinctive "licorice" taste and designed to sprout up in the shape of a mushroom cap, it is an ancient yuletide delicacy with roots deep in pagan Europe.

"Bildergebäck," pastries with imprinted designs, have been used as sacrificial offerings as far back as the Indus Valley culture and ancient Egypt, and through cultural exchange over millennia the practice spread to Greece and eventually Rome. Their use spread to our Homelands north of the Danube through centuries of contact between Rome and our Germanic ancestors, where it became a native delicacy with spiritual implications. (The Christian Eucharist wafer, imprinted with a cross, is an example of borrowing of the native sacrificial tradition). Anise is native to the eastern Mediterranean region and its cultivation likely spread to Germania through this exchange as well.

I grew up with these delightful treats and they have always been my favorite. In fact, I refuse to let Yule pass without making one or more batches! My family has an old Springerle recipe, passed down through my mother and grandmother that I'd love to share with you, word for word from a handwritten notebook.

You will need a springerle roller, a special rolling pin made just for this purpose. Please read the whole recipe before starting, or you will just make a mess!



### SPRINGERLE COOKIES

3, 1/2 to 4 cups flour

4 eggs

3,1/2 cups (1lb) powdered sugar

1/4 tsp anise oil

1/4 tsp baking powder

Mix eggs (beaten), oil, and sugar with an electric mixer. Flyff eggs as much as possible. Add baking powder and flour.

You will have to knead it by hand to get all of the flour to mix in.

**DO NOT ADD WATER.** If it is too dry, instead add less flour.

You would have to use EXTRA LARGE EGGS to use 4 cups of flour. If you only use large eggs it will be less. (I suppose you could try using 5 large eggs).

Divide dough in 1/2.

Shape dough into blocks, the width of the springerle roller, and about 1/2 inch thick.

Roll with springerle roller.

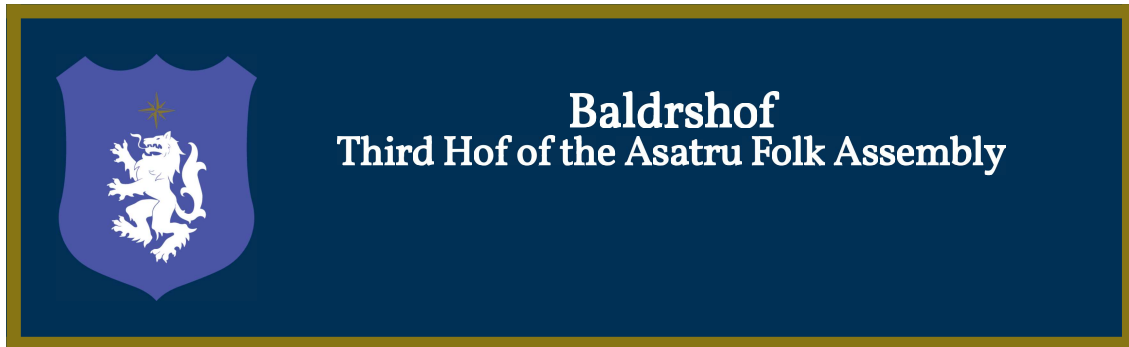
Push on the sides a bit to shape them and puff up the designs.

Set out on an ungreased cookie sheet overnight. Cover with wax paper.

Bake 300° for 1/2 hour. One pan at a time.



Patrick Cook  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[pcook@runestone.org](mailto:pcook@runestone.org)



## Arkansas

### *Old Time Yule in Oklahoma*

Also, members in Arkansas Missouri, and Louisiana have been getting together for weekly zooms talking about our Gods Goddesses and the runes.

For information on these calls and future events please email [towens@runestone.org](mailto:towens@runestone.org).

*Old Time Yule in Oklahoma*



We had an amazing Yule in Oklahoma this year. We spent our time spending time with our folk making memories from making cookies and ornaments, finding and decorating the Yule tree, and wassailing.





Micheal Sessumes led two amazing blots and should be proud to have pulled it off so well. He did a Njord blot by the water and an Odin's blot. He also led a baby naming ceremony.





Let's not forget about Melissa, without her Yule in Oklahoma wouldn't happen. She did all the hardest work from planning the activities to decorating and planning the meals. I look forward to next year celebrating Yule again with such amazing people.



Tabetha Owens  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[towens@runestone.org](mailto:towens@runestone.org)

*Midhearth Kindred*



This Month in Arkansas has been great! We help plan a multi-state Yule Event in Oklahoma at the start of the month with a lot of games and events.



We held an Odin's blot that was the best I've ever done and also held a baby naming for a local AFA family.



I personally took an oath and joined Midhearth Kindred and with them held another Yule event at end of the month! Been a busy month and am excited for this upcoming new year!



Michael Sessumes

Folkbuilder

[mssesses@runestone.org](mailto:mssesses@runestone.org)

---

## Illinois

*A Hike Through the Gods Gardens*





December was an extremely exciting month here in Southern Illinois. I'm consistently in a state of awe at the quality of folk that we have here in the AFA. Faithful, hardworking, and honorable folk. Every month I've been making it a point to get somewhere new and meet members of our church that I haven't had the pleasure of meeting yet. October was Hrafnagud kindred, November was Mid-Hearth, and in December, I was able to travel up and meet some of the local members that live near and continuously support Baldrshof. I'm not stopping there, and there are big plans on the horizon for January as well.

We started December off with a nice moot, hiking at a local state park called the Garden of the Gods. Sculpted by the elemental forces of an ancient inland shallow sea, the park has some of the most amazing views around. Some of the best sights lie on a very accessible half-mile trek, and we were thrilled to be able to bring our dogs out for some nice exercise and play-time on the trail. The way nature works is amazing, and the inspiration of the Gods is evident everywhere we look.



### *Traveling North for Yule*

As I alluded to earlier, I was blessed with being able to travel this month up to Baldrshof. It was my first time in one of our proud halls, and from the moment I left, my only thoughts have been on how and when I can get back to a hof as soon as possible. I was pleased to be able to ride up with another member from my area and spend the weekend getting to know him as well as our folk in Minnesota better.

It was truly an honor to take part in multiple blots led by some of the AFA's finest

leaders, with Witan Callahan and Folkbuilder Erlandson leading a particularly moving Wotansblot on one of the evenings. We followed that up with an amazing Sumble, praising the Gods, sharing stories, laughs, and tears. I was honored to read a story I found recently when doing research in an old Runestone article. I've shared it on MeWe recently, but I know with the recent transition, not everyone may have seen it, and I definitely hope you can glean even a little of what I have felt from it.

---

## ULLR'S GIFTS TO HUNTER

by WulthuthewaR

Long ago, in the days before man received the gift of iron or runes, he hunted. During the long, cold winters, it was the heart of the tribe. Long after the plants were gone, hunting provided food. Long after Sunna's warmth had gone, it provided furs for warmth.

The whole tribe hunted together as the whole tribe ate together. With nets, they captured the large game, with rocks and sticks they killed the small ones. All was well.

Until the year the tribe almost died.

It was a harsh winter. Cold enough that a sapling bent to set a snare would snap. Cold enough that the people had to go far out on the ice to breakthrough for water. Cold enough that a child grew deathly ill.

The child's sickness swept through the tribe, making everyone too weak to hunt, save one. He was called Hunter, for he was the best at killing a rabbit with a thrown rock or stick.

He tended his tribe, waiting for the sickness to pass. None died, but none regained their strength. Then the stored food was gone, and the fever did not pass.

Hunter gathered his rabbit sticks and went out. The snow was deep, and Hunter had to force his way through it. The hares and rabbits, who walk on the crust of the snow, heard him and stayed out of his range. Hunter wished that he too could walk on the snow, but he was not a rabbit and had to return home at the end of the day without food.

And his tribe grew weaker, and his daughter no longer answered when he talked to her.

The next day he took the tribe's nets out to the trails the larger animals left in the snow. He found two trees close on either side of the trail and placed the net across it. Hunter then circled far around and, with his flint-tipped spear, waited beside the trail. Deer rushed down the trail towards his net but stopped in front of it. Hunter rushed towards them, yelling and hoping to scare them into the net, but they ran around it. Hunter threw his spear, but even at his closest, he was far out of range.

Without others to cast the net, the deer could not be caught.

Again Hunter returned home unsuccessful. And now many of his tribe no longer spoke, and all were close to death.

The next day Hunter brought all of the tribe's nets. Hunter skillfully created a trap from them, so that no matter which way the deer ran they would be ensnared. Hunter again circled far around and, with his flint-tipped spear, Hunter waited.

A bull moose ran down the path and, being poor of sight, into the net. Angered, it began tearing the precious nets to pieces. In horror, Hunter jumped forward and thrust the spear into the moose. But a spear thrust will not kill a moose, and Hunter had to climb a tree for his life.

As Hunter sat in the tree, he felt a new type of cold, this one starting from his heart and flowing out. Hunter had failed. He could not provide food for his tribe, and without food, all would die. Hunter wept for his people.

A movement in the snow caught Hunter's attention. He watched in amazement at a tall man walking across the top of the deep snow carrying a bent stave. Hunter had never seen a man such as this before. who seemed to shine brighter than the snow. He looked at his feet and saw that he walked on nets stretched between sticks. The man stopped before Hunter and reached up, touching his tears.

"My people," said Hunter "they die. They are starving and I cannot feed them."

The brilliant man pointed across the field toward several deer, who were poking their heads deep into the snow to graze.

"I have tried." Hunter said, "but they are too wary for me to net alone, too wary for me to approach in this snow."

The man lifted his bow. He pulled an arrow from his quiver and fitted it to the string. How strange thought Hunter, yet his heart raced with excitement. With a snap, the bow sent an arrow across the field, dropping a deer.

Something else snapped in Hunter's mind, and he fell from the low branch. Suddenly he understood the bow, and how it sent the arrow further and faster than he could throw it. Suddenly he understood the snowshoes, and how they trapped the snow like a hunting net.

He got to his feet and looked around. The man was gone, but his belongings remained. "Who are you?" breathed Hunter. A voice inside his head told him "You will hear my name in the howl of the wolves," and he shivered.

Hunter picked up the snowshoes and looked at them. "We can make these!" he said and tied them to his feet.

Hunter picked up the quiver of arrows and examined one. "We can make these!" he said and tied the wolf hide belt around his waist.

Hunter picked up the bow and drew the string. "We can make this!" he said and slung it across his chest.

Hunter then hurried to the deer, for he had many to feed in the coming days. As he dragged it home, he heard wolves in the distance. He listened to them calling to him who is first among them.

“Uuuuulllll” they called.

"Ull" Hunter replied.

---

I was also happy to have been able to give a small talk on the importance and traditions of Yule while at Baldrshof. Although this isn't the medium for me to go into all of it in detail, I will quote the one piece that I have held on to the most through the nights of Yuletide. Joining the AFA and stepping up as an aspiring leader has truly been about coming home for me, about finding that family.

“Another important note of Yule is that of community, of the clan, of our folk. To Asatruar, our ancestral line is ONE – past and present and future. We are the summation of all who have gone before us – our gods and ancestors one and the same, and we will

be the ancestors of our children and their children so. Yule is a time for family, the nuclear family we have in our homes, our clan and kindred family, our folk family, our AFA family, but also our family throughout time.”

Shortly before making the drive up, I asked some of our northern folk how the weather was, and I should have known when they said it was fine, that their definition and mine were going to be a little different. All in all, it wasn't bad...Illinois gets snow and freezing temps, so that wasn't anything I couldn't deal with...if I had prepared. Ladies and Gents, bring proper head-coverings to our northern hof. A nice week of coughs and sniffles made returning to work after the trip oh so fun. Every second of it, however, was so very much worth it. Getting to spend time with members of both the Northern Blood and SigTyr kindreds, seeing all of the little children (OUR FUTURE) running around and playing, I wouldn't and couldn't trade those times for anything. The meals were excellent too, and speaking of that food, it was nice to be able to see first-hand giving back to the community through their food bank giveaway.

As I said in last month's issue, I am so excited for the coming year...to not only see how much I can grow and achieve but just to sit and watch as I know the AFA folk are going to do big things. And I don't think it's much of a hint to suggest that we ought to all be getting our trunks and preparing to book for a warm-water vacation pretty soon.



I can't leave off here without reminding everyone that January 9th is Remembrance Day for Raud the Strong, and in his honor, we'll be holding a moot here in Southern

Illinois. Reach out to me for details and to RSVP. Look forward to seeing you there!

Hail the Gods!

Hail the Folk!

Hail the AFA!



Nicholas Rice  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[nrice@runestone.org](mailto:nrice@runestone.org)

### *December Moot in Illinois*



AFA members in northern Illinois gathered for a moot and ethnic Polish meal on December 12. Although turnout for this event was rather light, we are looking forward to our annual Thorrablot celebration next month.



James Cummings  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[jcumings@runestone.org](mailto:jcumings@runestone.org)

---

## Manitoba (Canada)

*The Winter Wind Down*







Happy Yul to all,

Winter in Manitoba is finally here, we were blessed with above-normal temperatures for most of the fall and early winter, but as of last week we are in the -20c (-4F) during the day to -45c (-49F) at night.

We have been having lots of get-togethers with like-minded people, celebrated Yul with a good group out near us.

Our animals are all nicely settling into the cold weather thanks to good straw and food. We are bottle feeding 2 piglets that their mama rejected, and they are doing great, getting really big fast.

I enjoy wintertime, I love the fire in our stove (which is how we heat our house and shop 100%), the smell of the smoke, the rising of the smoke out of the chimney. It's nice to be able to relax and wind down from the hectic spring/summer/fall pace of farming and raising 5 children.

We are doing projects like tie-dying shirts, melting and making beeswax candles, working on fixing vehicles, plowing the snow, playing outside on sleds, and enjoying life to the fullest.

Our hopes are that all our folk take this time to relax and enjoy our families and friends, appreciate all that the Gods have given to us, and ask for their blessing as the days get longer and our thoughts turn to another year of great things to come from the AFA and

our folk.

Merry Yul to all from the Sydorenko family.



Trevor Sydorenko  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[tsydorenko@runestone.org](mailto:tsydorenko@runestone.org)

---

## Minnesota

*Virtue Recovery Meeting - Fidelity*



The virtue recovery meeting is still going strong, for our Asatruar that are striving to be their best selves and have struggled with dependency. We are able to be a hybrid meeting. This means that some of us meet together, but those who cannot join in with us via zoom! This opens up the ability for anyone to log on and listen, speak or just observe what we are all about! We are currently averaging 5-10 attendees! Member Josh Hemmingson and I are very proud of where our meeting has gone and look forward to it growing more and more!

This is the 4th article so we will be looking at our 4th step that incorporates the virtue of Fidelity. “We admit to the Gods, to another human being, and to OURSELVES the exact nature of our wrong choices. Virtue: FIDELITY: ‘Holding honesty as my honor, I stand before the Gods, my ancestors, and a trusted companion, and lay forth the poison I found within’”

In this, we emphasize admitting to ourselves, sometimes we are able to justify and rationalize past unfortunate choices by simply putting it out of our minds, to have to actively and consciously address things, makes us able to accept those things and truly make the improvements we need so as not to make those poor decisions again.

Fidelity is a loyalty. Though the term is often attributed to a romantic commitment, it is truly a loyalty to everything you are to find true and necessary in your own life. To our ancestors, our careers, our folk, our children, our lover, and of course to ourselves. Having the unshakeable fidelity to be the ABSOLUTE best and virtuous person we can be means that we can conquer any weakness and have unimaginable potential to do our people good.

If you would like the link information for our weekly meeting, which is every Friday at 5 pm CST, please contact apprentice Folkbuilder Ashley McStocker at [AMcStocker@runestone.org](mailto:AMcStocker@runestone.org)! Anyone is welcome to join!



Ashley Mcstocker  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[amcstocker@runestone.org](mailto:amcstocker@runestone.org)



Folkbuilder Nathan Erlandson  
[nerlandson@runestone.org](mailto:nerlandson@runestone.org)

*First Annual Yule weekend at Baldrshof*



Hard to believe that it's the end of 2021 already! December 17th-19th was the first Yule weekend at Baldrshof. It was such an amazing weekend! The Hof was decked out in holiday decor and Yule trees were decorated and lit up. The kids opened presents and the adults exchanged gifts and we had a lore trivia game led by Witan Brandy Callahan. We feasted and watched cheesy Holiday movies.



*Food Pantry at Baldrshof*



Saturday was the monthly food distribution and we handed out food to several families in the local community. I look forward to these every month and seeing the locals.

Join The Northern Blood Kindred on Sunday, January 9th at 11 am at Minnehaha Falls Park in South Minneapolis for our Walkabout with Wotan hike. Afterward, we will have lunch at a local pub. Northern Blood Kindred has several events in the works and will be posting them soon.

If interested please contact [jgallagher@runestone.org](mailto:jgallagher@runestone.org).

### ***Upcoming events at Baldrshof and Minnesota***

1/9 Walkabout with Wotan hike at Minnehaha Falls hosted by Northern Blood Kindred at 11 am

1/15 Monthly Food Distribution at 10 am-12 pm and Thorrablot at 12 pm-6 pm at Baldrshof

2/12 Charming of the Plow at Baldrshof

2/19 Monthly Food Distribution at Baldrshof at 10 am-12 pm and Work Day at 12 pm-6 pm

3/19 Monthly Food Distribution at 10 pm - 12 pm and Ostara at Baldrshof at 12 pm-6 pm



**JOIN NORTHERN  
BLOOD KINDRED  
FOR A WINTER  
WALKABOUT WITH  
WOTAN  
1/9/22**

**RSVP WITH  
FOLKBUILDER  
JASON GALLAGHER**





**JOIN NORTHERN  
BLOOD KINDRED  
FOR A HIKE  
AT 9 MILE CREEK  
BLOOMINGTON, MN  
2/6/22**



NORTHERN BLOOD KINDRED  
OUR BLOOD RUNS DEEP



**JOIN NORTHERN  
BLOOD KINDRED  
FOR OUR MONTHLY  
HIKE**

**Folkbuilder Jason Gallagher**  
Join Northern Blood Kindred for our  
monthly hike at Fort Snelling State Park  
in Bloomington, MN March 13th.

RSVP with Folkbuilder Jason Gallagher  
[jgallagher@runestone.org](mailto:jgallagher@runestone.org)

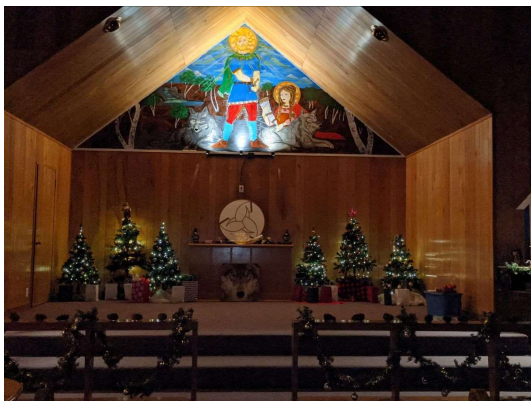


Folkbuilder Jason Gallagher  
[jgallagher@runestone.org](mailto:jgallagher@runestone.org)

*Yule at Baldrshof*

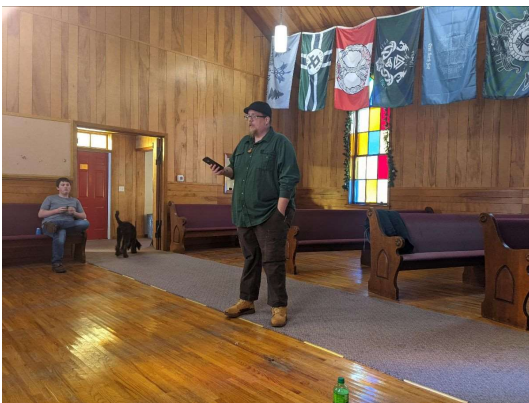


Our first Yule at Baldrshof brought families together from all over the district! Our local families, leadership, and members from North Dakota, Minnesota, and Illinois traveled through snowstorms and icy road conditions to spend a 3 day weekend with their Folk.



The Yule celebration started Friday afternoon with finishing the decorating of the Hof for the season. Trees were decorated for each of the AFA Kindreds in the district by their kindred members or representative. Evergreens and ornaments of gold were hung throughout the Hof. The AFA tree stood in the center of the feast hall, decorated with gold, blue, and ivory decorations. The Folk gathered in the early afternoon in blot to welcome the gods. Later in the day, our Alsherjargothi addressed the Folk via video conference and updated us on the state of the AFA and upcoming plans for 2021. We

feasted on ham and roasted sweet potatoes for dinner and spent the remainder of the evening sharing Frith, building new relationships, and watching horrible Yule movies.



Saturday after breakfast, Apprentice Folkbuilder Nick Rice from Illinois presented an educational talk about Yule. Following our lunch of wild rice soup and Monte Cristo sliders, the Folk gathered to witness 2 beautiful rites. Odin James, son of Josh Hemmingson of Minnesota, was named in front of the Folk and Gods with Folkbuilder Nathan Erlandson and Apprentice Folkbuilder Ashley McStocker standing as witnesses and godparents. Member Branden Fassett of North Dakota and his wife Jessica also renewed their wedding vows since the Yule celebration was held on the weekend of their anniversary. Following the rites, the children gathered on the steps to open gifts, and the adults gathered for a gift exchange. Folkbuilder Melisa Mills spoke with the Folk about Yule traditions in the late afternoon. The evening's feast was ham and pork shoulder with baked potatoes and vegetables. Following the feast, our Yule Blot was conducted in the sanctuary which included the lighting of each kindred tree and the AFA flame followed by an Odinsblot.



Sunday morning, the Folk gathered to say their goodbyes. Wayfarer Blot was conducted after breakfast.

Apprentice Folkbuilder Jaime Alainn and Witan Brandy Callahan stayed into the afternoon to get the Hof ready to receive Folk for the next event.

*Baldrshof 2021 Recap*



It has been an amazing year at Baldrshof. January 2021 arrived with lots of work left to be done to the basement and sanctuary to get us ready for the official dedication in March. It had been a long road up until that point, and the team was in overdrive getting things ready. Work continued nearly every weekend between January and the end of March.

Our major building improvements this year include the completion of the construction downstairs, numerous coats of paint throughout the building, removal of carpet, updated bathroom plumbing, construction of the front stairs and privacy screen, our murals, and removal of the deteriorating ramp on the side of the building.

Since the dedication in March, Baldrshof has been overflowing with Folk, more workdays, and wonderful events. Local members have been diligent in their care of the Hof and its grounds, ensuring that the temple is worthy of its name and the Shining One that it honors. Within its walls, Baldrshof has already seen two ordinations, several Folkbuilder Oaths, a National Event, two weddings, and a baby naming in its first year.

Our Food Shelf, held on the third Saturday of every month has helped numerous families in the immediate and surrounding communities, many families even being referred to our Food Shelf by other churches in the area. Gothar Jason and Anna Plourde were instrumental in setting up the Food Shelf and Folkbuilder Nathan Erlandson and Apprentice Folkbuilder Ashley McStocker were able to utilize strong

community bonds which have provided support and food since the beginning. I'm very proud of Nathan and Ashley for their recent successes with the Food Shelf as they have fully taken on this great responsibility.

Nearly everything that happened at Baldrshof this year was a first. Our first Ostara or Midsummer, our first National Event, our first oaths, our first wedding or baby naming. As we go forward into 2022, the newness and excitement of the "first" are being replaced with the confidence of "the best yet" as we take everything, we learned from 2021, all the hours of brainstorming and dreaming and planning, and create even more beautiful events and memories in 2022.

I would like to take a moment to thank the amazing people who really made beautiful things happen at the Hof this year.

We all wish Gothar Jason and Anna Plourde, the first Gothi and Gythia of Baldrshof, all the best in their new endeavors! Gythia Plourde has been a driving force of Baldrshof since literally day one when she picked up the keys to the building and posted the very first pictures. The leadership and Folk of Baldrshof send you both all the best and happiness!

The Hof Management Team of Folkbuilder Nathan Erlandson and Apprentice Folkbuilder Ashley McStocker will be taking over the huge responsibility of the project and permit management at Baldrshof in 2022. These two amazing Folk have worked side by side with me for months, planning repairs, projects, and events.

Apprentice Folkbuilder Cormag Jaime Alainn has taken over the job as Hof Historian for Baldrshof and is doing an absolutely amazing job in his role. His smiling face, camera, and bright optimism for our future have really brought something special to Baldrshof.

The steady heartbeat of Baldrshof this year has been Folkbuilder Jason Gallagher of Minnesota. His dedication has never wavered, and he has given 110% of himself to make Baldrshof's first year a success.

The Mills family from Missouri and Ault family from Wisconsin have also been a contributor to the Hof's success. Both families have traveled quite a long distance to attend numerous events and helped them run successfully.

Thank you, especially, to the Folk who fill the Hof each month with their laughter, stories, children, and food! Also, to the Folk who travel from hours away to spend the

weekend with their Folk. While cleaning up after Yule this year, after the last of the Folk had left to make their way home, I was struck by the calm stillness of the Hof, as if the building itself was holding its breath, just waiting for its Folk to return.

*Upcoming Events*



Join your Folk  
at Baldrshof  
to celebrate  
**Thorrablót**

Saturday, January 22  
10 am to 6 pm

Potluck Feasts  
Blót  
Sumbel  
Children's Crafts  
Frith & Folk

*Baldrshof 2022 Calendar*





# Baldrshof Calendar

## 2022

- 1/15 - Food Shelf
- 1/22 - Thorrablot
- 2/19 - Charming of the Plow / Food Shelf
- 3/4 - 3/6 - Ostara
- 3/19 - Food Shelf
- 4/16 - Food Shelf
- 4/30 - May Day
- 5/21 - Food Shelf
- 6/18 - Food Shelf
- 6/24 - 6/26 - Midsummer
- 7/16 - Food Shelf
- 7/23 - Sigrblot
- 8/20 - Freyfaxi / Food Shelf
- 9/2 - 9/4 - Fallfest
- 9/17 - Food Shelf
- 10/15 - Food Shelf
- 10/29 - Winternights
- 11/19 - Food Shelf
- 11/26 - Folksgiving & Feast of the Einherjar
- 12/9 - 12/11 - Yule
- 12/17 - Food Shelf

Witan Brandy Callahan

[bcallahan@runestone.org](mailto:bcallahan@runestone.org)



---

## Missouri

*A Whirlwind of Activities and Adventures to End the Year!*





Who hit the fast forward button back in August?!

Whew! It has been a very eventful and successful year for our folk!

In November, the Feast of the Einherjar took place in the heart of the country! On the weekend of Nov 11th, many gathered in MO. They came from California, South Carolina, Illinois, Kansas, WI, Nevada, and MN (and maybe a few more) and we all honored our fallen in a glorious Blot beautifully put together by Gothi Svan Herul. It was a moving and spiritual experience. One which would not have been complete without the ship built by John Veger, we owe him our gratitude for doing so. Thank you, John. And thank you as well to James Ault for putting the Valknut together (I am known it had some issues, but you made it look amazing in the end).

Also, To Stephan McNallen, the Odin Blot you did was spectacular, and we were all honored to have been there for it. Thank you for joining us.



To Matt Flavel, we appreciated you taking the time to be there with us and making sure

our Sumble was a deeply felt experience.

To Garth and Mary thank you for letting us be a part of your big day! And trusting us to help with your wedding. We wish you a long and happy life of love and laughter!

To Karen and Dalton Woodward, thank you for letting your community come together to welcome your son to Midgard! We were honored. Many blessings.

And to the crew that made ideas become a reality for this year's Feast of the Einherjar:

Lutisha Wilson

JR Wilson

Ashley McStocker

Nathan Erlandson

Michael Sessumes

You all are top-notch! We did justice to our fallen, held a wedding and a baby naming, and had a beautiful time building the bonds of our community!

Hail the doers!

You are all most appreciated and valued members of our community!



Folksgiving saw folk from AR, MO, TN, and Il gathered to feast and give thanks for all we have. With a special emphasis on our folk. We truly have the best people!



We decorated and burned the Yule log, and everyone got a piece to take home to light their own Yule fires with. We feasted, we wassailed, we hauled in our tree together and decorated it. We had a visit from Papa Yule and sat in the candlelight for a story like in days of old. We played a raucous game called The Wild Hunt, invented by Malike Sussens and Shea McCurdy. (Don't worry, most of them made it out alive!)

We also celebrated the 16th Birthday of Rex Young! A hard-working a valued member of our folk. He also bought his first 3 piece suit this month, on his own, and he looks way too grown-up now!

But the most wonderful thing we did was foster a love for our Yule festival and build the bonds of kinship that sparked a new excitement and activity in Oklahoma. Great things are rising there! If you are in Oklahoma and you missed this, reach out to Shea and get involved! You have a whole community of top-notch people there!



That same weekend we ended with the Baby Naming ceremony for Turner Avanesdian, officiated by Michael Sessumes. Turner is the 1st son of Emma and Christian Avanesian. Congratulations and many blessings!



Missouri's Mid-Hearth Kindred held a small Yule event with members and a few close friends and oathed in 3 new members! Laura Low, Michael Sessumes, and Jesse Parton! We also made sure the children of our community knew they were important to us and that we will all be there to set an example and to lend an ear and a hand when needed. That we will do our part to make sure they have a solid foundation from which to become the leaders of tomorrow.

And now that the holidays are winding down, some of us gather for the 12th night and prepare to usher in the new year, we hope you are all blessed with abundance, joy, and hope!

From our Hearth to yours, Happy Holidays and a prosperous New Year!



Folkbuilder Melisa Mills  
[mmills@runestone.org](mailto:mmills@runestone.org)

---

## North Dakota

### *12/11/21 Winter Hike in North Dakota*



On Saturday, December 11th we went for an afternoon hike in the wintry landscape of North Dakota.

Starting in Fort Ransom State Park, we left the visitor center at 12:30 in the afternoon. Starting the hike didn't seem all that difficult. Though there was new snow that had fallen on the ground, and clearly, no one had walked there since, it wasn't very deep, so it was easy going. Looking around at the dead trees and the frozen landscape was a wonderful sight. It was especially pleasurable to walk over the tops of small streams that were still flowing amidst the snow-covered earth.

For the briefest of moments there was consideration to taking the shorter trail that was present, but what fun would that be? In the end, it was settled to walk the longest trail in the park. This meant walking to the tops of hills which, I daresay, are the nearest thing to mountains we have around here. It was truly spectacular standing at the tops of those snow-covered hills and looking out over the landscape, but the hike was only just beginning.



Following the tracks of deer lead through winding pathways through the trees and into ravines and small valleys. Eventually, this led all the way to the far side of the park. This is where things got difficult.

The snow became very thick and before long it was getting up to 6 to 8 inches deep. Every step was a challenge. Worst of all you couldn't really see what was beneath the snow. I found myself taking a step onto the snow and falling straight through breaking the ice underneath and plunging my foot into a small stream more than once. It became a fun challenge.

After about 4 1/2 hours it started to get a little spooky as the sun began to fall behind the hills. It was uncertain whether it would be possible to make it back to the visitor center before the darkness fully enveloped the land. Yet as the sun grew dimmer it only seemed to add to the magic of the earth.

Finding a rock formation near the trail was a special occurrence. Here a small prayer was set to the Land Wights asking their blessing for the passage before moving on. I don't think it can be overstated how important it is to stay connected to nature, and to the wights that live in it. Overall, it was a fantastic day and I look forward to sharing beautiful moments like this with our folk again in the future.

Hail the Gods! Hail the folk! Hail the AFA!

*Acceptance*



When something bad happens it's normal to rage against it. It's in our nature to fight or to try to improve our situation. Accepting things as they are can be a very difficult thing to do, especially when we find ourselves forced to accept something very negative.

There's a phrase that I used to hear repeated by someone whom I cared for very much. At first, I found the utterance of this to be frustrating, they always said it when I would raise some issue that had caused us harm. Anytime something negative would happen in life or someone else would do something bad I would want to take action to change it, but my friend would always just say, "it is what it is."

I found this baffling. I just couldn't understand how they could simply accept something horrible and then move on as if it hadn't happened at all. Here I was furious at the injustice that had just been done, or ill-treatment we had received, but my friend didn't seem to be that bothered by it at all. I just didn't get it.

I always wanted to fight back; to change or remedy all ills. Yet, of course, there are

many things that we simply cannot change. When faced with some injustice against which you can do nothing what does anger get you? That anger and frustration can become nothing more than a poison that eats away at your own soul. It is true that when some wrong has been done we should seek to better things if it is within our power to do so, but when we have no power to change it all our attempts may do is further frustration. I never understood this and so I tortured myself trying to change things I either had no power over or no responsibility for.

It took me years to finally understand my friend's philosophy. You see I viewed their utterance of, "it is what it is," as a weakness. I saw it as an admittance of defeat; I saw it as a passivity that indicated submission. This frustrated me to no end until one day I was placed in a situation where something was happening that I found most disagreeable.

As is in my nature I immediately began looking for a solution. I tortured myself for weeks trying to find some way to fix this problem even though it was not my creation. Until finally I realized that the only thing, I could do was to accept the reality of what was happening and that I had no power to change it. All I could do was say, "it is what it is."

Acceptance is not weakness, or submission, or defeat. Rather it is the realization that sometimes we don't have the ability to change something and trying to do so is nothing more than masochism. Accepting the things, we cannot change does not mean that we allowed them to overcome us, but rather it means that we have decided not to allow them to control us. That we will seek our happiness and find the positive things in life rather than dwelling in the negative. It means seeing the darkness for what it is, but not allowing it to have power over you.

I once loathed the phrase, "it is what it is," but now I see those words as liberation. Change what you can, accept what you cannot.



Cormag Àlainn  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[calainn@runestone.org](mailto:calainn@runestone.org)

---

## Oklahoma

### *Building Hamingja*



Many of our central Oklahoma AFA members showed up to share skills and knowledge in an effort to complete projects for our fellow members and their families.

Being invited to improve someone's environment has a return on investment that one doesn't quite get from other deeds. A sentimentality is there when reminiscing about what it was like before and the teamwork that made the task all the more special.

When we cooperate and set sights on the same goal, our wyrd has an aspiration. The strength we attain from accomplishing such tasks has a physical nature, certainly, but the interaction together also grows our hamingja. For what fruit will we bear, when we agree to provide for our family, folk, and their future?

Meeting in frith lends itself to opportunities that create an abundant cycle of reciprocity, as well. Though this is new to our local circle, quickly we see the incredible potential this practice nurtures. For instance, building a greenhouse lends itself to productivity that can lead to food for everyone involved.

Our potential multiplies as we create reliable bonds with like-hearted individuals. With a bit of patience and perseverance and a heaping helping of doing, a bright future lies ahead of our Folk.

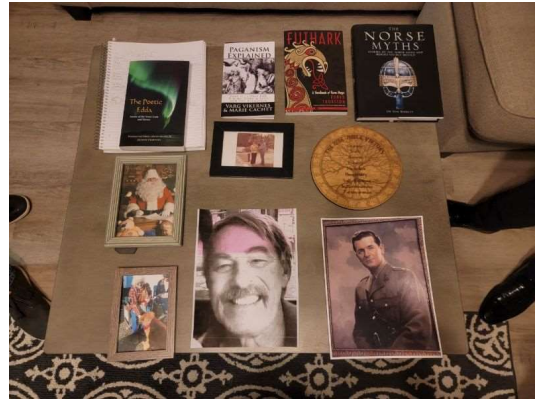


Shea McCurdy  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[smccurdy@runestone.org](mailto:smccurdy@runestone.org)

---

## Texas

*Texas Yule*



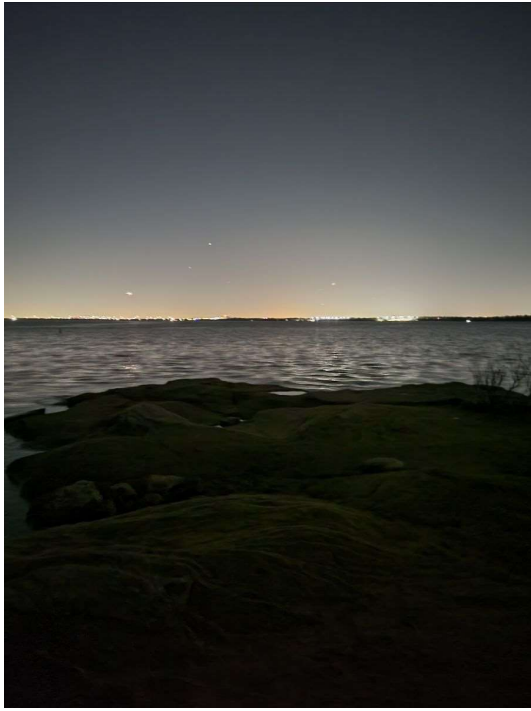
We celebrated Yule with a Blot honoring Freyr to set the tone for the New Year, a raffle, and dinner. Prosperity and fertility were our focus as we have a new member being born very soon as well as honoring our ancestors. Additionally, a new year ripe for success in our journeys was a focus.



Thomas Gleason  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[tgleason@runestone.org](mailto:tgleason@runestone.org)

*100 Names of Odin Ceremony*





On December 9th members of Fridr Folk Kindred Texas performed the 100 Names of Odin Ceremony on Lake Grapevine that one of our members brought back from our AFA brothers and sisters in Denmark and Sweden. We are so thankful to have such a great and loving worldwide family with which to share wisdom.

*Texas Viking Festival Moot*







On December 11th members of Fridr Folk Kindred held moot at the Texas Viking Festival at Valkyrie Ranch in Paige, Texas. We enjoyed everything from live music to tournaments of skill to the joy that comes from being around so many other great individuals who share the love for our pre-Christian Germanic/Nordic culture. Many thanks to Thorin's Meadery for throwing such a wonderful festival!

### *Celebrating Achievements*



On December 16th members of Friðr Folk Kindred held moot on the Denton Square to celebrate one of our member's graduation from flight school. We enjoyed a live jazz performance, drinks, great conversation, and a visit from Freya's familiar animal at the end of the night. We thank the Gods for the opportunity to gather our folk and to share frith!



Justin Day  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[jday@runestone.org](mailto:jday@runestone.org)

## Wisconsin

*December Past*



Hello Fellow Folk, I hope everyone had a wonderful Yuletide with Folk and Family alike! As we usher in the year to come, I look forward to continuing to connect with the AFA community and delight in the joy of folk souls awakening to honor the Gods as this beloved Assembly welcomes them home!!!



Our Wisconsin December was a wonderful one though we were not able to enjoy Yule at Baldurshof with everyone due to work schedules, Wisconsin members still come together regularly always to connect, and we celebrate in our homes when we can't. Our moot in December was very nice we gathered at Indian Lake County Park near Madison WI and went for a brisk hike up a hill overlooking an early German immigrant's homestead!!! Beautiful!! Folkbuilder Ault was kind enough to lead us in a blot to Wotan atop the overlook, we asked Wotan to awaken the ancestral blood memory of our people and heal our Folk!! Very powerful, thank you, Folkbuilder Ault! Followed by a wonderful picnic lunch my wife Kirsten planned and prepared for us all!! Thank you, sweetheart it was excellent! We ate outdoors in the Pavilion as we had wonderful weather and enjoyed Frith with great Folkish friends into the afternoon!!!

Josh Rapin



Apprentice Folkbuilder

[jrapin@runestone.org](mailto:jrapin@runestone.org)

### *Thorrablót*



Thorrablót is a perfect celebration at this time of year;  
January is a difficult time of year for a lot of farmers as well as just about everyone especially in the times past Norse/ Scandinavian/ North American cultures who didn't have access to modern grocery stores.  
Times were fraught with uncertainty;  
"Where's the next meal coming from, what shall we eat, is spring ever coming?"  
Questions abounded.

We celebrate this time of year by paying homage to our ancestors and their resolve and determination to survive by eating whatever there is left to eat with hopes that Thor will beat back the Frost Jotun and usher in spring once again.

Eating what our ancestors ate is hugely popular during this time in Scandinavia,

I personally would opt to fast and dedicate that to their struggle as I am not a fan of most of what they had to eat.



We are here because of their resolve to survive and achieve.

Thorrablót from its derivative meaning Thorra, from Thorinn: means Diminished.

Thorri: the month.

Thor: God of Thunder, sky, agriculture.

The time of this has little to do with, yet screams of association with Thor.

Our ancestors as we should harness and project to our folk, calling upon Thor to push

back the Frost Jotun so that spring will soon be ushered in.

Horns high!

Hail the Æsir!

Hail the ancestors!

Hail our folk!

Hail the AFA!



Folkbuilder James Ault

[jault@runestone.org](mailto:jault@runestone.org)



*Copyright © \*2020\* Asatru Folk Assembly, All rights reserved.*

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)



