

The Runestone: Voice of the Asatru Folk Assembly





## Óðinshof

First Hof of the Asatru Folk Assembly

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## Words from the Alsherjargothi



As 2023 comes to a close and we prepare to begin the 30<sup>th</sup> year of the AFA, it is time to take stock of where we are. It is time to take stock of the successes and failures of 2023 and how we can build upon those successes and correct the failures in 2024.

I am so proud and so happy to build my life and my family with my AFA brothers and sisters. We have something truly beautiful in our AFA. Those who come out and engage know this and it is absolutely life changing. Too many of our folk, some who are reading this, have not yet experienced the fullness of our church. We are real; we exist in the real world. I want to take this time to encourage all our Folk to come out and participate! Go to our Hofs. Go to the moots. Do Asatru in real life. This and every issue of the Runestone is packed with images of our amazing family getting together and building the life we want, together. If you are in these pictures, FANTASTIC! If you aren't, your folk want you to share this with us and we want to share it with you and your family.

We have amazing things ahead, and I am very excited to share all 2024's blessings with our beautiful AFA family!

Happy Yule!



Matthew D. Flavel  
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## Words From Our Gothar

*Asatru: More Than a Club*



“Asatru is so much more than just rollin’ with the homies!”  
 - Alsherjargothi Flavel, Midsummer 2023

\*Much of this piece was originally drafted a day or two after Midsummer at Óðinshof, which was in the middle of a small exodus of people who did not take Asatru or our Gods seriously. A few people left, and these few people were each followed by a few others whose loyalties were with their friends rather than the Æsir.\*

Some of our people who identify as Asatru seem to do so simply as a way to be different, as a path to a culture that is counter to the mainstreams of Christianity and atheism. As someone with very strong feelings on both Christianity and atheism, I can understand that aspect. However, these same people tend to treat our faith and our church as if they are nothing more than a club. It is nothing to them but another way to spend time with their buddies. This is the wrong way to look at Asatru, or any faith, for that matter.

The word Asatru means “loyal to the Æsir”, which translates to belief in our native Gods, as well as staying true to them. This is why the AFA has Hofs dedicated to the Æsir, rituals honoring and exchanging gifts with the Æsir, and ordained clergy to manage all of these things.

What we do here is not only real and serious, but will echo throughout the currents of time itself. Our ancestors are watching us from beyond the veil, raising cups or horns alongside us every time we hail our Gods and Folk. Our descendants are already being born into a world with multiple Hofs. Our present Folk are returning to the Æsir in

record numbers, never seen before and predicted only in the minds of optimistically pious.

Our Gods are with us- and by “us”, I will forever be speaking of the Asatru Folk Assembly.

This is not a club. This is not a hobby. This is real, because our Gods are real. This is who we are.



Gothi Trent East  
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*Call of the Wild: Kulning and Ladies' Chants in Modern Asatru*



Asatru is not just a living religion, but it allows for change in the 21st century. We're establishing customs and new traditions in the AFA that were previously unknown, as

far as we know. Our fundamental beliefs include cycles of rebirth, as in Sunna at the Solstice and bright Baldr's return. We also see ourselves as our Ancestors reborn.

A practice that was initiated at Midsummer 2010 is the ladies preparing the horn before blot. AFA elder David Byron James (who has long-since passed-on) presided over the blot where he had the women step aside into a circle "to speak words over the horn."

That basic ritual now ends in three special - magical - words that have been repeated hundreds of times at this point. Hundreds of babies have been born into the AFA since then. Let those words speak for themselves. The women know. The women have always known.

Some of our changes have taken place quite recently; in fact, since our own Witan, Brandy Callahan, stepped forth to lead. Anyone who has worked with her sees a rare fearlessness that she encourages in others. She has us ladies develop our own voices and presence in a dynamic, yet feminine manner. This is contrary to the more passive voice that we as women often exhibit.

My husband describes the nature of those voices coming together in the darkness on a moonless night as "eerie and inviting". From beyond the Winter Night's bonfire, comes the shrill call of "Wunjo! Wu-un jo!" Goose bumps are felt by all. Out from the darkness; out from the past; deep in the primal psyche of our Folk, the men know this call.

We call this "kulning"-- the women calling the beasts of the field and farm home. Home the men come to us, to the fire and abode of the Gods. Could Witan Callahan do more for us? In fact, she has. She's gathered the women to ritualize our chants in blot, to call the folk home. We look for ways to communicate these words, with the added magical essence is that we say the words in Swedish: "Folk kom hem!"

One time should be enough, however, we ritualize this by chanting in a sequence of gradually rising voices. As each verse reverberates, the decibels rise until we are shouting those words out through the cosmos, calling the folk home.

Meanwhile the men have stepped back, letting us wild women do our thing. In an outer circle, the men methodically intone the rune Raido to those "folk without" to begin the journey back to us and our noble, native ways. The intensity of our words together is meant to bring change. Does it work?

In November of this year, Oðinshof gained eleven new members, far more than previous months. It's not likely that we'll continue at this rate, but... why not? We ask

for the blessings and guidance of the Aesir and our Ancestors. Are we heard? I think so.

Know that you too can help “bring the folk home.” Intoning runic galdr of Raido, Wunjo, Mannaz, or calling “Fok kom hem” may bring someone home to Asatru. The old AFA slogan still has it right. “The Way of the Ancestors Calling us Home.”



Gythia Sheila McNallen

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

## We Remember You



It is with a heavy heart, that we announce the passing of Kamden Musser of Ohio. Called Kam by those who knew him, he was born in Indiana, Pennsylvania. Don't worry though, Ohio was still his most superior home!

Those who didn't know Kam well were still instantly aware of his friendly personality

by his big, easy smile. He loved a good joke, a good beer, and the companionship of his friends. Kam's love of history was rivaled by his love of animals. If he wasn't reading a good political history, you might be able to find him volunteering at his local animal shelter.

One thing that you could always be sure of with Kam was his love for his folk. He was loyal to those he cared for to a fault- to the AFA, to his kindred, Under Ash and Oak in Ohio, and most importantly, to his wife, Mary Jane.

All those who knew and cared for Kam knew that he was selfless, funny, and passionate. He will be missed by many.

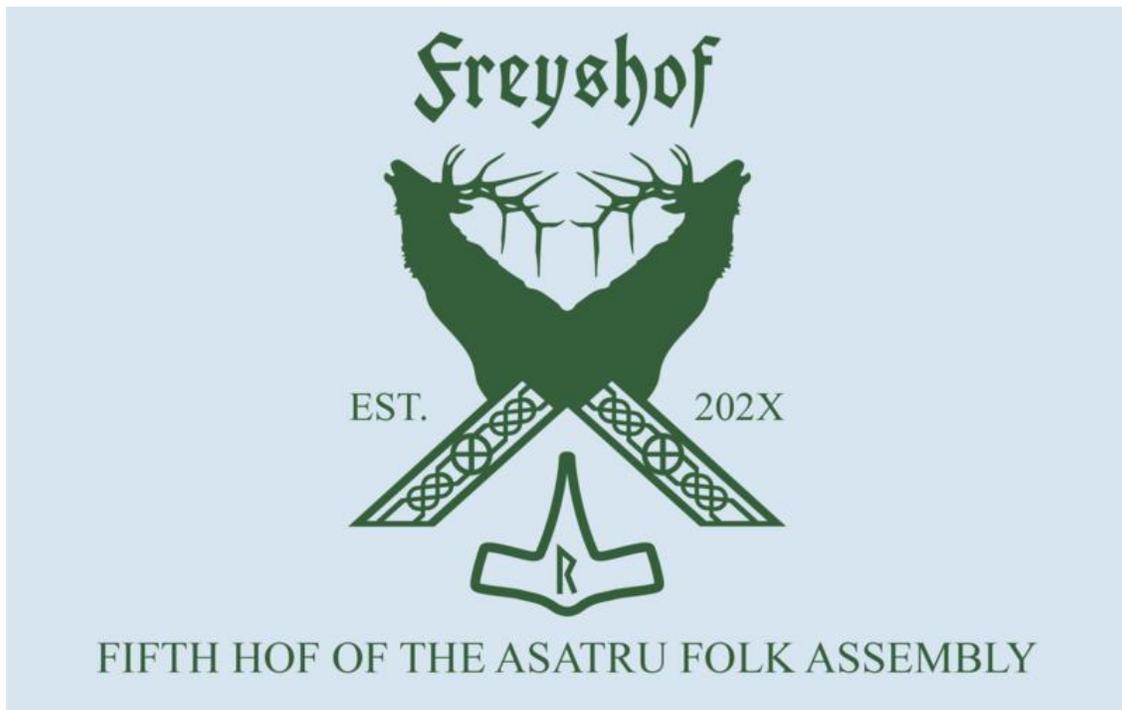
He will be remembered by many.

Hail Kamden Musser!

## The Quest for Freyshof

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

– Gylfaginning



[Freyshof Fund – Asatru Folk Assembly \(runestone.org\)](https://runestone.org)

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

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

1. We need to pay off Njörðshof.
  - The first of 2 loans have been paid off!
  - We now owe \$99,756.87 on our remaining loan.
2. We need to raise our monthly donation average by 7.6%.
  - This is membership dues/Hoftollar plus other donations.
3. We need to locate a suitable property.
4. We need to find lenders and build a war chest.

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

Hail Freyr!

Matthew D. Flavel



Alsherjargothi, Asatru Folk Assembly

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## Sigrheim: Home of Victory

*A Folksgiving Dedicated to Victory*



This past month, the local Sigrheim Folk gathered for a Central Tennessee Folksgiving at a local Celtic pub. Being able to take the time to gather in Frith, bonded by our Loyalty to the Gods, and to share in community over a good meal...this really is one of the small joys that our Church is all about. Please, if you're ever in the area, make sure to reach out. I'd love to have you over for dinner!

*Support the Home of Victory*



Help Sigrheim get stocked  
and ready for our Folk!

Donate Supplies  
from our  
wishlist ✨  
amazon

Thank You!

CLICK HERE

*Upcoming Events*





# Charming of the Plow at Sigrheim

Saturday, February 17th

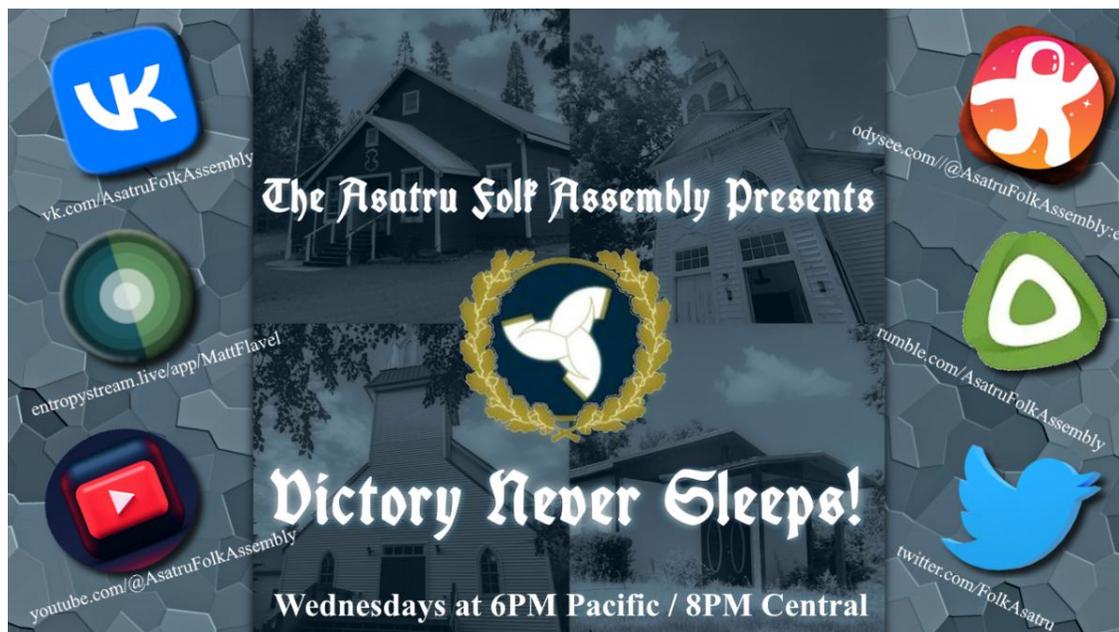


RSVP w/  
Folkbuilder  
Nick Rice  
via [nrice@runestone.net](mailto:nrice@runestone.net)



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

## Victory Never Sleeps



Victory Never Sleeps, a weekly podcast produced by the Asatru Folk Assembly, hosted by Alsherjargothi Matthew Flavel alongside weekly guests. The show doesn't stop until the questions stop rolling in. Come listen and learn about a variety of topics and truths relevant to our modern Asatru Folk.

Aesir. Virtues. Heroes. Doctrine. Beliefs. Cosmology. Runes. Holidays. Literature. Lore.

Help [support](#) the stream, and keep the cameras rolling!

Catch us LIVE with new episodes on Wednesdays at 8pm Central / 6pm Pacific on YouTube, Twitter, Entropy, Odyssee, VK, Rumble, and Twitch. Audio versions drop on Spotify the Friday after the new episodes air.

Check out the full playlist with 100's of hours of previous recordings on our [YouTube](#).



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# AFA Asatru Academy



Check out the Asatru Academy at [AsatruAcademy.org](https://AsatruAcademy.org)

## *Ásatrú Academy and the Children's Blot*



Greetings parents and students! If you didn't know, our meetings every Friday are a great way to get connected and meet other parents and students. We have had some wonderful guest storytellers and have more scheduled that you are sure to enjoy! We hope to see you there!

This past weekend at Thorshof, I had the honor of leading the children in a children's blot. The kids learned about the einherjar, and then we participated in a special kids-only blot. The children really did great! And had a lot of fun and learned about our

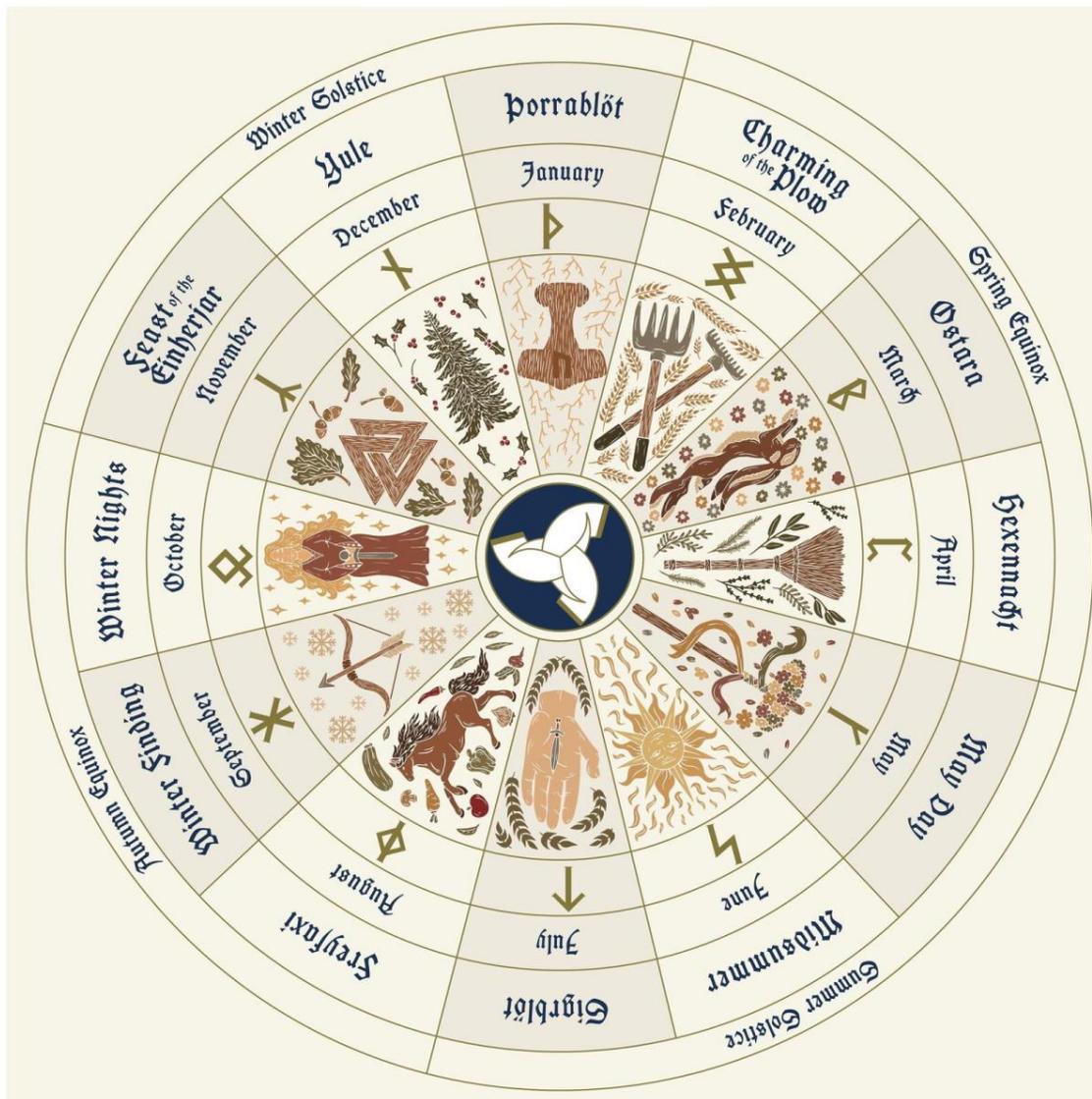
faith. I encourage kindred's and Hofs alike to make time for special children's blots. Gythia Sheila McNallen who is on our staff, does some wonderful children's ritual at Odinshof, I encourage you to attend if you are in the area.

We thank all our parents and kids for their hard work this semester. With the coming of Yuletide, we just posted some brand-new Yule specific activities and stories for you. I hope you enjoy! This is such a special time of year; we look forward to seeing all our smiling kids and their projects! We'd love any and all pictures of your kids doing Academy work, or of their projects so that we can showcase them here in the Runestone.



Gothi Rob Stamm  
Dean of AFA Academy  
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## Remembrance & Holy Days



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

2023

Date	Observance
January 9	Day of Remembrance for Raud the Strong
January 21	Porrablót
February 9	Day of Remembrance for Eyvind Kinnrifi
February 18	Charming of the Plow
March 9	Day of Remembrance for Olvir of Egg
March 21 (observed on 18th)	Ostara
April 9	Day of Remembrance for Jarl Haakon
April 10	Day of Remembrance for John Yeowell "Stubba"
April 28 (observed on 15th)	Hexennacht

<b>Date</b>	<b>Observance</b>
May 9	Day of Remembrance for Else Christensen
May 1 (observed on 20th)	May Day
June 9	Day of Remembrance for King Athanaric of the Goths
June 21 (observed on 17th)	Midsummer
July 4	Day of Remembrance for Sveinbjorn Beinteinsson
July 9	Day of Remembrance for Alexander Rud Mills
July 15	Sigrblót
August 9	Day of Remembrance for King Radbod of Frisia
August 19	Freyfaxi
September 9	Day of Remembrance for Prince Hermann of the Cherusci
September 22 (observed on 16th)	Winter Finding
October 1	Day of Remembrance for John Gibbs-Bailey "Hoskuld"
October 9	Day of Remembrance for Meister Guido von List
October 15	Birthday of Founder Stephen McNallen
October 21	Winter Nights
November 9	Day of Remembrance for Queen Sigríð of Sweden
November 11 (observed on 18th)	Feast of the Einherjar
December 9	Day of Remembrance for Egill Skallagrímsson
December 20	Mother's Night
December 20-31 (observed on 16th)	Yuletide

## Day of Remembrance

*Egill Skallagrímsson | December 9th*



"Here I am at the hearth  
 Of my host, Yngvar  
 The Generous, who grants  
 Gold to heroic men;  
 Free-handed fosterer,  
 You'll find no three-year  
 Babe among bards  
 More brilliant than me."

--So "penned" the three-year-old Egill Skallagrímsson after stealing a horse from this father to attend his grandfather's feast. That small poem was just a precursor for the man who would become known as one of the best poets of the Viking Age. Planting an ax in the skull of the boy who cheated him at a game at seven years old would similarly set the tone for a man who would become known as a fierce warrior prone to berserker rages.

From Egill's Saga, one of the great Icelandic family saga's written in the 13th Century by Snorri Sturluson, we learn about a man who was both an unforgiving warrior and a masterful poet. He spent a good half of his life as a very successful Viking chieftain whose violent tendencies took him through most of Northern Europe. From Norway to Latvia, from Sweden, to Saxony, his exploits were prolific.

Egill was known to always strike out in revenge against those who wronged the ones he loved, even going so far as to rip out the throat of a man with his teeth in an honor duel. For all the man was known for his ferocity, Egill Skallagrímsson was also known for his love of his family. This is seen most clearly in his poetry. Many of his poems were composed as a result of the death of someone he loved. He wrote a poem for his brother, Thorold, and recited it at his poems. He also wrote a poem named "Sonnatorrek" after the untimely death of both of his sons.

His skills don't end there, however. Egill was considered a skilled rune master, even going so far as to heal the daughter of a man with whom he was staying by carving runes into a stick and placing it under her pillow. Truly he seemed to be gifted by the Allfather.

Egill retired to a farm in his middle years and lived to be nearly 90 years old before dying of a sudden and quick acting illness.

What can we learn from this story?

Egill represents the true duality of human nature.

Egill's Saga is one of war and one of love. We watch the pagan chief battle his way across all of Northern Europe, and we watch him immortalize his love of his friends and families through masterful poems. His loyalty to those who were important to him was tantamount to the man he became.



Gythia Catie Erickson  
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# Holiday

*Yuletide | December 20th-31st*



Yuletide is the 12-day period in December in which we hold our biggest celebrations. During the Yuletide, we celebrate our families and our tribes and the bonds that hold us strong. We celebrate our Ancestors. We celebrate our Gods and the Wild Hunt. We celebrate the bright fires of the hearth that keeps us warm, and we celebrate the rebirth of the sun. We have made it halfway through the harshest time of the year. The sun begins to stay in the sky a little longer each day, moving us closer and closer to the fruitful and warm summer.

We celebrate by gathering together to feast and sing songs. We put up our Yule trees and our wreaths. We bake cookies and give presents. We build strong bonds and traditions that our children remember and pass on. It is a joyous time of the year.

We begin the Yuletide on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, called Mother's Night. During Mother's Night, we celebrate our ancient mothers, the Disir, who kept the hearth flames burning bright. One way to celebrate this is to extinguish all of the lights in the house. Light a candle to represent the hearth flame and, if you have children, give them pots and pans. Starting at the central part of your home, or the hearth (usually the kitchen and the stove, but can be a literal hearth if you have a fireplace), let the children “chase the ill-wights,” or the bad energy, from each room by running through the house and banging the pots and pans. As you go through each room, light a waiting candle. You are bringing the light of the hearth, of the Goddess Frigga, of the Disir, into each room to bless it. You can say something simple with each candle you light, like “The Goddess Frigga bring love and light into this room” or “The Disir bless this home and all who live within it.”

Yuletide ends on December 31<sup>st</sup>, a time when people can make oaths for themselves for the coming year.

An AFA tradition started by our esteemed founder Steven McNallen, focuses on celebrating 12 Asatru virtues: Industriousness, Justice, Courage, Generosity, Hospitality, Moderation, Community, Individuality, Truth, Steadfastness, Loyalty, and Wisdom. Each night, we light a candle in honor of each of these virtues. Steven McNallen has videos for each of these days on our YouTube channel, and we recommend that everyone take some time to watch them.



Gythia Catie Erickson  
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## Feast of the Einherjar 2023: A Look Back



This year's Feast of the Einherjar was held in South Dakota bringing together new members of the AFA with long-time members to the event from previous years. There were well over a dozen children playing and having fun with each other, and all of this couldn't have been done without my fiancé, Folkbuilder Ashley McStocker, with the commitment and work she put in. In an exquisite location, the weather couldn't have been better for the time of year in a northern climate, sandwiched by the weeks leading up to the event of freezing temps and the week following by freezing temperatures. The location put us on the cliffs above the Missouri River with an Einherjar Blot at the edge of the water. This event was a collaboration of Baldrshof District leadership with everyone involved from planning to execution ensuring a successful event for our Folk to experience. Honored guests again included Founders Elder Stephen and Gythia Sheila McNallen, Alsherjargothi Matthew Flavel, and Witan Gythia Brandy Callahan.

The event started with Gothar student Folkbuilder Stian Penner welcoming the Gods, a first time Freyja/Odin Blot synchronized together by AFA Founders Elder Stephen and Gythia Sheila McNallen, Einherjar Blot by firelight at dusk culminating with a ship lighting and sending off, and Wayfarers blot by Gothar student Folkbuilder Allison Clausen. The Alsherjargothi led a powerful and at times emotional Sumbel that connected the attending Folk. Elder McNallen and Gythia Sheila McNallen conducted a Baby Naming for a couple of long-time members. There were talks, activities, and a Witan-inspired (directed) dance allowing the Folk an opportunity to cut loose. The Folk in attendance had the opportunity to witness apprentice Folkbuilder Bruce Perron being offered and taking his Oath as a Folkbuilder for the AFA. Hail Folkbuilder Bruce Perron!



If one is not completely familiar with just what the Feast of the Einherjar entails, it is the time to gather together with our Folk in ritual and celebration to honor those who have passed, specifically those who have gone, by way of combat, living lives of honor, and examples of courage in fighting one way or another for our Gods, Folk, Family, and Community. Einherjar means “those who fight alone” and have specifically been chosen to join Odin in Valhall, to continue their fight beyond this life. In fighting alone, meaning, one that fights in a manner that elevates them above the typical and mundane masses around them in their focus and selfless, right, and controlled actions. One does not get to choose themselves to join this elite group that will fight alongside Odin at Ragnarok. Live courageously and in service of our Gods and Folk, build bright fame, and be a beacon for the Folk to without to find their ways home.



“Many brave warriors sit in Valhall, and many more are yet to come. And yet, it will still be too few when the wolf comes”



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

## Help a Member Rebuild After a Fire



On the evening of December 1<sup>st</sup>, there was a catastrophic fire in the apartment building in which one of our New York members, Sara, lived. News sources have stated that the fire is a total loss, and Sara concurs. She was allowed entrance after the fire was extinguished; however, she was unable to salvage anything, and was given a mere few minutes to even look around, due to the unsafe structure of the building. She has lost everything! She even lost her beloved pet hedgehog. Per our conversation, Sara is in need of Clothing, Essentials, Household goods...etc. She is currently away from the vicinity staying with friends. She may have found a possible apartment for rent that would be available on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

Please [help](#) in any way you can to help one of our members as she goes through the arduous process of rebuilding everything that she knew and had.

## Introducing the Newest AFA Kindreds

### *Deep Well Kindred*



It is my honor to announce Deep Well Kindred of Florida as the newest official Kindred of the Asatru Folk Assembly.

Deep Well Kindred is one of several AFA Kindreds that help support Florida and Njörðshof. Without these Kindreds and dedicated members, it would not be possible to maintain and operate our Hofs and districts.

I want to say thank you to all the members of the AFA that help out and contribute to this amazing church.

Face to face is how you build solid bonds with other folk, not behind a keyboard at home. These bonds grow into communities of families and relationships are built and Kindreds are born of these local congregations.

Gaining Kindred recognition is not an easy thing. It takes dedication and loyalty, and

willingness to stand with the AFA at all costs. All new Kindreds go through a six-month probationary period before joining our family as an official Kindred.

If you are interested in forming an AFA Kindred in your area or would like more information.

Please contact the Kindred program email at [kindred@runestone.org](mailto:kindred@runestone.org).

Hail Deep Well!

Hail the Kindreds of the AFA!!

Hail the Asatru Folk Assembly!!!



Folkbuilder Jason Gallagher

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

## AFA Prison Ministry



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

We are compiling letters from prisoners that are Educational, Empowering, and Encouraging along with special spiritual writings from our Gothar to create a quarterly newsletter to be distributed to inmates, institutions, and jails. Our mission is not about providing free books or literature to bored prisoners who simply want free stuff. We intend on making real-world change for the better of our folk.

""No packed rooms in the prisons; in each institution I have only a few people; occasionally about a dozen, but 5-6 is more common. I certainly do not want the Fellowship to be a club for cons, or ex-cons; the advantage is that when in prison the inmates have time to discuss and digest what they read, a point that often is lost to people on the outside in the hubbub of daily concerns" - Else Christensen

By the example of our Folkmother, Else Christensen, we will also be going into prisons as we are able to. Some of our Gothar and other leadership, will be going into the prisons to hold study groups, lead blot, and encourage continued growth in the folk inside.

If you have a loved one who is incarcerated or know of someone who is Folkish and will benefit from this ministry, please contact us at [prisonministry@runestone.org](mailto:prisonministry@runestone.org).



Or if you'd like to donate to this ministry, there's a donation earmark set up on our site [here](#). The donations will be used to get small ritual items and books into the prisons and the hands of our Folk inside.

James Ault  
Prison Ministry Director  
[jault@runestone.org](mailto:jault@runestone.org)



## The Artisans of the AFA Support Our Folk



Wyrd Woman custom laser engraving, cutting or etching. Wood keychains, magnets,

altar cards and more.



Contact Cody or Ali Clausen for details and inquiries or email [wyrdwomanllc@gmail.com](mailto:wyrdwomanllc@gmail.com)



Folkbuilder Alison Clausen  
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## Cooking for our Folk



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Folkbuilder Mike Joyner

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

## New Year, Old Roots: A Folk's Collective Genealogical Journey



“Where do we come from?”

When posed by a child, the decision is really yours how far exactly to delve in

answering this question. For my maternal grandfather, well, he took the simple route.

“From your mom and dad, of course!”

He didn't expect that as an eighth grader, I wanted more than just an overly simplistic answer – that I was actually interested in substance. I'd been assigned a project at school that required me to create a poster highlighting the culture of whichever ethnicity I chose from the myriad possessed by my forefathers. It was a convenient tool and justification for “pestering” my parents and the precious few remaining elders in my family for answers I'd wanted for a long time. Who are we as a people? Who are we as a family? My inquiries had been brushed off in the past – probably due to my age – but since my parents were adamant about striving for straight A's and being as successful as possible in school, chances were high I would finally get what I had long since been yearning for: a straight answer. Who am I? Where did I come from? Where do I belong? Who am I descended from? Who are we as a family, and as a people?

I was met with a wide range of reactions from each side of my family. My maternal grandfather viewed it as a humorous endeavor, though he did indulge my curiosity by accompanying my mother and me to a nearby cemetery and walking me to where his grandparents were interred.

My maternal grandmother supplied me with information which turned out to be incorrect entirely – things ranging from her mother's cause of death to which ethnicities she was.

My paternal grandfather had passed, but his wife (my grandmother), was all too happy to use this assignment as a bonding experience between the two of us. We exchanged phone calls frequently, and during those, she would try to be as helpful as possible about both her and my grandfather's backgrounds. She phoned cousins of mine a few states away whom I'd never met, and they were happy to oblige in sending the little research they had done on our family. It still is some of the best mail I've ever received. “The Rigginses didn't have two nickels to rub together when they came over,” I remember her saying. “And my side, well, we're just Polish.” Polish would eventually change to Yugoslavian, which in turn changed to Czech. There was no one alive who could quite nail down where her folk were from, though she did know that her maiden name of Baricak was pronounced differently in the old country. It wasn't until later on that I found out that the Baricaks are from a village in northern Slovakia called Vysoká nad Kysucou, which today is still relatively small, with a population of less than 3,000. After my grandmother had passed some years later and I leaned on her younger sister – my great aunt – for answers, her attitude turned sour, and she'd shut me down and

change the topic of conversation completely. I later found out why, but that's a story for another article...maybe.

I was grateful to my teacher, though, for assigning us such a task. Ultimately, I ended up choosing Scotland for my project as an homage to my paternal grandfather, who was primarily of Scots-Irish descent. It was just one assignment, and one that most of my classmates probably slapped together the night before it was due, but for me, it was the first step in a profound journey – one that I'm still on today and that I would love to share with others if they'd like to take the first step.

At 33 years old, I can say that I've been researching my family and heritage for over half of my life, and it brings me great joy both to make personal discoveries and help others make theirs. Many equate genealogy with Ancestry.com and paywalls; this is not necessarily the case. I've made tremendous discoveries for myself and others using other websites and other resources that cost nothing. I've been in County Clerk's offices at courthouses, in cemeteries battling weeds, briars, and yellow jackets, in State Archives so quiet and rigid that you could hear a pin drop, and in cozy historical societies run by some of the sweetest and most passionate volunteers and elders I've ever encountered – I say all this not as some sort of a strange boast, but as a reassurance that in today's technological age, you don't need to be tech-savvy (though it may come in handy from time to time) and you don't have to sign up for anything with a recurring monthly charge that competes with your bills to find out incredible things about your family. Despite popular marketing claims, no single website has everything you need in one click (or a thousand).

If your eyes glaze over at the thousands of search results that come up when you're looking up terms like “ancestry,” “family history,” or the like, if you find yourself yawning while looking at family histories posted by others online because you can only read “born, married, died on (this date) and at (this location)” so many times, and if you want to put meat on the bones of your ancestors and resurrect their stories, learn from their shortcomings and rejoice in their triumphs, then I invite you to read what I envision to be a monthly column in The Runestone on how to get your start in finding your roots – hopefully in a way that's not overwhelming for absolute beginners and still interesting for researchers who have much more experience than I do.

Next month's objective to kick off the new year will be to cover the topic of the federal census records – perhaps the most beginner-friendly and widely accessible record for genealogists – and what information you can glean from them as well as the information that you can't.

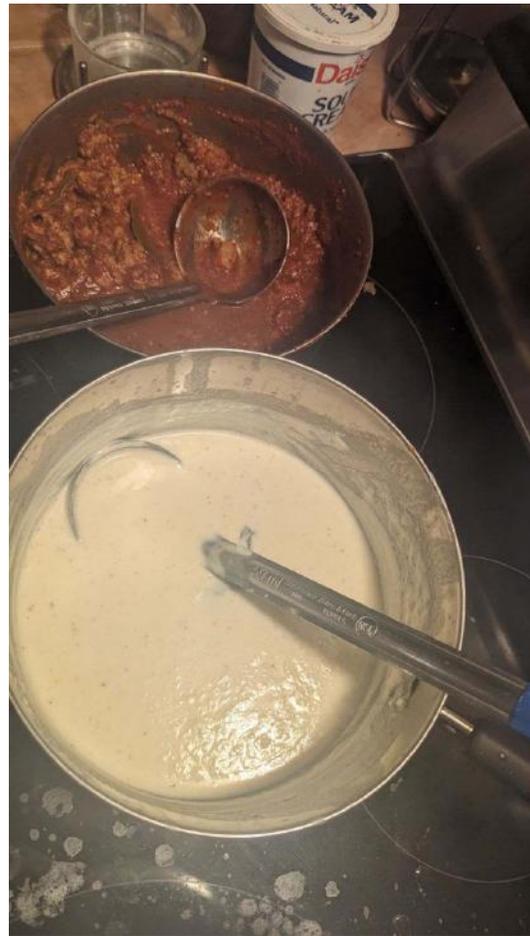
- Samantha Riggins, Member, North Carolina

## Ancestral Food and Culture

### *A Pasta Making Adventure*



What happens when you mix flour, eggs, water and the folk? Pasta! On December 7th, the folk gathered at the Joyner's house to help preserve the box of 90 eggs that Gythia Catie Erickson gifted the hof. As it is on most occasions, the kitchen was the center of attention. Everyone took turns kneading the pasta dough (and getting an amazing arm workout!) around the center island. Even the littles took part in playing in the flour. We feasted on fantastic fresh pasta and Mike's homemade alfredo and Bolognese sauces. Flour was as plentiful as the laughter and smiles.



Egg Pasta:

347 grams flour

185 grams of wet ingredients – 2 whole eggs, 3 yolks, and add water until proper weight



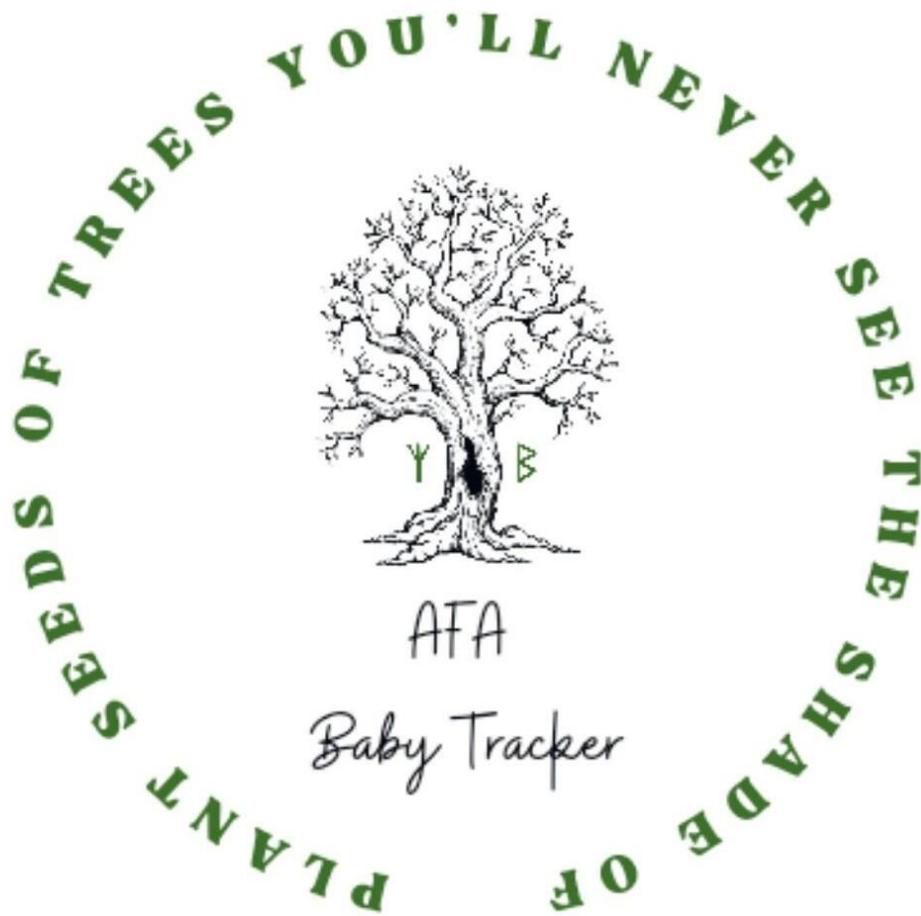
Create well with the flour on the counter, place wet ingredients in the well. Whisk with fork while incorporating small amounts of flour until the consistency is no longer runny. Using your hands, start mixing in the rest of the flour. Knead until smooth. Pat with flour and wrap in plastic wrap for 30 minutes to rest. Take out in sections. Roll out to desired thickness and shape as you please. Boil in salty water until done (only a few minutes as fresh pasta cooks much quicker!). Enjoy with your favorite sauce.



Folkbuilder Katie Joyner

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

## Baby Tracker



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

Total babies born in 2023: 33

## Online Events and Meetings



Virtue recovery  
meeting

Thursdays at 7pm CST;  
5 pm PST; 6 pm MST;  
8 pm EST

With Ashley Mcstocker  
amcstocker@runestone.org

Saturdays at 9 am CST;  
7 am PST; 8 am MST;  
10 am EST

With Jaclynn Duffy  
jduffy@runestone.org

**VIA ZOOM**

**MEETING ID: 885 2917 0746**

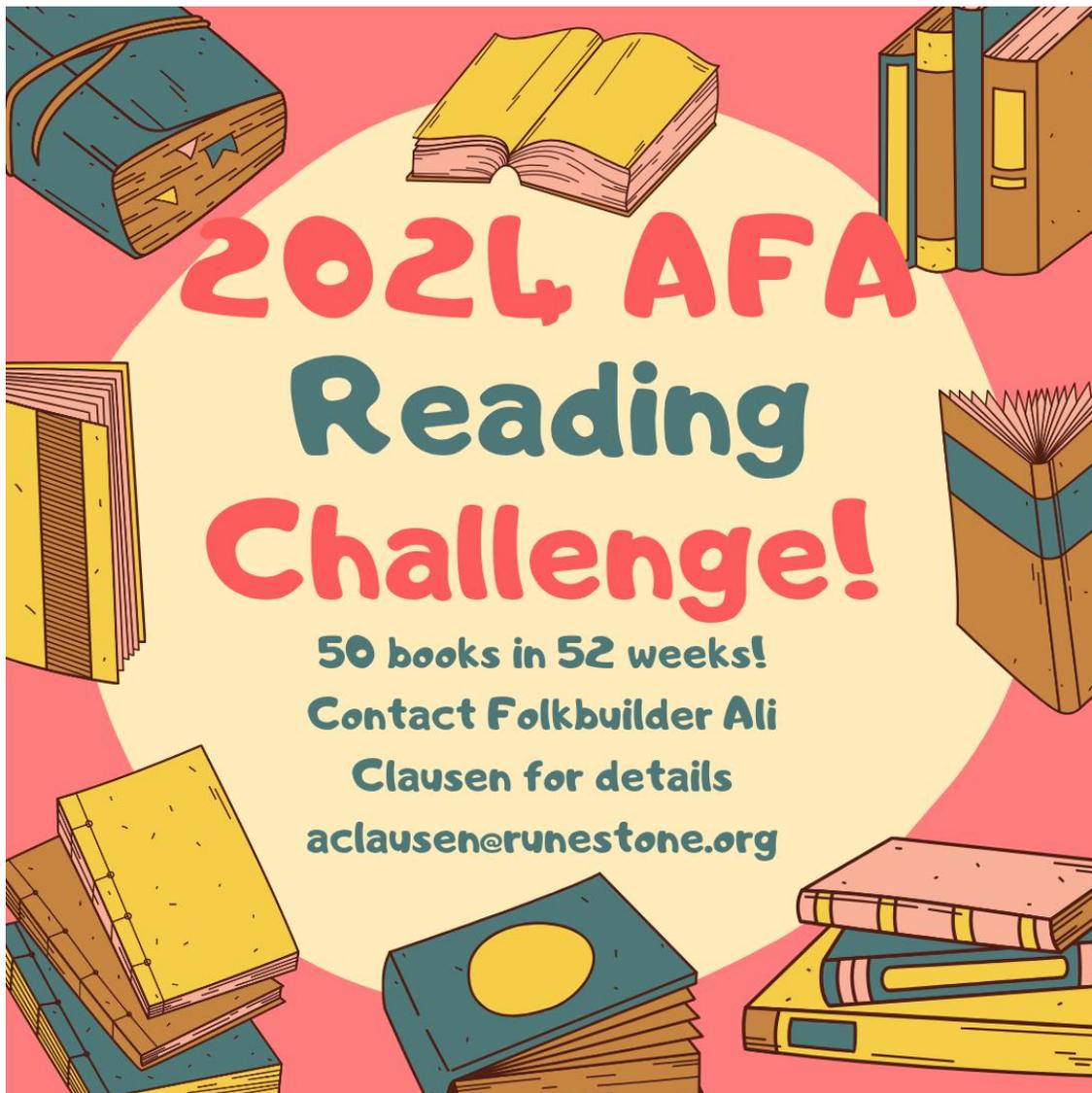
**PASSWORD: Virtue**

PASSWORD: VIRTUE

Sisters Sunday Chats

Every Sunday, 10am central

For more info contact  
Folkbuilder Ali Clausen  
[aclausen@runestone.org](mailto:aclausen@runestone.org)  
or  
Folkbuilder Katie Joyner  
[kjoyner@runestone.org](mailto:kjoyner@runestone.org)



# Ladies Book Study

## Thursday Nights at 7 pm CST

No book study in Decemember but...

We return with a new book on  
January 4th!!!!

Link for Teams meeting will be posted in  
the AFA Ladies group on MeWe

For more information contact:

Witan Brandy Callahan  
[bcallahan@runestone.org](mailto:bcallahan@runestone.org)

or

Folkbuilder Sara Ault  
[sault@runestone.org](mailto:sault@runestone.org)

# **Lore Study with Gothi Jason Plourde**

**Join us every Monday night**

**at**

**8:00 pm EST**

**7:00 pm CST**

**6:00 pm MST**

**5:00 pm PST**

**4:00 pm AKST**

**Each study begins with trivia questions  
from VNS and the previous week's  
reading. A winner is announced monthly.**

**The link can be found in the AFA  
Spiritual Excellence Group on Mewe.**

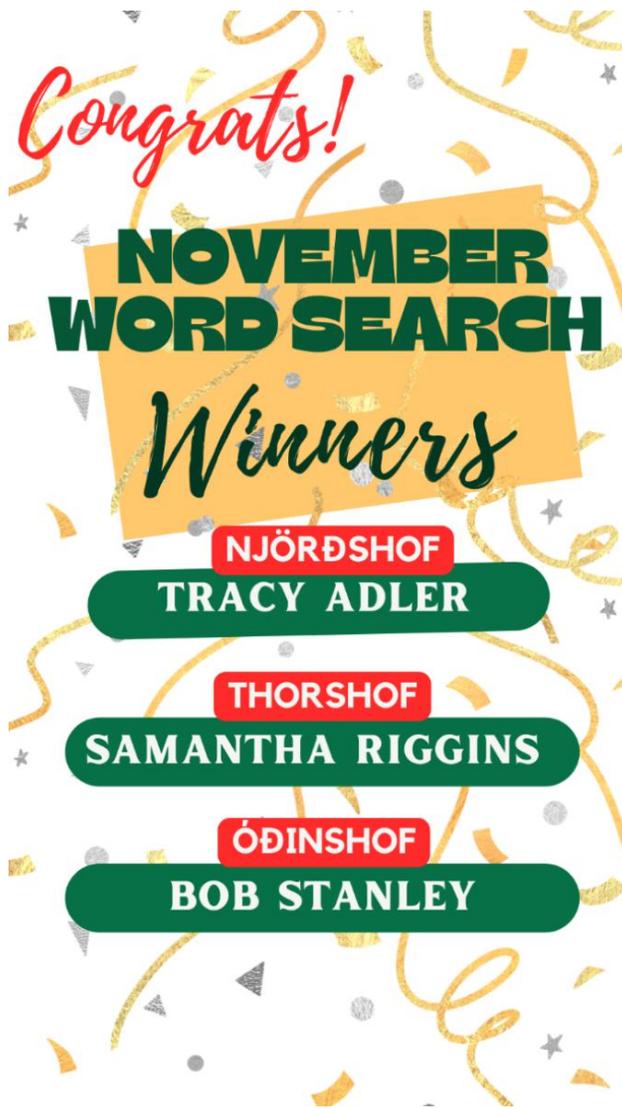
**For more information  
reach out to Gothi Plourde  
[jplourde@runestone.org](mailto:jplourde@runestone.org)**

*AFA Eldri -  
A social group on MeWe for our seniors*

Every Friday, members from across the country gather for a ninety-minute Teams call. There's generally a topic in mind, but we quickly take the conversation in new directions. Come check out this easy-going, convivial group. For AFA members age 50 and above.

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

## Just For Fun



Thank you all who participated last month! Awesome job, Tracy Adler, for being the first member to solve it! Baldrshof, where are your puzzle enthusiasts?

Here's a new puzzle of Yule words for December:

### Yule Word Search

HL  
 CW  
 QHAH  
 VBCB  
 ZGSQEQ  
 BWYTCG  
 UTYBMSIU  
 DEMHPIFO  
 JLORZYNTQA  
 UDCWLRDSOW  
 YSWULHTURTGX  
 ILCHVLNSBHZW  
 WDLDIIOSTVOCXP  
 PGVZNBYPTRASHKB  
 RVQYWDOAEIEPSUNJ  
 NKEKMIWLAOWILNWR  
 ZYASMOVKTDUCTDRETN  
 NTEQWDIRYFSBAFPCFO  
 HTIGEERDRSANBLXFINTJ  
 RINANCAUVJSEHIKITHQB  
 DVOURZKNAMWTSBTJISCPUE  
 EPJMUNCILOINSUYUQUSGMW  
 SFFTMOYACIDLEXUPZXJQIHIA  
 UZVKOCKUHTEDSSYTI SORENEG  
 UGYSNCBXITYRHSOIEGJITEIEPJ  
 BUBECHSKTNBAUSOLSTICEYHLHV  
 TNTD  
 ITKB  
 OLFY  
 NQNS

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YULE	MODRANICHT	SOLSTICE
INDUSTRIOUSNESS	JUSTICE	COURAGE
GENEROSITY	HOSPITALITY	MODERATION
COMMUNITY	INDIVIDUALITY	TRUTH
STEADFASTNESS	WISDOM	LOYALTY
WILDHUNT	KITH	KIN
GIFTS		

The first member to solve it and send proof to [Press@Runestone.org](mailto:Press@Runestone.org) will get a shout-out in next month's Runestone! Happy Word Hunting!

And here's a coloring page for the youngsters to get involved in the season as well!



We'd love to see their finished creations, so feel free to send those to [Press@Runestone.org](mailto:Press@Runestone.org). (And yes, parents, we know you like coloring too. That's okay!)



Olivia Sutherland  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[osutherland@runestone.org](mailto:osutherland@runestone.org)

**Now Available in the AFA Store**



Now in pre-order! The Asatru Folk Assembly 2024 calendar. Featuring a beautiful photo of our Folk for each month, our Holy Days and Days of Remembrance. Perfect for keeping track of our many important celebrations and your own important dates.

Get your order in ASAP to ensure it arrives by the New Year!

This item is in pre-order and will not ship immediately. Shipping confirmation will be sent when the time comes.

<https://runestone.org/product/2024-afa-calendar/>



Folkbuilder Ali Clausen

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

## Óðinshof

### Food Pantry at Óðinshof



## Measuring the Success of our Oðinshof Food Pantry

Gythia Sheila McNallen

At the close of 2023, we've learned a few things.

- 1) It's very challenging to give out turkeys to 85 families when we brought in 64.
- 2) Rainstorms are beautiful to behold through a window, but a detriment when one stands for over an hour outdoors while greeting our neighbors in need.
- 3) Loyal volunteers come through like the elves they are, to fill bags and bring food out to waiting families.
- 4) No other area church in the area puts joy in the hearts of our neighbors like we do.
- 5) The future of our Folk, our own children as young as three, help distribute food with their own little hands.
- 6) The need for our charity food services is likely to grow, as we've served over 425 separate families since we began in April 2021.
- 7) We build our reputation month-by-month, standing strong in our virtues and values of the Asatru Folk Assembly. We are our deeds.



Gythia Sheila McNallen

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

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## Feast of the Einherjar at Óðinshof



Members of Óðinshof gathered on the night of the 17<sup>th</sup> through the day of the 19<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the Einherjar. Gathering to think about the ancestors and warriors, we celebrate the sacrifices they have made. The morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> was greeted with heavy amounts of rain that seemed to last for a very long time. In California, that is something to be grateful for, but the timing could have been better.



Our folk still delivered many meals to many families in need. Due to the poor weather outside, the children were inside with everyone else all day long. Many activities and games were pulled out of the cupboards, as well as a few movies for them to view.



There were important talks held by the separate genders, where the men were given the hall, and the women had their meeting along with the children, who were very loud. They made it harder to speak to each other, but it was still a pleasant gathering.



The cooks worked diligently to make an amazing meal for all of the folk to enjoy. There was even a table for most of the children to sit together.



Music was heard throughout the hall, as a member played his guitar during dinner-- a treat that Paul often shares with us at events. After dinner, the desserts were enjoyed.

From homemade cookies, to pies, and various other desserts, it was an amazing end to a marvelous feast!



After dinner, we had blot. Founder Stephen McNallen led our blot and offered a ship made by a member to the offering fire. It was a wonderful blot.



On Sunday, Óðinshof invited in the community for a Movie Matinee showing of Braveheart, which fit in nicely to conclude our fun-filled weekend of honoring the Einherjar.

As always, it was a great time seeing Folk come from near and far to honor our Gods!



Angelina Stone  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[astone@runestone.org](mailto:astone@runestone.org)

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## Upcoming Events at Óðinshof

December 15-17

# YULE AT ODINSHOF

## Friday Night 11/15

Dinner

Frigg Blot by Gythia McNallen

## Saturday 11/16

Food Pantry

Greeting to the Gods

Tree Decorating

Activities for All Ages

Yule Blot by Alsherjargothi

Dinner & Music

Folk Hymns

Sumbel

Auction

Papa Yule Gifts for Children

White Elephant Gifts



## Sunday Morning 11/17

Breakfast

4th Annual Community Toy Giveaway 11am

RSVP

to your Folkbuilders!

We need to know how many Folk are coming!



**MOST WANTED**

# Yule Auction Items

HANDCRAFTED, HOMEMADE, ARTISTIC,  
FUNCTIONAL, NEW OR SECOND-HAND, FOLKISH,  
FUN, AND INSPIRATIONAL ITEMS FOR THE 2023  
ODINSHOF ANNUAL YULE AUCTION!

Contact Your Folkbuilders!  
[osutherland@runestone.org](mailto:osutherland@runestone.org)



## 2024 Events at Óðinshof

January 20	<i>Thorrablót</i>
February 17	<i>Charming of the Plow</i>
March 16	<i>Ostara</i>
April 20	<i>Hexennacht</i>
May 18	<i>May Day</i>
June 22	<i>Midsummer</i>
July 20	<i>Sigrblót</i>
August 17	<i>Freyfaxi</i>
September 21	<i>Winter Finding</i>
October 19	<i>Winter Nights</i>
November 16	<i>Feast of the Einherjar</i>
December 21	<i>Yuletide</i>

Óðinshof is usually open from Friday through Sunday on event weekends. Every event includes a Saturday morning food pantry distribution. Sunday often includes community outreach like a classic movie matinee.

All proposed events are on the third weekend, except for MIDSUMMER which is the premier event for the Óðinshof district. We are moving it to the fourth weekend to allow vehicle traffic for the food pantry to proceed as normal.

## Leaders of Óðinshof



*To our Oðinshof Folk ~  
We wish you the blessings of Yuletide*

<b>GOTHAR</b>	<b>FOLKBUILDERS</b>	<b>APPRENTICE FOLKBUILDERS</b>
<b>Matt Flavel</b> mattflavel@runestone.org	<b>Ryan Harlan (MT)</b> rharlan@runestone.org	<b>Angelina Stone (CA)</b> astone@runestone.org
<b>Brandy Callahan</b> bcallahan@runestone.org	<b>Lou Nickerson (AZ)</b> lnickerson@runestone.org	<b>Olivia Sutherland (CA)</b> osutherland@runestone.org
<b>Sheila McNallen</b> sheila@runestone.org	<b>Sierra Chapman (CA)</b> schapman@runestone.org	<b>Kyle Reader (ID)</b> kreader@runestone.org
<b>Thorgrun Odden</b> todden@runestone.org	<b>Tyler Heinlein (MT)</b> theinlein@runestone.org	<b>Aaron Simbeck (WA)</b> asimbeck@runestone.org
		<b>HOF STEWARD</b> <b>Daniel Odom</b> dodom@runestone.org

**Arizona**

*Remember to Stay Positive this Yule Season*



This Yule season, and this month of Yule (as the Anglo-Saxons would have called it), let's take time to slow down, and remember all the things we have to be grateful for. It's very easy to get caught up in sadness or even despair when something doesn't go our way, especially during Yule season and during the darker days of winter in general. On top of that, every time we turn on the TV or go online and read the news, we get bombarded with negative information, which reminds us of how bad everything supposedly is for our nations and our Folk.

I would like to be the voice of reason here. We all have it pretty good. Even when we lose our job, or lose our spouse, or even a pet, we have each other to lean on. If something happens that sends you into despair, I want you to call a leader in the AFA, whether it's your local Folkbuilder, a Gothi, or even our Alsherjargothi himself. None of us are so busy that we don't have time to help our Folk during a dark time. I would love to talk to anyone who is going through a rough time, and I'll do what I can to help you through it. My number is 323-333-7784. You can call at any time, but please leave either a text or a voicemail if I don't answer because I frequently don't have service at work.



This holiday season, I want everyone to do a few things:

First, make a list of everything you have to be thankful for. Briefly thank the Gods for everything that is on this list. The list can include the mundane, that we all need, like a job, or a roof over your head, or it can include something more special, for example, I am thankful for the healthy baby daughter that we had in October of last year, who is now one and growing very fast. She was named Kathleen after my wife's grandmother, to help continue the connection between our ancestors and our descendants. Or, I am

thankful that I was able to make Óðinshof Midsummer back in June and that I am going to make Yule later this month, to continue my spiritual connection to the Gods and my ancestors. Whenever something happens that doesn't go our way, let's refer back to our personal list and remember the things we have to thank the Gods for.

Second, reach out to your family this Yule. Preferably, reach out to someone that you haven't spoken to in quite a while. I'm going to call an uncle that I haven't talked to in years. We actually agree on politics, which is rare for my family, but he mostly keeps to himself. Additionally, reach out to your nearest AFA Folk, or a friend in the AFA, and wish them a Happy Yule!

Third, if you ever find yourself feeling down about the state of the world, then ask yourself why that is. If it's a website, give yourself a break from that website. If it's Telegram, take some time away from Telegram. If it's the evening news, take some time off of TV. You can easily fill in this time with other activities that will leave you feeling with a positive outlook: pick up a good book, catch up on some Asatru lore, watch one of your favorite movies, or play a board game with someone. The future of our Folk and the AFA looks bright, despite all of the negative propaganda the media constantly bombards us with. We have four Hof's, we have Sigrheim, and we are re-establishing the link between our Folk and our Gods older than time immemorial. In the end, though it might take time, years or even decades, Victory is inevitable.

Fourth, try to get out to an AFA Hof this Yule, or, if not possible, sometime next year. Midsummer is always a good time to travel, but there are Hof events going on every month across the US. In particular, I ask you to do this if you have never been to a Hof. If you haven't been to a Hof, please come out and join us! We would love to have you, and you will be made to feel welcome; hopefully, you'll feel like you really are coming home after a long journey. That was my experience.

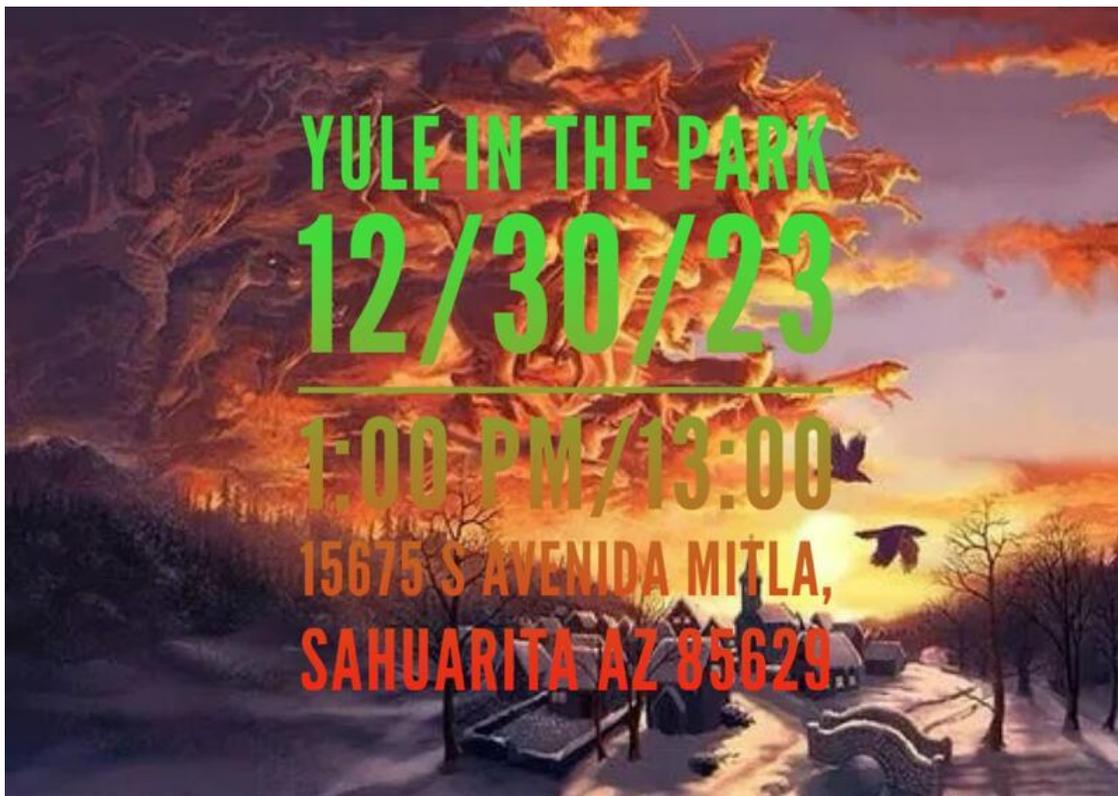


Last month, I hosted a moot at an aircraft museum. Unfortunately, everyone else ended up being unable to attend.



However, I did have a good time with my daughter, who got to pose with an Iraqi T-72 and an SR-71 Blackbird.

### *Upcoming Events*



We will be holding a Yule gathering on 12/30/23 at a park near our house where there will be rituals, food, and good conversation. Hope to see you there if you're in or near Arizona (and travel isn't too difficult). As I mentioned before, I will be at Óðinshof from 12/15 to 12/17 for Yule.

Hope to see you there!



Folkbuilder Lou Nickerson  
[lnickerson@runestone.org](mailto:lnickerson@runestone.org)

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## California

*Third Day of Yule: Honoring Tyr, the Virtue Courage, and Astronaut Borman*



(Photo Credit Source: NASA)

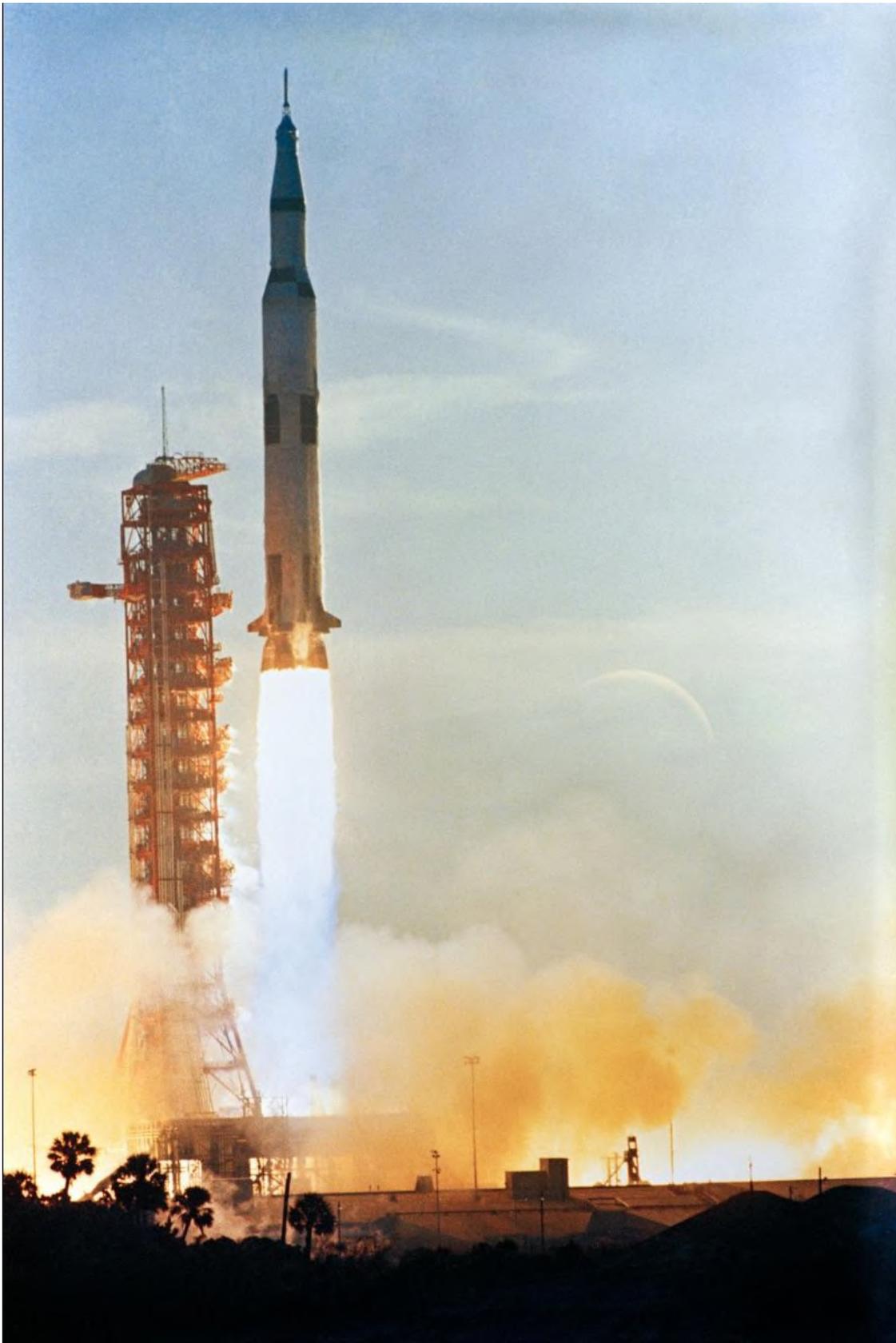
Long ago, AFA Founder and first Alsherjargothi Steve McNallen (U.S. Army First Lieutenant and Army Ranger) taught me that on the third day of Yuletide (typically Dec. 22), we honor Tyr and the virtue courage. In this spirit, during this Yuletide 2023, let us honor a very courageous man, U.S. Air Force Colonel and Astronaut Frank Borman. On Nov. 7, 2023, at age 95, Frank Frederick Borman II passed from Midgard. Borman was known for his lightning-quick reflexes and exceptional decision-making skills. Let us also honor his companions on the Apollo 8 mission, Astronaut James A.

Lovell, Jr. (U.S. Navy Captain, naval aviator) and Astronaut William A. Anders (U.S. Air Force Major).



(Photo Credit Source: NASA; from left to right: Anders, Lovell, Borman)

The Apollo 8 mission was a seminal event in 1968. It was a rough year in America. The Cold War was on. The Space Race was a true battlefield in the Cold War. In 1968, the Soviets sent a probe around the Moon that returned to Earth -- before the U.S. did. But Apollo 8 was the first time men travelled to the Moon. The U.S. was in the lead again. It was a huge, worldwide, public-relations victory, but Apollo 8's significance to our Folk is far larger than that.



(Photo Credit Source: NASA)

Was the Apollo 8 mission dangerous? Apollo 8 took men not only into the cold, forbidding, unforgiving vacuum of space, but also took men for the first time beyond

the relative safety of Earth orbit and its protective magnetosphere, shielding a spacecraft from the dangerous “solar wind” particles and radiation. Astronaut Lovell, veteran of the Gemini 7 mission, described the Saturn V rocket launch as “unbelievably violent.” Hitting a target like lunar orbit from 230,000 miles away, coasting, after the Trans-Lunar Injection burn, was quite an accomplishment by scientists and engineers. Like all the Apollo missions that orbited the Moon, if the rocket engine to break free from the Moon’s gravity didn’t work, the astronauts would still be orbiting the Moon - dead. Lovell thought they had one-chance-in-three of a successful mission. Lovell said the splashdown was so violent, he thought the spacecraft had split open.

Apollo 8 had a huge impact on people across the world during Yuletide 1968, making Yule particularly beautiful. The crew sent a TV broadcast from moon orbit that was shown around the world. Borman closed the broadcast with blessings for “all of you on the good Earth.”



(Photo Credit Source: NASA/Astronaut William Anders)

The crew took photographs, including “Earthrise,” that will likely inspire awe in our Folk and all humanity for perhaps hundreds of years to come. I remember seeing and hearing the Apollo 8 crew on TV on Christmas Eve. It was so inspiring and hopeful.

It was 55 years ago this Yuletide, and I shall honor the crew of Apollo 8 and the team of 400,000 people who supported that mission. On the Winter Solstice, Dec. 21, 2023, I will think of the launch on December 21, 1968, at about 8 a.m. in Florida.

The Earthrise photo was heavily used to promote the first Earth Day and the third wave of the Environmental Movement in the 1970's. Honoring, respecting, and caring for nature and the land is a basic value of our Folk, before any political movement tried to take this idea over.



(Photo Credit Source: NASA)

Today, people take space travel for granted. Growing up during the Space Race, I'll never forget that each mission was actually a suicide mission on TV to try to get to the next activity needed for landing on the Moon: orbiting, docking, space walking, leaving Earth orbit, orbiting the Moon, and landing on the Moon. Each astronaut was a hero. Tyr showed us the way, sacrificing his hand to bind the wolf. Some astronauts sacrificed their lives on the ground or in flight. Whatever craft was invented to fly men and women into the air or space, someone had to test it. Someone had to fly it for the first time.

Hail Tyr! May we have courage in 2024 and always!

— Bill, Member

### *Hagvirkr Kindred Folksgiving*



The Hagvirkr Folk Kindred hosted a lovely Folksgiving. This was an evening for bonding and Frith as the anticipation for the Yule season builds and the new year approaches.



I would like to thank Courtney for showing off her hidden talent for stunning pies and the Johnston family for opening their home to a large group of Folk and their gracious hospitality! The food and snacks were all amazing and helped to fuel conversations about our Kindred's future goals and ambitions as well as Kindred events and meet-ups.



Keep your eyes peeled in the New Year for meet-up announcements. As always, there'll be plenty of notice so you can save the date.

Hail Victory!

Krystal Podbreger



Member

*November Work Weekend at Óðinshof*



Gather ‘round, for the tale I have to tell is one of work weekends’ past....

The Sons of the High One and the Daughters of Frigg had another fun-filled work weekend over Veterans Day! It was loaded with emotion-we laughed, we cried, we painted, we cleaned, we feasted... it was a heck of a good time! There were nearly more folks than we had tasks for, with 16 willing adults, but everyone found ways to contribute to making the temple of the All-Father even greater!



The lady folks planted bulbs and weeded at the goddess pole, brought order to the merchandise inventory, and maintained the great fire with pine needles! Meanwhile Sons of the High One kept busy battling the forces of chaos in the office and in the storage room. Dan the Man, Wildman Paul, Bobby Popcorn, and others were busy planing wood for cabinetry. Some of the lads, being professional painters by trade, put their skills to use applying paint to the kitchen, multi-use room, and the back of the Hof.



We had a couple of gents who, after a day of joyous laughter and labor, found themselves a perfect fit for the AFA and discussing becoming members with a Folkbuilder. Later in the evening, when the sun had left us, Master-chef Matt commandeered the grill and turned out the best burgers any weekend warriors could ask for! Gothi Thorgrun blessed our meal and we all feasted and enjoyed one another's company.



So live a little; join your AFA family for a work weekend! Don't worry if you're not a master craftsman as there's tasks for all skill levels. Many hands make light work and.. there's always work to be done. (The next Work Weekend will be December 9th-10th to prepare for Yule!)

...What's this?? You may not be able to partake in the physical tasks required to raise our Beautiful Óðinshof to even greater heights, but you do wish to contribute? Not a problem, as there are other ways to contribute.

1. We are in need of Hoftollar--Men and women who financially contribute a percentage (minimum 1%) of their household income to the High God Odin and his Hof. (The Hoftollar was a tax long ago in pagan Iceland which supported their religious infrastructure.) To set up your Hoftollar, just contact any of the Folkbuilders. It's super easy to do!

2. We also have an Amazon Wish List...it's a list on Amazon with things we wish we had... that wonderful people like you can donate! [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2F51BGQ07A9K2?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2F51BGQ07A9K2?ref_=wl_share)

3. You can bring or send in a nice auction item to the Hof anytime!

4. And one more way to contribute to the success of our Hof would be to monetarily

donate directly to the Óðinshof Fund: <https://runestone.org/product/odinshof-fund/> (A gift of \$500 or more gets you a shiny name plaque on the Óðinshof Donors Wall!)



The poster features a dark red background with a white central area. At the top left is a small green Christmas tree. The title 'Óðinshof' is written in a large, green, stylized font, and 'Yule Wishes' is in a smaller, red, cursive font below it. To the right is a brown gift box with a holly leaf and red berries. Below the title is a list of four bullet points. To the left of the list is a square image of a white horse and a black horse in a snowy, starry night. At the bottom are two clusters of colorful wrapped gifts and a red square logo with a white bird and a shield.

**Óðinshof**  
**Yule Wishes**

- Join the next Work Weekend - **DECEMBER 9-10TH**
- Become a Hoftollar
- Gift from Óðinshof Amazon Wish List
- Bring/Send in auction items to the Hof
- Donate to The Óðinshof Fund

These are just four simple ways to help (if you can't come to a Work Weekend) without even leaving your home. How many Folk will join me in doing all four before the end of Yule?



Brodin Sutherland  
Member

*Yule Tree Cutting*



For the past couple of years now, right around Thanksgiving time, my family has enjoyed hunting for the perfect Yule tree for Óðinshof on Mt. Shasta. It has been the perfect time to get away from the Bay Area as a family, find some snow, breathe some clean mountain air, and to have an adventure.

Although several other members were planning to attend, due to illness, it ended up just being my family and visiting relatives, totaling 10 people. Hopefully next year we will all be healthy, and more Folk will be able to join us!

### *Daughters of Frigg*

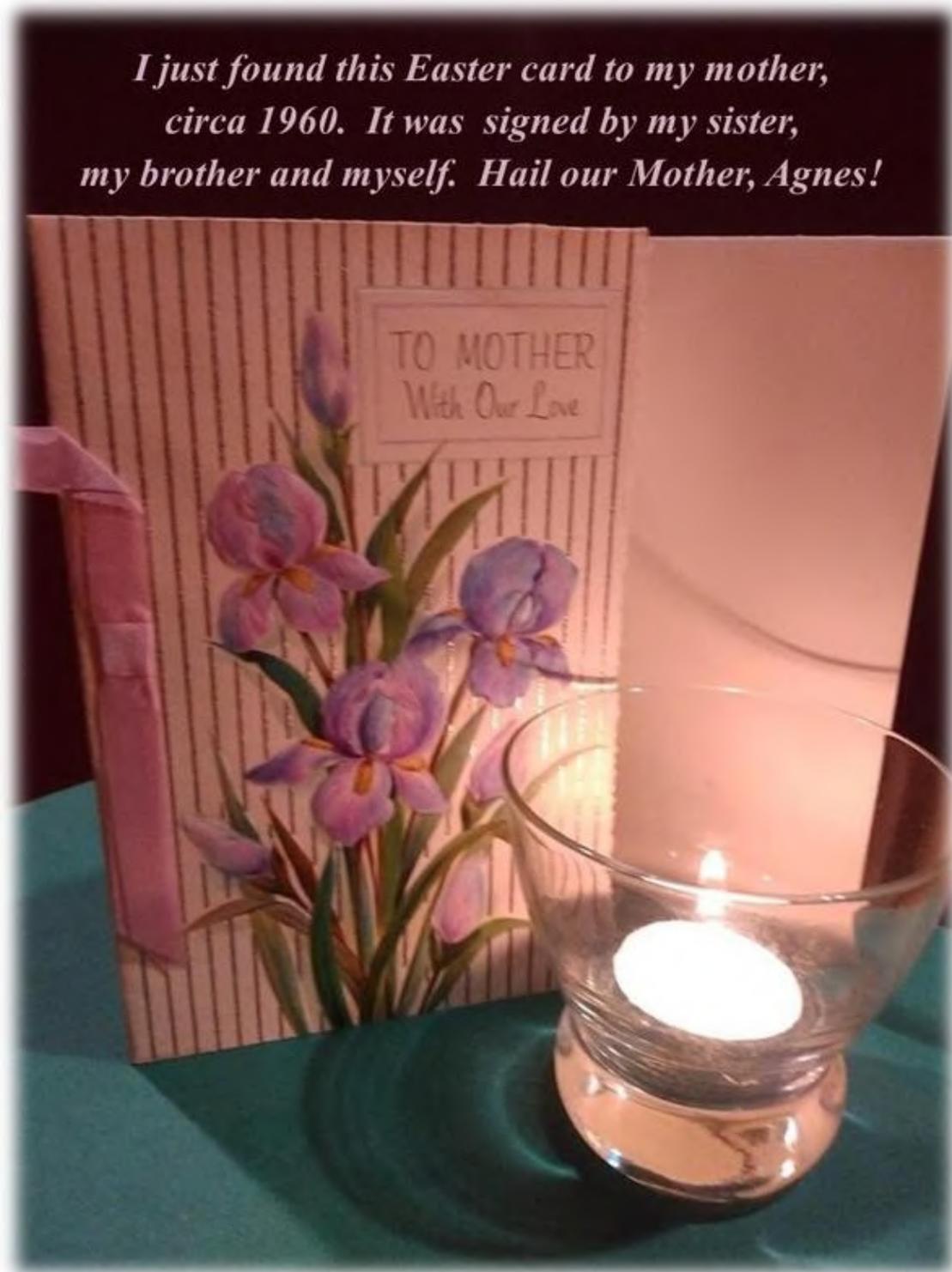


In November, we spent time honoring warriors and the Einherjar, and this year we came together to honor the women veterans among us. At the Daughters of Frigg Virtual Veterans Tea, three of our ladies presented about their experiences serving in the U.S. military. Witan Brandy Callahan shared about becoming stronger and braver in the Air Force amongst men and creepy camel spiders! Apprentice Folkbuilder Angelina Stone talked about her duties in Air Force Security Forces and being in Japan during a 9.0 earthquake. Navy veteran, Melinda Harris, also shared about maintaining calm in her stressful jobs during the Persian Gulf War.

All three agreed that it was an especially difficult path as women in a male-dominated military, yet each of these ladies rose to the occasion and served honorably. A common virtue learned was what they called, “focus during chaos”.

I am in awe of their courage, especially in the face of chaotic forces. It is such a privilege to have these ladies among us!

On the first Friday of each month, our ladies honor the Goddess Frigg in what we call "First Fridays for Frigg". Whether by lighting a candle or making a small offering, we are spiritually uniting in worship across the district. We take a moment to think about what Frigg means in our lives and to remember our grandmothers and great-grandmothers. Members then share their photos and send positive messages. (We are on MeWe, and all ladies in the Óðinshof District are invited to take part!)



This past month, Gythia McNallen shared that when she was about to participate in "First Fridays for Frigg", she serendipitously came across a beautiful card with irises on the front. It was the Easter card that she and her siblings gave to their mother back in 1960! Her mother passed away a few short years after they gave her this beautiful card, so it was rare and deeply meaningful find.

Other ladies set up elaborate altars for Frigg with their special items and mead offerings. One lady shared that she incorporated her wedding bouquet, wedding ring,

and a spool of thread from her husband's grandmother at her altar. So lovely!



I look forward to seeing many dear Daughters of Frigg in-person soon at Yule (we will have a Yule Tea), the upcoming work weekends, as well as volunteering at Óðinshof's community outreach events (Food Pantry and 4th Annual Toy Giveaway) this month!

## YULE PENPAL



DAUGHTERS OF FRIGG



Please sign up to  
send a friendly letter  
or postcard to a fellow  
Óðinshof lady!

SIGN UP BY DECEMBER 16TH~

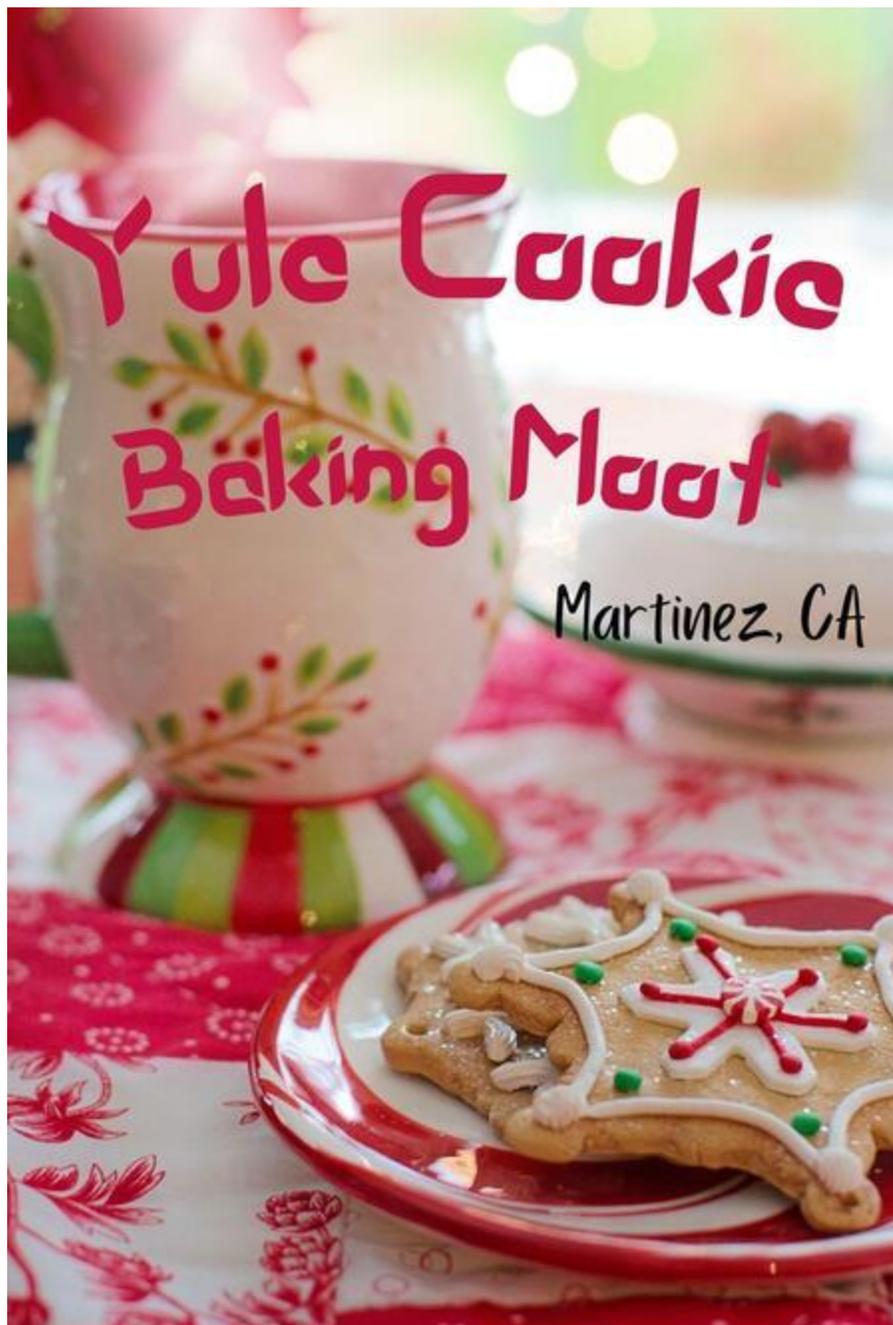
Receive a Penpal. Send Your Yule Card!

OLIVIA\_SUTHERLAND OSUTHERLAND@RUNESTONE.ORG

Whether you can make it out this month to Óðinshof or not, I hope all our ladies will join me in our very first year of Yule Penpals! This just a simple way to get to know a fellow Daughter of Frigg and wish her well this season. You never know who you'll get--could be your new best friend!

### *Upcoming Events*

On the second night of Yule, Solstice Night, please come over and bake some delicious Yule cookies with your Folk!



**Yule Cookie  
Baking Meet**  
Martinez, CA

**Sutherland Home**  
December 21st 3-7pm  
contact: [osutherland@runestone.org](mailto:osutherland@runestone.org)



In January, we will have a S'mores and Sumbel Moot. Hope you can make it!

Have a blessed December!

Happy Yule to All!



Olivia Sutherland  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[osutherland@runestone.org](mailto:osutherland@runestone.org)

### *Upcoming Events*

**Eleventh Day of Yule Celebration**  
**at the McNallens**  
**December 30th**  
**2-7 PM**



**19172 Leopard Court**  
**Grass Valley, CA 95949**  
**RSVP please! 530-575-8692**

Join us as we close Yuletide  
with a Sumbel, Feasting, and Frith.  
Children's activities planned.  
Potluck; beverages provided



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

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## Idaho

*Where Has the Year Gone?*



It's hard to believe it's already December, Yule is almost here, and the New Year is near. November flew by just as fast as 2023. We had an amazing turn out at our movie moot, which was held on the 18th. We had a total of 8 people between adults and children, including a potential new member who will hopefully be joining us as an AFA member soon. We held blot to Odin, watched Braveheart, and had some great pizza along with tons of great conversation!

### *Upcoming Events*



**Yule Celebration**  
Dec, 17th in Idaho Falls, ID  
Starting at 12pm

**There will be food, drink, white elephant gift exchange (homemade items or \$20 limit), games, and great company.**

**Contact App. Folkbuilder Kyle Reader for more info:  
Call/Text: 208-497-8712  
Email: [kreader@runestone.org](mailto:kreader@runestone.org)**

On December 17th, we will be holding our Yule Moot at noon. I will be cooking up some amazing food, there will be drinks, games, great company, a white elephant gift exchange, and a blot. Even though this moot is on a Sunday, I encourage everyone who can to please come out. You may even come down on Saturday and stay the night to enjoy an extra day of company with your folk! I look forward to seeing everyone who comes.



Kyle Reader  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[kreader@runestone.org](mailto:kreader@runestone.org)

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## Montana

*Friends New and Old*



This month was marked by saying goodbye to a great man and saying hello to new friends. On the 18th, members from Idaho and Montana gathered in Missoula to give Alan Wittenberg a proper send off at his memorial service. Over sixty people came that day, with almost half being AFA, to be with Alan's family at this time.

Having been asked to run the memorial, I was tasked with the impossible. I had to capture who Alan was in such a short time. Obviously, this was unobtainable as he had lived such a robust life, but the pursuit still had merit in and of itself. I told the tale of a young boy who learned his father's trade and was a champion skier and martial artist, the tale of a young man who played in rock bands and rebelled against the establishment, and the tale of a wise elder who could always be counted on for his knowledge of lore and wise counsel. I told the story of my friend's life from the beginning--of times well before I had the privilege of knowing him and of times before I was even born.

As I told this story, I watched those in the crowd fill with emotions of grief and joy when I spoke of the Alan they knew. His childhood friends and family were impacted by the stories of his youth, while his band mates were deeply impacted when I told of his wild days. I watched our AFA members struggle with emotion when I spoke of his later years. Through it all, I came to know Alan far better than in life. It was a privilege to aid his family through their grief.



We played songs that held importance for Alan. The first was Forndom's haunting "Hemkost", which I had sent to Alan on his last day in Midgard. He listened to it on repeat until he passed.

The lyrics:

Outside the family gate,  
*utanför ättens port,*

Be invited there to drink by fager mö,  
*Bjuds där på dryck av fager mö,*

Warmed by a beautiful fire,  
*Värms av ett vackert bål,*

Around me I hear fathers litter,  
*Kring mig jag höra fäder strö,*

The year and the toast of peace.  
*året och fridens skål.*

*Til ars ok friðar*  
*Til árs ok friðar*

Darkness flees away, light bites,  
*Bort flyr mörker, ljuset bidar*

*Fé Fé Fé*

*Til ars ok friðar*  
*Til árs ok friðar*

Darkness flees away, light bites,  
*Bort flyr mörker, ljuset bidar*

*Fé Fé Fé*

Bone becomes bone and blood becomes blood,  
*Ben bliva ben och blod blir blod,*

*Flesh becomes flesh again,*  
*Kött bliver åter kött,*

*Again I find old courage*  
*åter jag finner gammalt mod*

*That which is dead shall live.*  
*leva skall det som dött.*

*Til ars ok friðar*

*Til árs ok friðar*

*Darkness flees away, light bites*

*Bort flyr mörker, ljuset bidar*

*Fé Fé Fé*

*Til ars ok friðar*

*Til árs ok friðar*

*Darkness flees away, light bites,*

*Bort flyr mörker, ljuset bidar*

*Fé Fé Fé*

We followed it with a song that captures Alan's indomitable spirit and the message he wished to pass on to those who feel his loss. "Bubbles Up" is a song that shows that, even in the saddest hours, we can find joy in life. Alan was a man who loved life and found joy in all things.



After the songs, we sent a horn around to toast Alan and tell stories. His memory will definitely be preserved, and his legacy has impacted the AFA. His good name lives on!

I began this article mentioning that there were new friends as well. Montana has been growing and our new members made the trek out to meet us while we were in town. We ate at a restaurant above a brewery where we all had a great time. Our newest member was an instant fit, and the evening zipped by rapidly. It was only the restaurant's hours that ended our dinner, and even then, we chatted on the sidewalk for a good hour more.

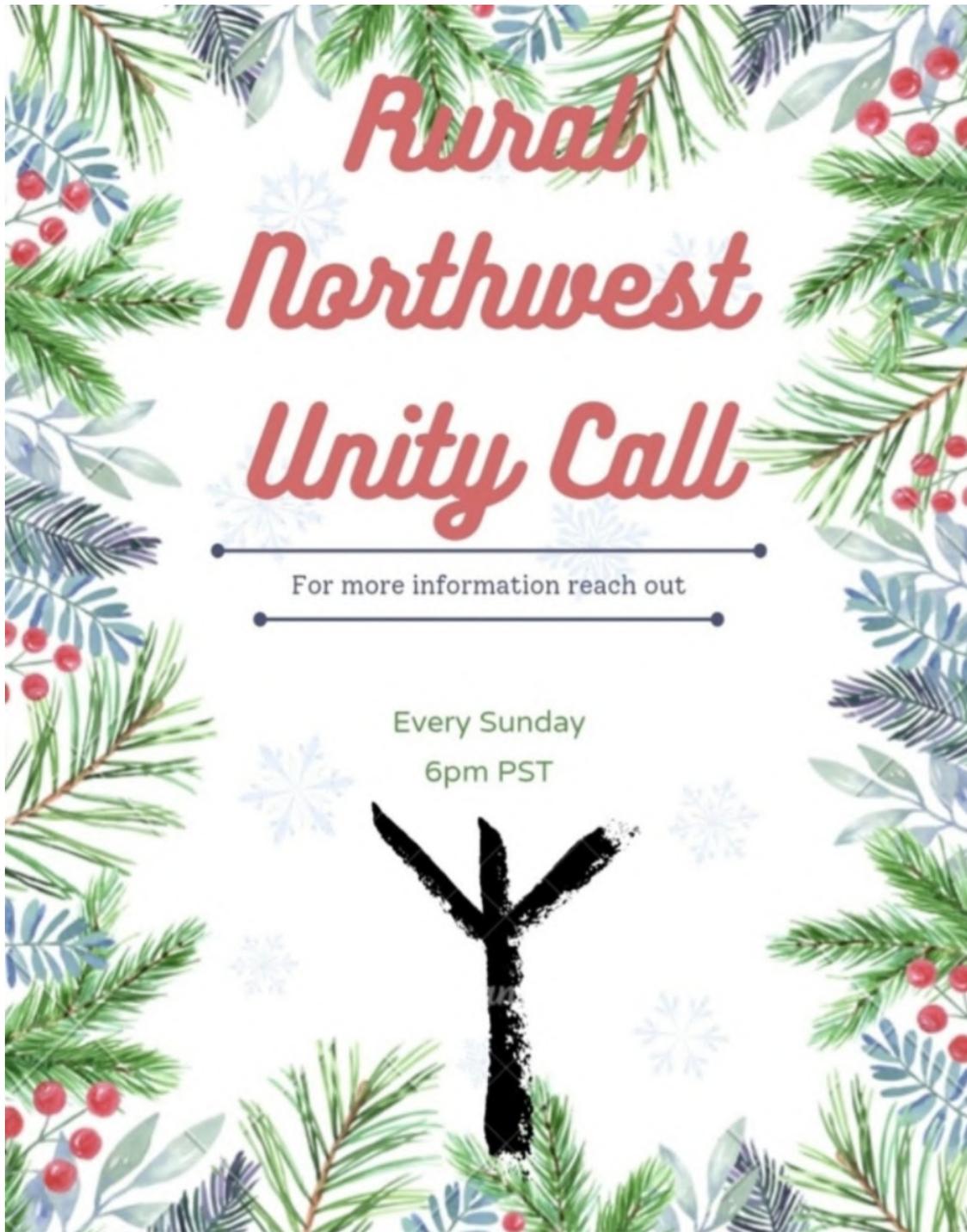


Our month had the perfect send-off for my kindred member and friend, Alan, and it was filled with opportunities to build our community in Montana.

### *Upcoming Events*



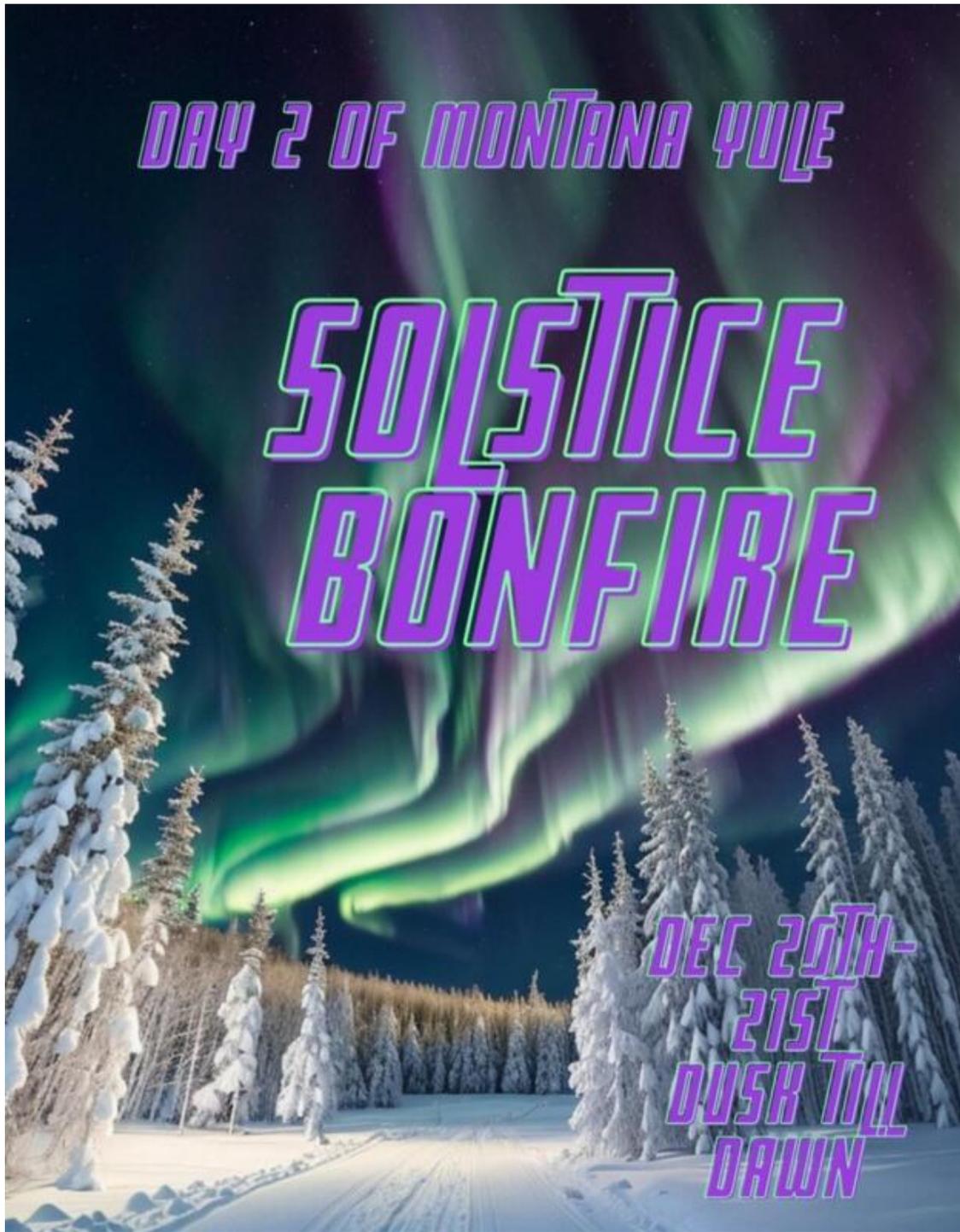
Now, I want to invite you all to join Óðinn's Hof District on the 9th for our monthly home activity. While we remember Egil Skallagrímsson, we also prepare for the Yuletide. We invite you to gather your family and go cut your Yule Tree, gather greens for boughs and wreaths, and decorate your home for the season. Take pictures and send them to me at [theinlein@runestone.org](mailto:theinlein@runestone.org) so we can show just how much fun our district had this Yuletide. When you're finished decorating, you have a great opportunity to talk about or learn about Egil as a family. This activity is a great family outing, but it also allows each and every one of us that participates to transcend geographical divides and come together without travel as a people.



Additionally, I'd like to invite you all to join us on our weekly Unity Calls that take place every Sunday at 6pm PST. This month we will be focusing on Yule Traditions.



Furthermore, I'd like to have it know that for anyone traveling through Montana during the holidays, my home is always open to you. From the 20th to the 31st, my family celebrates the twelve days of Yule.



Every AFA member is welcome to join us, but this year there is a caveat in that when my wife goes into labor (which could happen at any time during that window) the cabin will become closed off for some time--which I think we can all agree is fair.



So, until next month:

Hail the Folk!

Hail the Gods!

And Hail the AFA!



Folkbuilder Tyler Heinlein

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

### *Montana Feast of the Einherjar*



Feast of the Einherjar was held in Helena, Montana on November 25th. Members and guests came together from across the state to celebrate the chosen warriors of our Folk. A central altar was erected, and attendees were encouraged to bring photos of loved ones and ancestors who have served. A craft station was set up for the kids to make bird feeders from pinecones, peanut butter, and birdseed to hang during the winter months when food becomes scarce.



Of course, we had plenty of time to converse and enjoy the frith, which accompanies so many of our events. Plus, the food was plentiful! Sumbel around our altar capped the night as new bonds were forged and old ones were strengthened.

### *Upcoming Events*



A Merry Montana Yule. December 23rd in Helena, MT. Please contact me for more information.

Please join the Flavel family on 12/23 for our final Alsherbjargothic Dinner of 2023! This is a potluck, and we are planning on doing a ham, glogg,..... and, at long last.....pig face!

Pig face and drinks at 1pm

Dinner at 3pm

Happy Yule!



Folkbuilder Ryan Harlan  
[rharlan@runestone.org](mailto:rharlan@runestone.org)

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## Nevada

### *Alsherjargothic Feasting in November*



Thank you to folks who attended our November dinner! Please join the Flavel family on 12/23 for our final Alsherjargothic dinner of 2023! This is a potluck and we are

planning on doing a ham, glogg ..... and, at long last.....pig face!

Pig face and drinks at 1

Dinner at 3

Happy Yule!

*Upcoming Events*



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



## Washington



Tomte, also known as Nisse, are spirits that live in and around the home and barn. "Tomte" translates directly to "Homestead man." They are short, have long white beards, and wear plain clothes with red stocking caps. A Tomte will walk around the land on which it lives and check in on the animals and children throughout the night, helping where they see fit. This could be bringing straw to one of the animals who is cold, patching a hole in the barn roof, or simply comforting the livestock should they become restless. They come out during winter and stay under the floorboards or in the pantry during the summer and spring months.

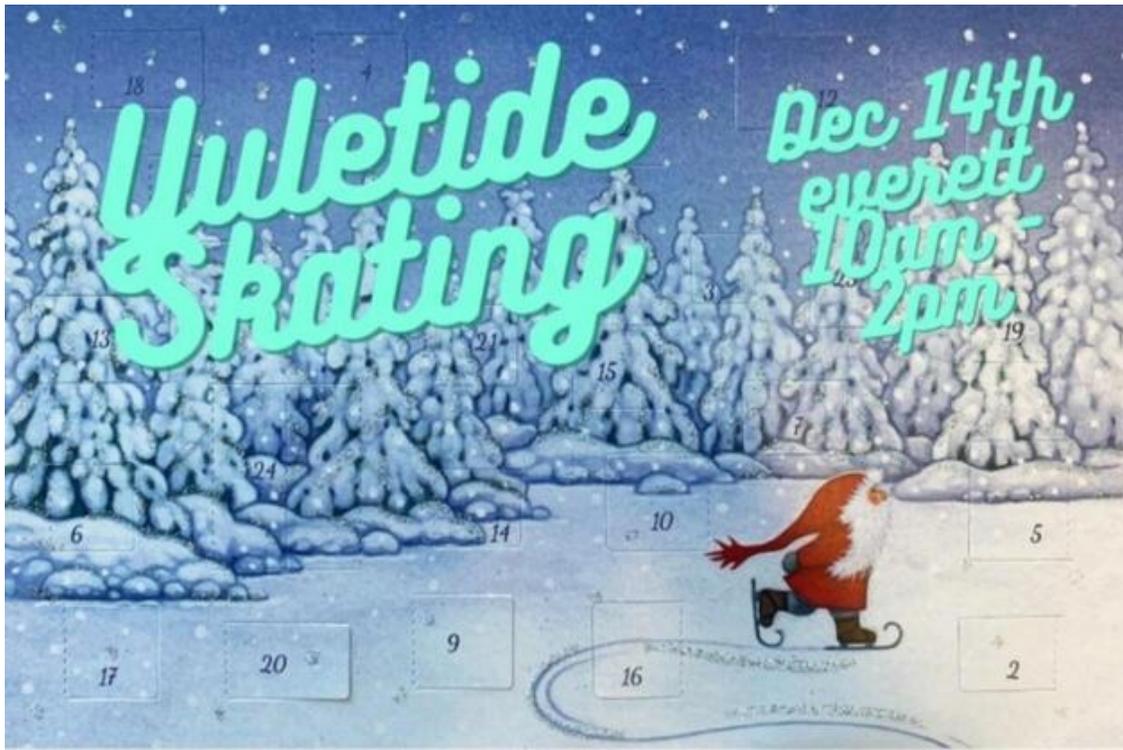
A yearly offering of julegrot, normally set out on the night of December 24th (which is a day for the house wights during the Yuletide), will keep the Tomte happy. Julegrot is a porridge, or soft pudding, generally topped with a generous knob of butter. Butter used to be a luxury and only produced for special occasions. The addition of julegrot shows

the Tomte your respect and gratitude for his help over the last year.

Treating animals unfairly or maintaining a dirty or untidy house will also upset the Tomte who lives there. An unhappy Tomte will often play pranks on the residents, from breaking things or hiding important items from you, to tying cows' tails together and other disruptive behavior. A happy Tomte will promote a healthy and bountiful farm or homestead. Without one, the land will not thrive and will fall into disorder and poverty.

Be sure to make a bowl of Julegrot and top it with a large chunk of butter this Yuletide to show your Tomte how much you appreciate his hard work.

### *Upcoming Events*



### Public Session Rates

#### NEW RATES AS OF JUNE 1, 2020

- ◆ \$8.50 Admission
- ◆ \$4.50 Skate Rental
- ◆ \$5.50 Children 5 & Under (includes Skate Rental)
- ◆ \$7.50 Senior/Military w/ ID
- ◆ Public Skating Punch Card - \$45.00 for seven public sessions (Limit 1 punch card per person. Skate rental is included.)

**CONTACT  
APPRENTICE  
FOLKBUILDER  
AARON  
SIMBECK FOR  
MORE INFO**

**[ASIMBECK@RUNESTONE.ORG](mailto:ASIMBECK@RUNESTONE.ORG)**



Aaron Simbeck  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[asimbeck@runestone.org](mailto:asimbeck@runestone.org)

## Be a Doer



**We need you to volunteer for the AFA!**

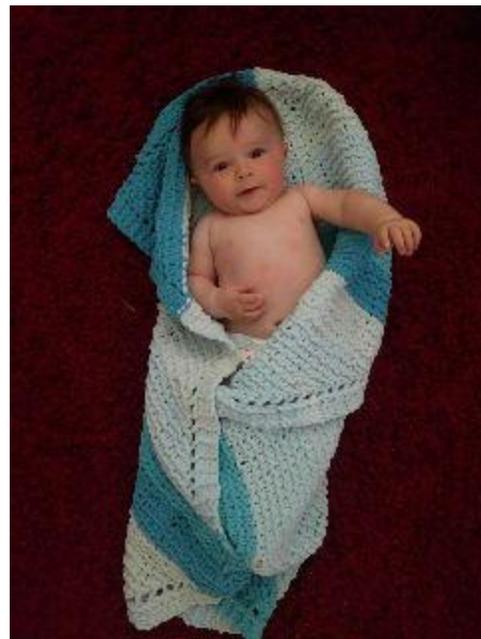
Yes, you. We have work to do and need folk who are artists, editors, writers, accountants, lawyers, publicists, reputation managers, professionals of all manner, technical support, web developers, system admins, tradesmen, craftswomen, and more. See the list of amazing projects we have below. We will 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!

## 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

Witan Allen Turnage  
[aturnage@runestone.org](mailto:aturnage@runestone.org)



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