



Óðinshof

First Hof of the Asatru Folk Assembly

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Words from the Alsherjargothi



As I write this, the official membership of the Asatru Folk Assembly is now 1000, for the first time in history. Thank you all for making this a reality. Special thanks go to our, ever-growing, team of amazing Folkbuilders. Too often the hard work of these folk goes unnoticed and unpraised, yet it is that same hard work that makes these victories manifest.

Hail the Folkbuilders!

Hail Victory!

I would like to mention something here that has been weighing on me. The leading cause of death in the Asatru Folk Assembly is, overwhelmingly, suicide. Suicide is killing a shocking number of white men. One reason for this is being overwhelmed with negativity and the hopelessness that this breeds over time. Those of us with a traditional worldview have a tendency to "shine a light" on all the myriad things terribly wrong in the world. We share these things all day and all night. We talk about all the things we don't like until we are out of breath. Sometimes it is the need to get things off our chests. Sometimes it is to expose these things or to wake our folk up. The trouble is that, more often than not, we share an endless flow of negativity to an

audience that is all too awake and awake to these things. This focus on negativity is literally killing our young men (and those not so young). More than that, this focus takes our eyes off of goals and victory. We are far better served celebrating what we have instead of mourning what we don't. Life is good. We are doing great things. We are growing. We are winning. We are doing this day by day and year by year. We do this together as a family. Hold your head up and focus on the positive. Always look for opportunities to succeed, seize those opportunities, rejoice and celebrate with deeds and with glory. Be a force to lift your fellows up, keep your spirit high. We build, we achieve, we ascend. Focus on Victory and there is no end to what we can achieve.

Hail the Gods!

Hail the Folk!

Hail the AFA!



Matthew D. Flavel
Alsherjargothi, Asatru Folk Assembly
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Mitch Loveless 7/16/1988 - 2/10/2023



Today, we lost a great man. Mitch Loveless, born July 16, 1988, was the epitome of what a man should be: kind, loyal, and an ever-loving father and husband. He was someone you could call on in a time of need and count that he would be there at a moment's notice. Mitch was an avid outdoorsman and a hard worker. He was an example to young men on what true masculinity should be. He also had a softer side that would shine through, especially with his girls. He could go from strong and resilient to soft and gentle with just a smile from anyone of them. Mitch lived in a blended home with three children of his own blood and four from his wife, but you would never know, as he loved all of them as if they were all individual pieces of his own heart. He also helped sculpt two boys into very fine young men who will do great things. Mitch will be severely missed by any who have had the pleasure of his company, his kindred that will never again be whole, and of course, a family that have lost their father and husband, something no one can truly understand without firsthand knowledge. Mitch leaves behind his beautiful, strong wife Kristina, their seven wonderful children, both parents and extended family and in-laws. May his passage into the Halls of the Ancestors be smooth. Please keep the family in your thoughts and prayers. Until we meet again, with much love and respect. Hail the Loveless Family! Hail Mitch! – from Josh Birdzell

Words From Our Witan

Our Season of Growth



I am writing this halfway between Charming of the Plow and Ostara. I had the honor of leading Blot to Freyr and Gerda at a great gathering of Folk from at least four states near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Nearly 40 of us gave gifts to our Gods, received their blessings in return. We witnessed a ritual drama, witnessed the naming of two new children into the Folk. Thank you to all the Folk who attended and to Folkbuilders Keller, Cook, and Hudak for their efforts in organizing this event.

This time of year, we set about breaking out of the winter and doing all the work to ensure a prosperous year. We plan gardens, we plant seeds, we maintain and fire up the engines of machines that sat over the winter, we budget for the year, we schedule out our time, travels, and vacations.

We do this in the Asatru Folk Assembly leadership as well. Our Gothar evaluate which Folkbuilders are doing well and who needs help. Our Alsherjargothi reviews the Witan and the Gothar. Planning for Sigrheim is well under way, and for hofs yet to come.

The Asatru Folk Assembly this month has just had our membership count reach 1000. This is not 1000th Facebook “like” or even our 1000th member signup. We have, for better and for worse, had members come and go through the years. This is 1000 simultaneously active and contributing members. This is a great achievement, and our

success will continue so long as we are acting in a noble way that pleases the Aesir.

I am making a call to action to all our members in states, provinces, or countries without a Folkbuilder. Become that Folkbuilder! Our Folk need someone to rally around, and there is no reason it should not be you. So often it takes one brave person to be first to raise the AFA banner and folks will find them and kindreds will form around them, and eventually even Hofs dedicated to the divine Æsir. This first person is what makes Asatru possible to so many Folks.

Also, there is no such thing as too many Folkbuilders, so if you are in an area that has one already but would like to answer this call, we need you too. If you are willing to lead your Folk home please contact me or another member of our Witan or Gothar, witan@runestone.org and gothar@runestone.org, and we'll setup an interview with you to make sure you understand the position, its expectations, and that you are fit to serve in this role.



Witan Clifford Erickson
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Ostara



Blessed Ostara to the Folk! The days lengthen, the snow and ice is melting, the birds are awake, hope returns...

Spring begins to break through as winter loosens its grip on the earth and on the folk. A new dawn shines over the horizon.

Below is my personal blot for Ostara and the coming of Spring. Blessed Ostara to all the Folk!

Items Needed:

Mead

Water

Horn

3 Bowls

Flowers of Choice

Sprig

Single Flower

Vase

1 Folk to assist in receiving gifts and giving blessings.

Entrance: Prior to blot, give a flower to each of the folk present. Enter your sacred space in a clockwise motion.

Blessing of the Mead: If women are the folk are present, ask them to bless the mead prior to blot.

Welcoming:

“Folk, welcome to the celebration of spring and devotion to Ostara.

*May our voices, in worship to her,
stretch across the horizon
and welcome the coming of the dawn of spring.*

*Holy Aesir, mighty gods and goddesses of our Folk,
we ask for you to join us here,
hear our voices, devoted and pious,
witness our worship,
and see the honor we hold for you in our hearts!*

*Honored Ancestors, grandmothers and grandfathers as far back as time remembers,
we ask you to join your sons and daughters here,
in celebration and in worship!*

*Friendly vaetter, spirits of this land and place,
look upon us, witness our devotion,
see our nobility and deeds!*

*Hail Ostara!
Goddess of the Dawn,
Bringer of rebirth and of renewal,
With you comes the songs of the birds,
The fertility of the fields,
The fresh rains,
And beauty of the blooms!
With you, comes the dawn,
As the light pushes back
The darkness and cold of Winter!
We ask you, to join the gathered Folk here,
Who prepare to give you their gifts,*

*Who prepare to receive your blessings!
Hear our voices, your name on our lips,
Echoing our worship of you
And carried on the winds of March!*

Hail Ostara!"

Receiving the gifts of the Folk:

*"Folk, close your eyes and place your hands over your heart.
Feel the heartbeat beneath your fingertips.
The blood that runs through your veins
Is that of your ancestors.
Noble, strong, and beautiful.
Gather your gifts for Ostara within your heart,
The best and the brightest of yourself.
From your heart and into your hand
Push those gifts forward.
Open your eyes, and as the horn is brought to you,
Through your hand put your gifts into the horn for Ostara."*

Give the vase to one of your folk to collect the flowers for Ostara.

*"In your hands you hold your flower
Colorful, beautiful, alive and vibrant.
A physical reminder of the beauty
And rebirth spring brings to us.
Into these flowers, pour your thanks
To Ostara for the arrival of spring,
For the rebirth of the earth,
Of fertility and opportunity.
Place your flower of thanks into the vase
As it follows the horn."*

Ask the folk to galdr together as the gifts are given. There are many appropriate runes, I will be using Berkano.

Giving the gifts of the Folk to Ostara:

After collecting the gifts of the Folk, hold the horn high, your assistant should hold up the vase of flowers.

*"Ostara!
The horn is heavy with the gifts of the folk,*

*Our flowers radiate the beauty of our personal thanks.
If you see these gifts worthy,
We ask that you take them now.”*

Place the vase of flowers on the altar and pour the mead into the offering bowl.

Receiving the gifts of Ostara:

Pour mead into the 2nd bowl, water into the 3rd. Hold the bowl of mead high, having your assistant hold the bowl of water.

*“Ostara,
We ask for your blessing,
For ourselves, for our families,
For our Folk.
Bless us, give us hope,
Let us see the beauty in the world.
Brighten our days,
Make our fields and our women fertile.
Give our Folk, if you find us worthy,
Those things they ask for themselves.
May this mead carry your blessings,
May this water remind us of the cleansing rains of spring,
The rebirth of the earth,
And the chance of our own spiritual rebirth and renewal.*

*Hail Ostara!
Hail Ostara!!
Hail Ostara!!!”*

Using the spring, asperge the Folk with the blessings of Ostara. Have your assistant, using the single remaining flower, sprinkle water upon the heads of the folk.

Closing of blot:

*“Folk, this blot has ended.
Take with you, not only the blessings of Ostara,
But the hope of spring,
And the strength of the community that surrounds you.*

*Hail the Gods!
Hail the Folk!!
Hail the AFA!!!”*

Be sure to properly tend to the gifts of the Folk and Ostara.



Witan Brandy Callahan
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Lawspeaker's Challenge - Patience

“Patience is
bitter, but its
fruit is sweet.”

—JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

Having missed last month’s deadline I was going to write about procrastination, but I never could get around to it.....

I am not a patient person by nature. Having found Asatru 18 years ago (thank you Mr. McNallen!), I am ready for all our Folk to find their way home. Everywhere I see so many of our people who are spiritually lost, their malaise manifesting as depression, anxiety, drug abuse, and the Ten Thousand Horrors that plague modern civilization.

In the Olden Days, like, say, around 2010, the frustration that I felt often manifested as impatience: impatience at the slow check-out clerk, slow traffic, and anything that didn’t move at a fast-enough pace. I wanted things to change; I wanted everyone

around me to see what I could see so clearly. When they couldn't see it, or wouldn't, I wanted to give them a good shaking!

Don't get me wrong, though. It wasn't all about Asatru. I was also busy at work, with my three young boys, with a too-busy modern life.

I'm not sure when that all changed. Whether age has given me a better perspective or my meditation practice is finally working, or whether the progress that the AFA is making just has me in a better frame of mind overall, it's hard to know. The one thing I know for sure is that the more patient I am the better things seem, including the response of the people around me.

I still get impatient, and there is plenty of Road Rage to go around (I mean, don't those people even know what the term "SLOW LANE" means??). Overall, though, I almost always get through my day without boiling over. One reason, certainly, is my confidence that the gods have us well in hand, and our petty annoyances are nothing to lose sleep over.

I cannot remember where I heard it, but "despite all indications to the contrary the universe is unfolding as it should." Trust your gods, trust your Fylgja, trust yourself. The better you act, the more likely that the cashier, busboy, or mechanic will be to want to join you in your wholeness. We are right, and we will prevail.



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Words from Our Gothar

Ritual Mundus: Discipline = Freedom



Ritual is at the core of Aryan man. It is our means of creating order in our lives and participating in the works of our gods. Like building when a house, we must equip ourselves with good tools and build a sturdy foundation. Start each day by embracing our Noble Virtue of Discipline. Establish a ritual routine every morning and make it a habit. In doing so start with the mundane and build upward towards the divine. Perhaps start with making your bed, followed by starting some coffee, light stretching, and some brief meditation in front of your alter. Your rituals are not limited to these things alone, but whatever the elements you choose are, they should be an act which be an act

which makes you and your surroundings more orderly. In doing so you develop discipline, freeing your mind to focus on finer details in your life to either expand on your daily ritual, or begin to build rituals with-in rituals. Repeat consistently and with intention. Chances are if you are experiencing discomfort or awkwardness in doing so, congratulate yourself. You are experiencing growth and likely do something right! At the highest level of execution your daily actions may even become an act of worship, liberate you from unnecessary stress, reduce your chances for error, and open your mind to possible creative liberties you may not have previously considered as circumstances change with-in a moment. Discipline creates freedom, and the means to make poetry of life. Start mastering yourself today, so you may conquer the world tomorrow. It's what the gods made you to do.

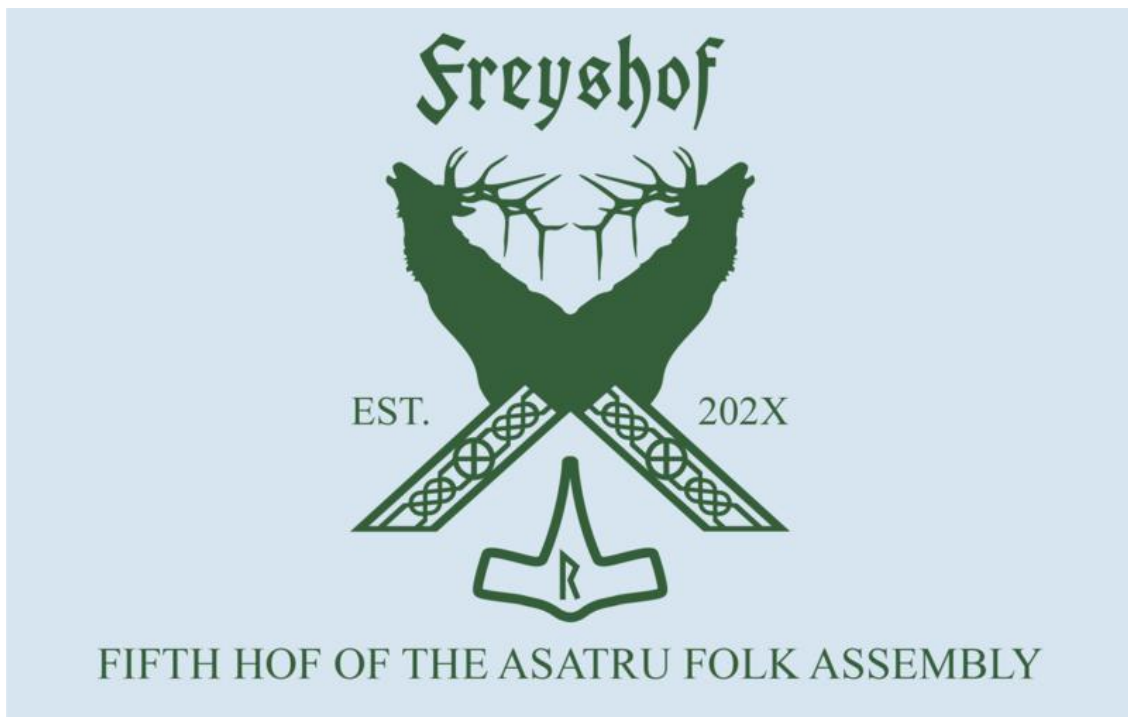


Gothi Jason Plourde
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The Quest for Freyshof

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

– Gylfaginning



[Freyshof Fund – Asatru Folk Assembly \(runestone.org\)](http://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. (We have paid off 58.28% so far.) If every member donated \$102 we would be able to pay this off today!
2. We need to raise our monthly donation average by 11%. (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.

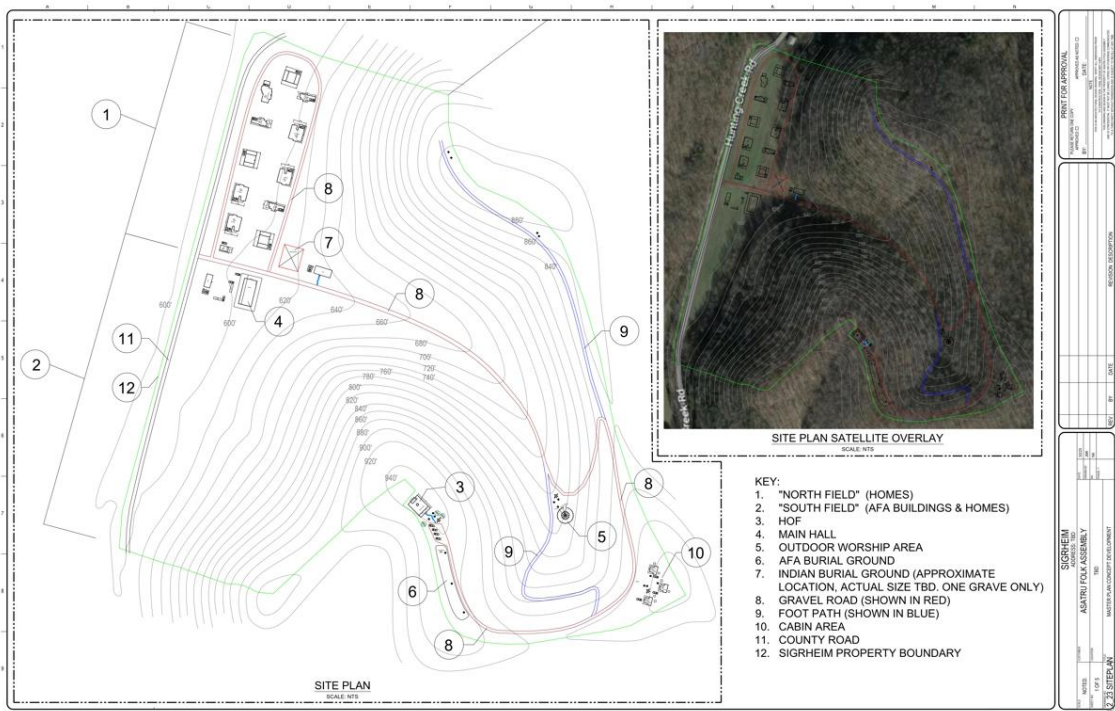
This is not a "quick" process so stay patient and resolute. As we progress, I will keep you all updated on our progress!

Hail Freyr!

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Sigrheim: Home of Victory



Progress continues in the planning and development of Sigrheim. This above is an idea of the space available and the first phase of our plans. This month we have some members of the team headed to the site to do some measurements and to talk to an engineer/sewage guy to get a more realistic idea of what we can and can't do on the site. The results can definitely change the above plan. We also have a member who will be living onsite in April and 2 more who could possibly get there by then as well. This is a long-term process, but we are certainly making progress.



And don't forget, Sigrheim is OURS, and we can only build it up as the Capital of Asatru and the AFA with the help and donations of our generous Folk! Donate to the [Sigrheim Fund](#).



We'd love to see you out there in July for Sigrblót at Sigrheim.

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Victory Never Sleeps

The Asatru Folk Assembly Presents

Victory Never Sleeps!

Wednesdays at 6pm PST / 8pm EST

vk.com/asatrufolkassembly

entropystream.live/app/MattFlavel

odysee.com/@AsatruFolkAssembly:e

youtube.com/c/AsatruFolkAssembly

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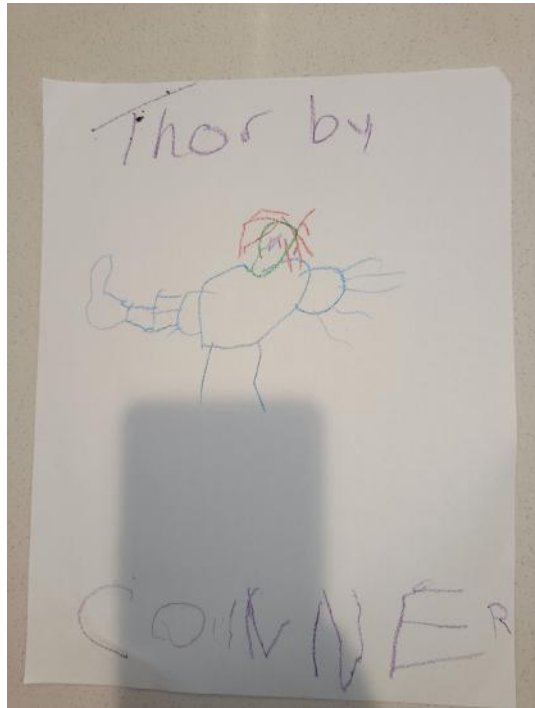
AFA Homeschool Program



Check out the Asatru Academy at AsatruAcademy.org



I gave the assignment to our kindergarten students to draw or color their favorite God or Goddess, lore story, or even a memory from their Kindred or Hof. I'm proud to present a few of the entries we have received so far!

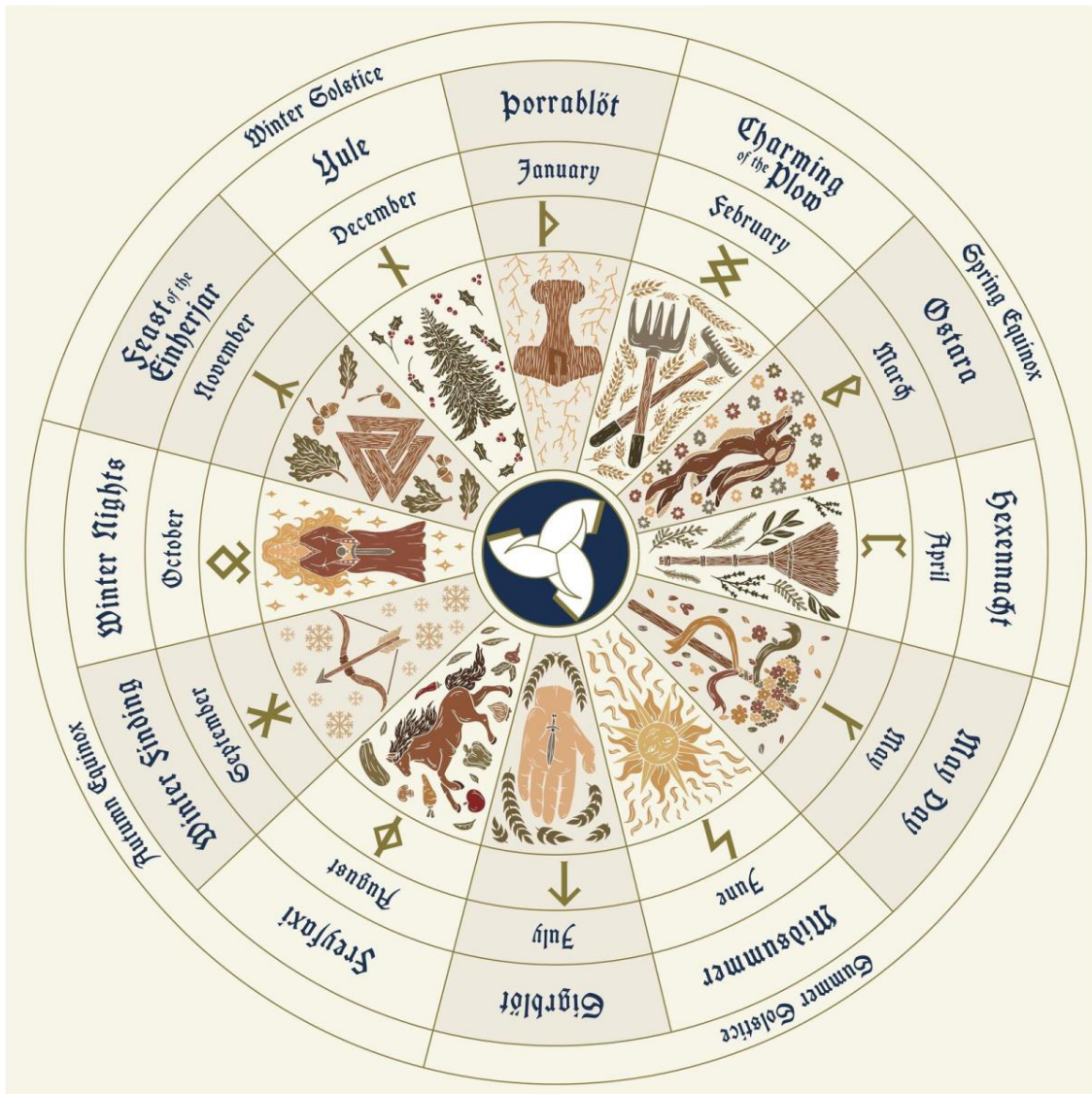


We are proud of our students and all their hard work this year, and certainly of their beautiful art!



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Remembrance and Holy Days



Date	Observance
January 9	Day of Remembrance for Raud the Strong
January 21	Þorrablót
February 9	Day of Remembrance for Eyvind Kinnrifi
February 18	Charming of the Plow
March 9	Day of Remembrance for Olvir of Egg
March 21 (observed on 18th)	Ostara
April 9	Day of Remembrance for Jarl Haakon
April 22	Day of Remembrance for John Gibbs-Bailey “Hoskuld”
April 28 (observed on 15th)	Hexennacht
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 4	Day of Remembrance for John Yeowell “Stubba”
October 9	Day of Remembrance for Meister Guido von List
October 15	Birthday of Founder Stephen McNallen
October 21	Winter Nights
November 9	Day of Remembrance for Queen Sigríð of Sweden
November 11 (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

Olvir of Egg



Sometime between 1020 and 1021 CE, the Christianization of Pagan Europe was well underway. King Olaf II was ensconced on the throne of Norway. Much of the country had been baptized under threat of torture and death. Such things, however, were not

enough to deter the faithful, and eventually, word reached the ears of King Olaf II of gatherings in and around Trondheim of a very pagan nature.

Olvir of Egg, a leader and a Gothi of his people, was elected by his people to speak to the King on their behalf and to defend their religious activities. An intelligent man, Olvir was called before the King on two separate occasions to defend the stories of Pagan festivals and feasts. On both occasions, Olvir of Egg humbly described not Pagan gatherings, but communal gatherings, in which neighbors drank and feasted as friends.

Both times Olvir left behind an unconvinced King and when spies told him a third time of an Eostre festival being arranged for the people, Olaf decided that he had heard enough. Five ships and over three hundred men were gathered and set out to ambush Olvir and the men and women who worshipped with him. Arriving under the cover of darkness, Olaf's men ambushed Olvir and his pagan community. Olvir was killed and many of his people were tortured, mutilated, or killed. Once a great stronghold of the Pagan faith, Trondheim had been taken.

And what can we learn from this story?

Many of these stories are not happy stories. On the surface, they are stories of death and defeat, but we have to look past the surface of all of these stories. Here, with Olvir, we see a man who loved his Gods and, despite all of the pressures of his ancient world, did his best to worship them. Not only did he do his best for himself, but he also did the best he could for his people. In the face of adversity, Olvir did his best to provide and protect his people from the angry, outside force that was the King.

Our world is not the same world that Olvir lived in. We have the right to choose our faith, but there will always be obstacles. In these times, when our native faith is still so small, and our heritage is being challenged by the multicultural whirlwind, remember Olvir. Provide a safe place for your folk to be away from the harm of the “societal norm”. Remember that sometimes smart words are required instead of rash ones.

Be there for your folk. Provide for your folk.

The Gods and the Ancestors are watching.



Gythia Catie Erickson
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Holiday

Ostara



Hail Ostara, conquering Goddess of the Dawn, radiant Lady of Spring! You ride boldly out of the east, conquering all before you! May your light chase away the darkness! May your warmth banish the cold!

Ostara is the celebration marking the beginning of Spring. The cold, dreary days of winter are finally coming to an end. The sun is warming the frozen soil. Life is once stirring from the depths. Ostara is a celebration in every way. Our ancestors celebrated life and the survival of another long winter. They celebrated the birth of lambs, calves, and horses. They celebrated the blossoming fertility of the world around them.

In today's fast and hectic world now is a good time to stop and take a deep breath. Let the sun warm your face and take the time to thank the Gods and the Ancestors for seeing you through another cold winter. Shake off the influences of the winter blues. Now is the time to get your hands dirty.

The small plot of the garden that you planned for during the Charming of the Plow is almost ready for planting. Keep that soil turned and soft. Keep fertilizing it. It is too cold to plant seeds directly into the ground, but this is a good time to begin your seeds inside. Plant them and keep them warm. Set yourself up for success. If you are not working on a garden then you should be moving from the planning stages of your Charming of the Plow project into the beginning of the active stages. The winter months are stationary by nature, but winter is over. Now it is time to leave the introspection in favor of action. With industriousness, we can change the world. Start small and move always onward.



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Upcoming National Events



Order your tickets [HERE](#)

Ostara at Þórshof, an Asatru Folk Assembly national event, is scheduled for March 10 – 12 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.

Tickets are available at
<https://www.runestone.org/product/ostara/>



Witan Clifford Erickson
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Folkbuilder Spotlight

Folkbuilder Ryan Harlan
Marysville, Montana



Ryan Harlan has been an AFA member for only ten years, but it seems like he's always been with us. You could easily describe him as tall, handsome, personable, thoughtful – but, in his quiet way, he's so much more. Ryan's well-researched talks at Óðinshof have a deep historical perspective from which we learn more about our ancestral roots. His mead-making workshops and hand-crafted knives of Damascus steel have brought history to life before our eyes. If there's a job to be done, Ryan will take care of it. At events, he's right there for health emergencies, having set up our array of medical equipment as a qualified EMT. He's an Odin's-man, an Ullr's-man, a Frey's-man – but at the very root it all, he's a family man.

It was my pleasure to spend time with Ryan this morning, learning more about his journey to the AFA. What follows is some of what I learned.



Family is at the core of who Ryan is, whether he's telling stories of his ancestors or bringing you up to date on Harlan family of today. He keeps one foot in the past, with the stories of Cornish gold miners from his mother's side or the roots of the Harlan clan on his father's. Ryan refers to his children as “our future” and they are filled with strong virtues and high expectations, even at their young ages.



Both sides of his family had careers in law enforcement and fire-fighting, and though he wanted to be a Navy medic, a diagnosis of colorblindness ended his hopes of a military career. As an Explorer Scout, he did ride-alongs with firemen and began training as an EMT. At age 19, he received his certification and began his career with the US Forest Service. After years of being a “fire-tech” working the forest fires throughout the west, he moved to a dispatcher position so he could stay home with his family.

When it came to religion, Ryan said that Christianity "never clicked" with him. Instead, he found himself reading books on Greek and Celtic mythology. By researching “European religion” online, he discovered the AFA website - but it would still be some time before he made his move. While the AFA's Midsummer 2014, he knew it was the right decision at that point in his life.



When asked about important memories, he was quick to reply: getting engaged and married, and the baby-naming ceremonies of his three daughters. It was through the AFA that he met his wife, Rachel. In September 2016, they were married at June Lake, on the east side of the Sierras in true mountain-folk fashion. It's no surprise that when they relocated to Montana, they found a home built in 1892 in a ghost town with only 70 inhabitants...not unlike the California gold rush communities they both left behind.



Ryan had been a Folkbuilder before leaving California, so it was only natural that he rolled up his sleeves and began building an AFA presence in Montana, which had never had a Folkbuilder. He describes the locals as “hearty gold-country folk but more reserved” than those in California. He's getting to know folks there, and his efforts are showing results with an increase in Montana membership. Ryan is cautious about growing a community too quickly; he's much more concerned about maintaining high quality.

Ryan has hosted events at various venues, with several families now joining. A kindred is being established, and will proudly hoist its flag this August. Coming right up is this year's Ostara Celebration at Elkhorn Hot Springs close to the Idaho border (elkhornhotsprings.com). The site offers cabins plus other amenities, so reach out to Ryan at rharlan@runestone.org if you'd like to know more.



When weather prevents meeting with other families, the Harlan's do blot as a family. Once you've seen the photos of his young daughters Heidrun and Ida Belle pouring libations on a Montana mountaintop, you'll understand the impact the AFA has in our lives today...and in the days to come.



Gythia Sheila McNallen
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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 to help us make a difference in our world.

Baby Blanket Project

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

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



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

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

Folk Services

For some, it may be a natural disaster. For others an unexpected change in health, and for some just an unforeseen chain of events. Whatever the case may be sometimes we find ourselves in a sticky situation, and although we try and to work and do our best to



pull ourselves out, sometimes we may need the help of our Folk community to give us a hand up...

That's when our folks Services Program comes in. We give one-time monetary grants to those members in need. These folks are so grateful and we know that once they get back on track they will contribute to this fund. For those that are able, we are in need of funds so we can be prepared for when these situations arise

in our community. If you're able please place a donation today. Even a small donation adds up in the grand scheme of things and even \$5 or \$10 can help if enough people pitch in. If even a fraction of the folks who like the page did that each month, imagine the possibilities!

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

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

Thanks in advance!

Photo Donations

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



If you are willing to donate some hi-res photos for use in promotions such as the AFA Calendar, the AFA website, our publications, and more please email them to the AFA at photos@runestone.org. The larger the resolution the better, so please email them from the device where the photo was taken.

Eir's Blessings



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

Do you have a health concern and need a little extra energy? Are you battling with a mental illness like depression or PTSD? Is your baby having a hard time with teething? If you've answered yes at all, reach out to us. Once a month women of the AFA will get together to perform healing rituals all across the globe. If you would like to be included, please send a message to let us know!

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

You can reach us at 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

Cooking for the Folk



Calling all Chefs

We are looking for recipes for a cookbook. We ask that the recipes were served to the folk at a Hof or moot. Please include where and when it was served.

cookbook@runestone.org

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

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

(don't take out a second mortgage for this) but be proud to feed the folk.

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



Folkbuilder Mike Joyner
mjoyner@runestone.org

Ancestral Food and Culture



I know I'm preaching to the choir, but there are many tangents involved in our Ancestral Faith that don't exactly break off, but rather interweave into each other.

Culture, community, traditions. How are those not interconnected into not only what we are doing, but who we are? Bangers and mash are such a simple, yet delicious and hearty meal. It was a staple in my grandparents' house and I'm lucky to have my wife serve it to our family. What's so great about peas, sausages, potatoes, and onion gravy? Nothing and everything. Tacos sure are delicious but this simple and filling meal is a nod to my ancestors every time it's prepared. Thoughts wander back to England, Ireland, and beyond how they would be in the kitchen preparing, butchering, harvesting, and so forth.



Before dinner, my wife also served delicious Irish breakfast tea with cream and blueberry scones. Again, sipping and munching these treats activates my ancestral memory and I transport myself in a long-forgotten blood memory overseas. Everything about us is important and it all incorporates into our faith. I would love to share our recipes and traditions and encourage you all to take pictures of your own meals and treats, and please submit them to the Runestone to share with us all. If you do not have traditions, you can start today! The ancestors are so important, but WE are the ancestors now my Folk and we need to start thinking that way. To your health, Hail!



I can imagine the first thing some of you are thinking while reading this after you rolled your eyes is why a holiday after someone that allegedly purged Ireland of "pagans" is being written about in an Asatru Newsletter.

In a society where everything White is under attack, why not then embrace any semblance of culture we still have? Most people don't associate this holiday with religion at all.

In my Family, St Patrick's Day was a happy time, but not one of silliness. I was raised by Depression-era Irish Americans that knew all too well the harshness this world can muster. Corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, root vegetables, and soda bread might be a seasonal delicacy for some, but for the Ancestors of myself and many others, it was the cheapest food available at that time. We ate this meal to remember how much they had to sacrifice to provide us with our easy lives here in America. We ate the meal with the highest reverence, paid our respects, and raised our Guinness and whiskey up to hail their good names. Even as a little boy, I could tell this day was a very serious day for my Grandparents and we were a part of something special.

To me, that is very much in alignment with what we are doing, even if it was done by some Irish Catholics. This day to us is a day to honor not only our ancestors but to celebrate our victories and to pass on that good Orlog to the next generation.

I think it's easy to play victim and complain about St Patrick and many other similar tangents, but then which side are we on: crybaby liberals or Noble European Folk? We can't be victorious stuck in a victim-mindset, being contrarian, and claim to be Asatru at the same time. We have to steel ourselves and rise above.



Folkbuilder Timothy Dumas
tdumas@runestone.org

Ladies' Mysteries Podcast

LADIES MYSTERIES PODCAST

Spiritual Self Care

◆ March 19th @ 1:30 pm CST
◆
◆



GYTHIA CATIE ERICKSON



GYTHIA ANNA PLOURDE



FOLKBUILDER SARA AULT



FOLKBUILDER CHRISTINE DUMAS



FOLKBUILDER HEATHER YOUNG

Contact Christine Dumas for details
cdumas@runestone.org



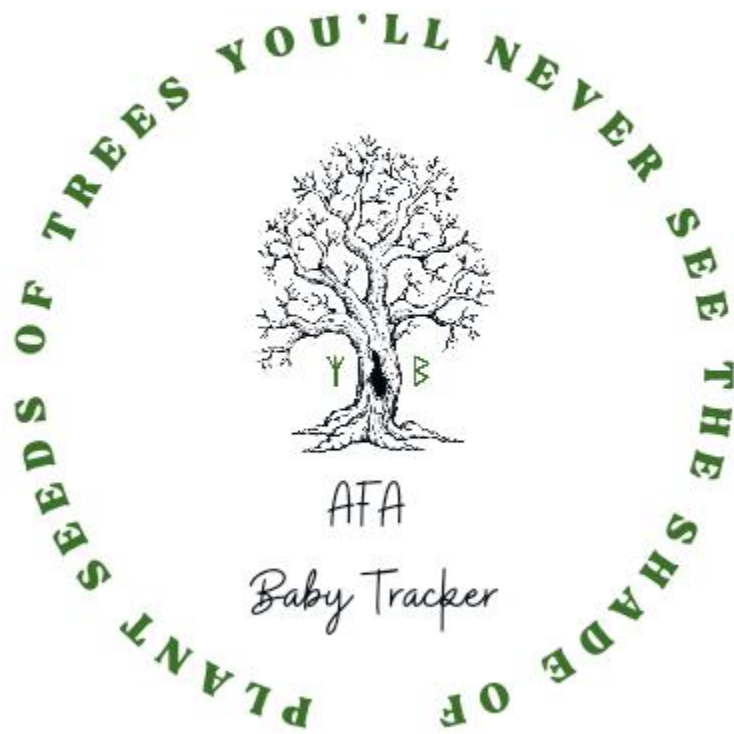
Folkbuilder Christine Dumas
cdumas@runestone.org

AFA Sister's Chat



Alison Clausen
Apprentice Folkbuilder
aclausen@runestone.org

Baby Tracker



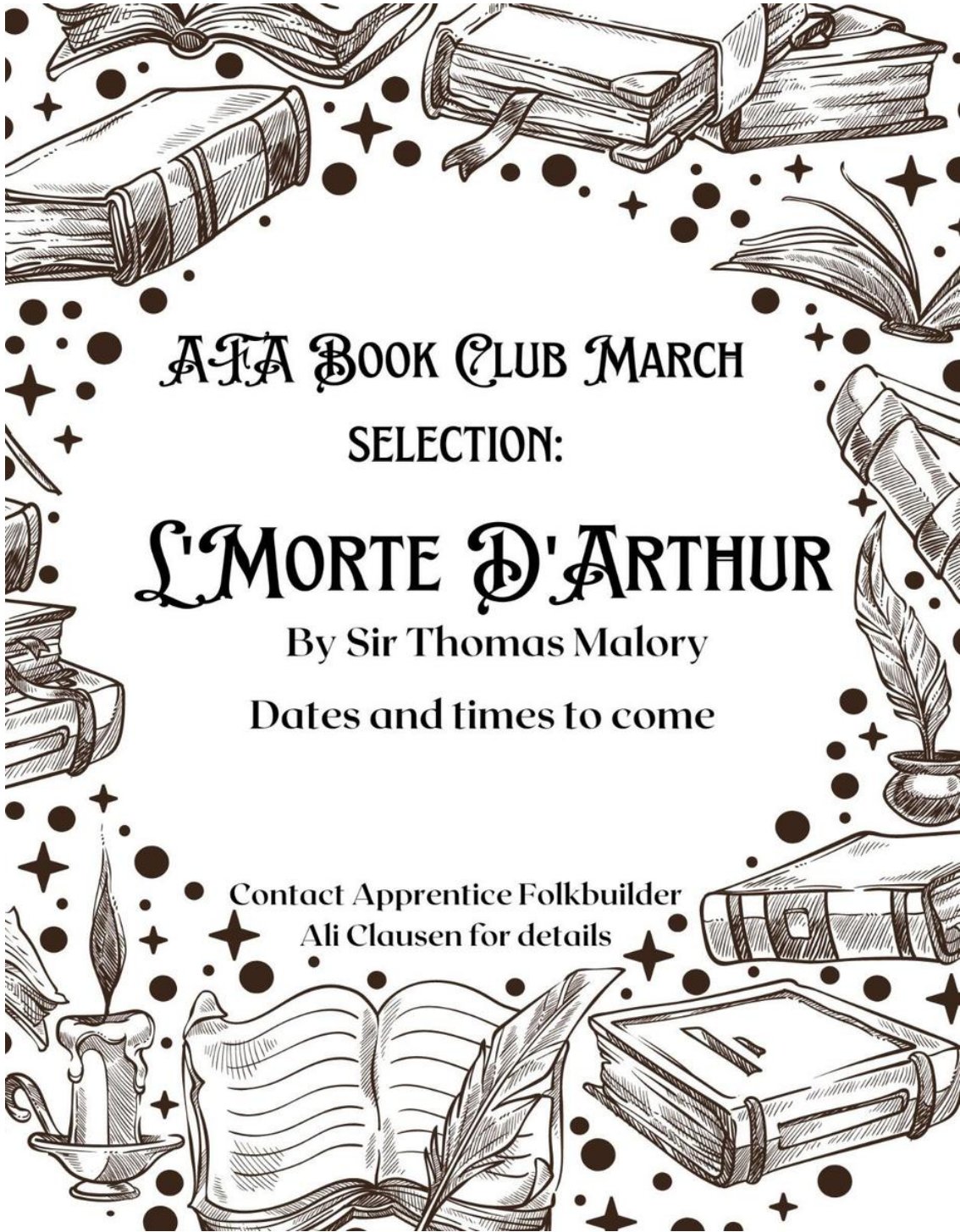
To show the growth of our folk we present to you an ongoing baby tracker. We will be keeping track of how many children have been and are born within the AFA from 2022 and forward. The ongoing tracking is proof that we are building something sustainable for the future of our folk, which is a place for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

Total babies born in 2023: 3



Jessica Keller
Apprentice Folkbuilder
jkeller@runestone.org

AFA Book Club



AFA BOOK CLUB MARCH

SELECTION:

L'MORTE D'ARTHUR

By Sir Thomas Malory

Dates and times to come

Contact Apprentice Folkbuilder
Ali Clausen for details

Alison Clausen

Apprentice Folkbuilder

aclausen@runestone.org



AFA Prison Ministry



Greetings kinsfolk,

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

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

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



Folkbuilder James Ault
jault@runestone.org

Saga's Literature Project



Saga needs your stories!

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

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

How do you celebrate our Holidays or Days of Remembrance?

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

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

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

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

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

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



Folkbuilder Shane Duffy
sduffy@runestone.org

Now Available in the AFA Store



The first of the new 2023 Apparel has arrived!



Last year we celebrated to the light of the AFA shining and guiding our folk to us. Now we call them home! "Folk Kom Hem!"

[Get yours today!](#)

Also, March is the last month to get the 2022 AFA t-shirt. It is being retired. So if you want one, get it today!

Another Not-So-New Item



We also wanted to point out that we have a few Official AFA Tie Clip and Cufflink Sets in the store that've been for sell a while, but have definitely flown under the radar. We've only got 9 gold sets and 5 silver sets in stock at the time of writing this, and when they're gone, they're gone! [So snatch 'em up fast!](#)



Folkbuilder Melisa Mills
mmills@runestone.org

Óðinshof

Charming of the Plow at Odinshof: Planting Seeds of Transformation



This begins our eighth year of holding ceremonies to our Gods at Oðinshof. We've established "templates" to help with planning, so most who make the journey to Odin's Home know what to expect. Charming of the Plow was a bit different this year, though. A call had gone out to each hof to acquire an old farm-plow for the ceremony. Folkbuilder Sierra Chapman found one in the Sacramento area that was perfect for our needs. It was my pleasure to pick up the plow, literally, and bring it to Oðinshof.

Saturday morning, the plow was adorned with ribbons and flowers, making it the centerpiece of the blot that was about to commence. Alsherjargothi Matt Flavel had us intone the rune Ingwaz, for the potential of our dreams and goals that each brought to the ritual circle. Offerings shared, the horn was passed so all could hail Ingvi Frey, the god of potential growth and fertile outcome.



In addition to our God Frey, the goddess Gefjon is often chosen for the seasonal offering at Charming of the Plow. Why Gefjon? She may be one of our more obscure goddesses, but she has captured the attention of our Folk at this time of year. There are a couple of references to her that relate to Charming of the Plow. One is Snorri's Prose Edda poem Gylfaginning, with a similar version in the Heimskringla. When you hear her story, you'll understand why she's often chosen by Gythias for this celebration.

Long, long ago, the Swedish monarch, King Gylfi decided to enjoy the company of a lady who arrived at his hall. Being well-entertained, he offered her a piece of his land

in exchange for her favors. In this bargain, she would keep all the land that she could plow in one day and night, using four oxen. As a wealthy king, parting with a pasture or two wouldn't be noticed. However, he unknowingly made this offer to the Goddess Gefjon. With the help of her four sons brought from Jotunheim and transformed into oxen, she drove a plow through Sweden in the allotted time, cutting away a huge chunk of land. She then dragged that land away from the Swedish coast, creating the Danish island now known as Zealand where the capital city of Copenhagen stands. It's no surprise that Gefjon is considered the Goddess of Denmark.

There are many layers to this story, but one lesson is there for us. It's clear that Gefjon's actions created a separate and autonomous home for the Danish people -- their sacred space. I'm convinced we also have a homeland for our people. Every time I go to Oðinshof, I'm aware that it exists for all the right reasons. In the early days of Asatru, back when the Asatru Free Assembly led fledgling kindreds and individuals, the AFA logo was RAIDO - the rune that pushed them ever onward into unknown territory.

Raido. Right action brings forth positive results. In a like way, the motto of Oðinshof also goes back to those early days. "Do Right and Fear No One!"

Decades ago, Stephen McNallen pulled us away from the dominance of Christianity. In this journey, the trail has felt long and arduous, but there's no doubt we have been blessed! In over 1,000 years, no group of people have had the means to honor our Gods to the extent we can, with actual hofs. Have you experienced the blessings that come with Raido, being on the right path as a member of our AFA family? Help us call others to the transformative connections with our Gods. "Folk come home!"

From the 9th century skald Bragi Boddason:

Gefjon drew from Gylfi
gladly the wave-trove's free-hold
Till from the running beasts
sweat reeked, to Denmark's increase;
The oxen bore, moreover,
eight eyes, gleaming brow-lights,
O'er the fields wide: booty
and four heads in their plowing

Gythia Sheila McNallen

sheila@runestone.org



Upcoming Events at Odinhof



Óðinshof Ostara

Saturday
March 18th 10am

Sheila McNallen Sheila@runestone.org Ashley Stockton 707-800-5333

Arizona

Widukind and the Saxon Resistance



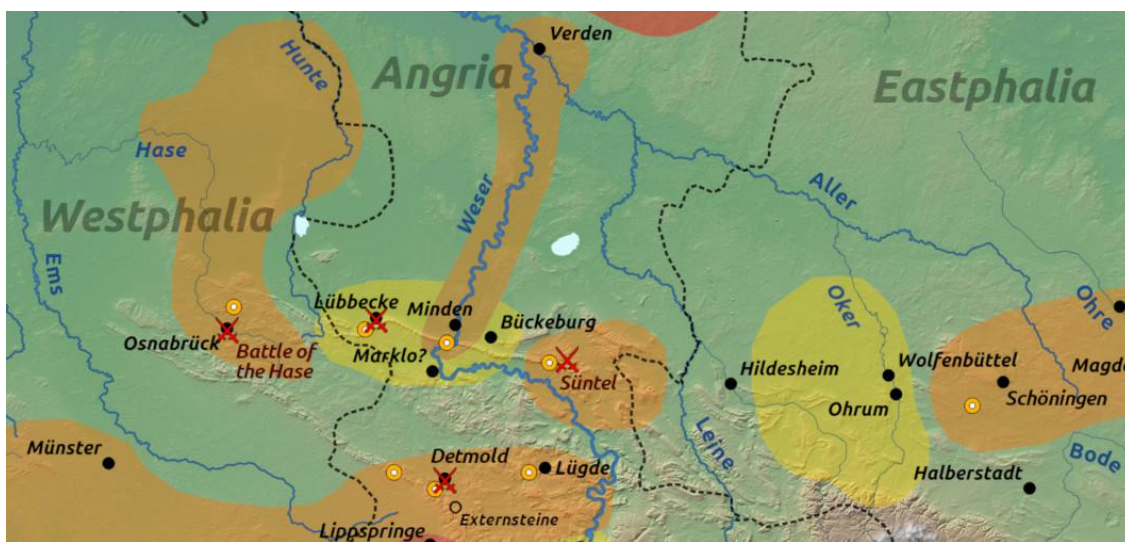
A little-remembered conflict in history, but one that our folk should learn about and honor the sacrifices of the fallen, is the great campaign of resistance of the Saxon people. While last month we looked at the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain, it is important to remember not all of the Saxons emigrated from Germania to the isle of Britain; in fact, a majority of them stayed behind in what is today northern Germany. For hundreds of years following the Migration Period and into the Early Middle Ages, the Saxon way of life changed relatively little. They remained in a tribal society, practicing Asatru as their ancestors of the Migration Period had, and enjoying relative isolation. However, the Saxons were aware of the threat of the Frankish super-state to their immediate west, a vast empire which controlled most of modern France, Germany, the Low Countries, and Italy, including the great wealth of the former imperial city of Rome, now the seat of the Catholic religion. The Franks, a Christianized Germanic people under Karl the Great (known in modern French as Charlemagne), possessed a formidable standing army and under their renowned king a seemingly insatiable appetite for expansion. Additionally, Karl, the great-grandfather of Europe and almost all AFA members' direct ancestor, possessed an uncompromising attitude toward the practitioners of Asatru and wanted to either convert the Saxons to Christianity by force, or, if these efforts failed, exterminate them completely.



In the year 772 CE, border skirmishes between the Saxons and Franks finally led to all-out war, and initially the Franks were victorious, driving into the heart of Saxon territory, and destroying the sacred symbol of the Saxon people, the Irminsul, as well as numerous Saxon strongholds, and captured several Saxon leaders. By 773, the overwhelming force of the Frankish army had swept aside all armies the Saxons put in the field, and Karl negotiated the conquest of Saxony and its addition to his great empire. However, something then happened that took Karl and the Franks by surprise: the Saxons simply refused to accept Frankish rule and refused any attempt to be converted to Christianity. Unlike all of the other Frankish conquests, the Saxons alone were prepared to suffer to remain free. After Karl's armies left Saxony to deal with other threats to their empire, the Saxons rose up, raiding Frankish lands along the Rhine river, and Widukind first made a name for himself, leading the Asatru Saxon forces against the Franks.

In 775, Karl must have begun to realize he underestimated the perseverance of the Saxons, and prepared another powerful invasion force, which once again stormed into Saxony, taking the Saxon fortress of Sigiburg, winning two battles in the field, and accepting the surrender of the Saxon warlord Hessi. Once again, as soon as the Frankish army left, the Saxons rose up, and completely burned to the ground the Frankish fortress of Eresburg in 776. Widukind, who was gradually building a reputation as the greatest of the Saxons who made a name for themselves fighting the

Franks, was again at the forefront of the rebellion. This time, Karl moved swiftly to crush the latest Saxon uprising, but Widukind escaped to Denmark. In an attempt to pacify the Saxons, Karl next directly targeted their religion of Asatru. Karl instituted a policy of forced conversion to Christianity, and any Saxon who was found to openly practice Asatru was to be immediately killed. Though historians may remember him as "the Great", this policy, along with later events gave Karl the nickname "Butcher of the Saxons". Another major revolt took place in 779, but after the Saxons were yet again crushed, Karl assumed that Saxony was finally beginning to become subjugated. But the Saxons weren't finished yet.



In 782, following concentrated efforts by the Franks to consolidate their control over Saxony, and continued religious tension, a massive uprising occurred, led by Widukind. The Saxons met the Franks, under the command of Adalgis, in the high ground at the Battle of the Süntel. Widukind and the Saxons, fighting on their homeland, in the terrain they were used to (broken hills and dense forest) won a stunning victory over their hated enemies, and Adalgis, along with a long list of Frankish noblemen, lost their lives. Karl responded to this decisive defeat by rounding up thousands of Saxon prisoners, captured in earlier rebellions, and massacring them at Verden.

After the Saxon victory in the Süntel, Karl took personal command of the Frankish army, and three hard years of brutal warfare followed between Widukind and Karl and their respective forces. Finally, in 785, the Saxons negotiated the terms of their surrender, and the leaders and men of the rebellion were allowed to keep their lives, but Widukind was forced to convert to Christianity, and most likely spent the rest of his days as a prisoner in a monastery. While some may regard Widukind as a flawed hero, or even someone that isn't worth honoring due to his surrender and in the end abandoning Asatru, but personally I think that while he is flawed, he is worth remembering due to his honor on the field of battle and his relentless refusal to submit

for over a decade of hard fighting. I would love to hear your feedback on what you think.



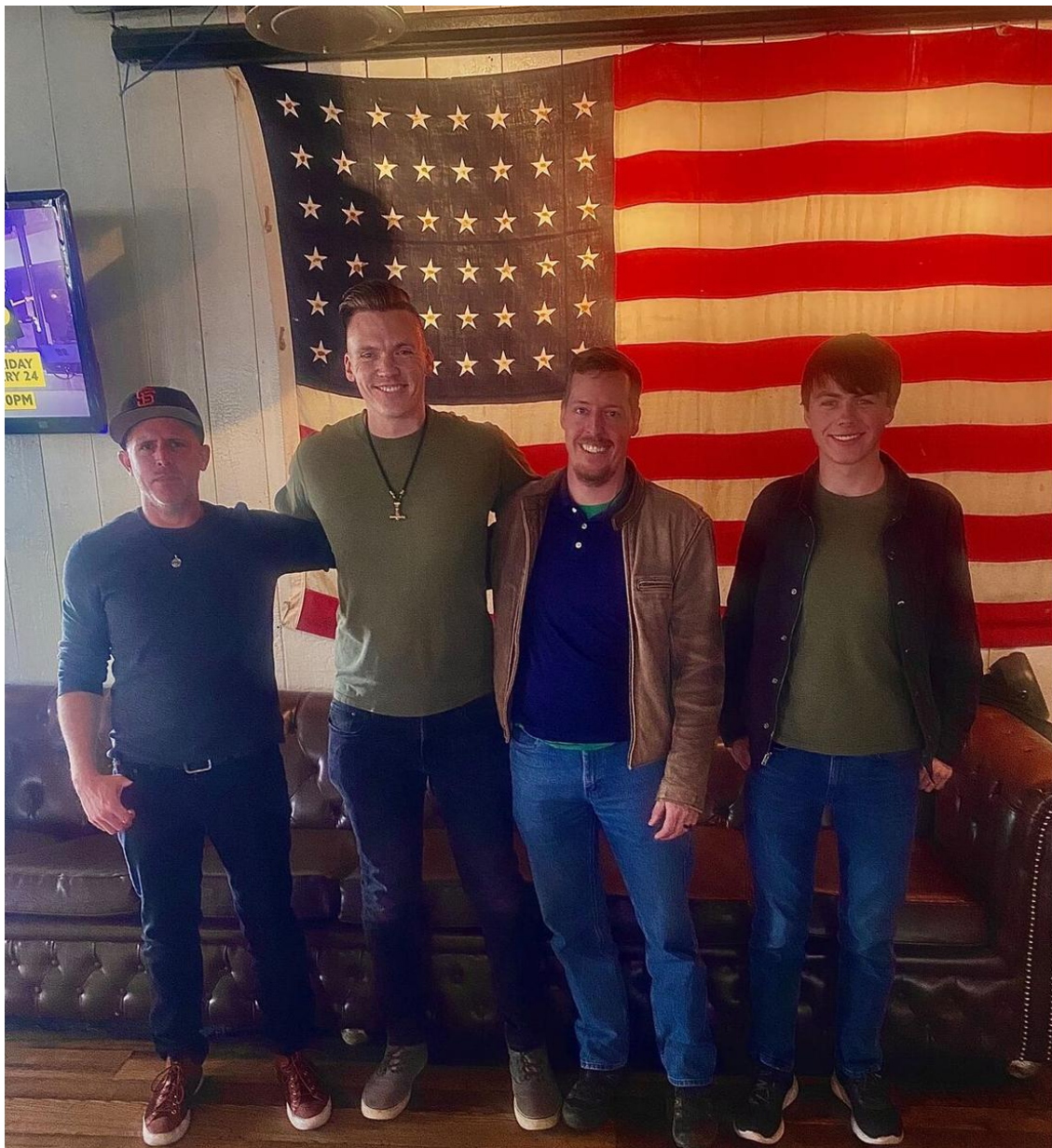
Despite Widukind's surrender, the Saxons still were not finished actively resisting the hated Karl's rule. From 792 to 794 a full-scale revolt raged in Saxony, and after that was put down by the Franks after two more years of brutal war, the Saxons simply revolted again in 796. By this time, the Saxons who chose to rebel and put their Folk and their faith before their own personal safety were risking everything. The Franks, by now, after over two decades of trying to pacify Saxony, had no qualms about rounding up entire villages and either deporting them to modern northern France in an attempt to undermine their identity or simply massacring them. Additionally, the Franks had strong allies in the Obodrites, a powerful coalition of Slavic tribes in what is today northern Germany, located to the east of Saxony. In 798, the Saxons living northeast of the Elbe river continued to defy Karl and the Frankish empire, and despite knowing the likely consequences of their courage and fidelity, they marched to war to defend their honor and their homes from foreign peoples and foreign gods. At the Battle of Bornhöved, the Saxons bravely stood against superior forces, but the Obodrite-Frankish alliance defeated the Saxons. Rather than flee, many of the Saxons decided to fight to the death. As a result of the uprising, the Saxons, both combatants and civilians, were deported or slaughtered northeast of the Elbe, and their lands were given to the Obodrites, while the border with the Danes in the north was demarcated at the Eider river. The Saxons, displaying legendary perseverance and courage, considering the odds, revolted again in 804, resulting in more wholesale slaughter and deportation of civilians. However, despite the final defeat of the Saxons, the survivors remembered the stories of their ancestors, and the proud tales of the now-legendary Widukind, despite his defeat, lived on. The innumerable revolts against Karl's rule finally led to the Franks allowing ancient Saxon law to stand in Saxony, despite the conquest and fact that Saxony was part of the Carolingian empire, as it came to be known.

Another intriguing legacy of the bold Saxon resistance quite possibly could have been

an invasion of Britain, famously beginning with the raid at Lindisfarne in 793, but eventually by 860 culminating in a full-scale invasion by the legendary Great Heathen Army, as the Anglo-Saxons called them. Modern historians have begun to examine the Danish incursions against Christianized Anglo-Saxon Britain in the wider context of the Saxon Wars. While the Danes did not participate in the wars directly, they clearly favored the Saxon side, and often gave assistance to the Saxons when they could. Famously, as before remarked, they also harbored Widukind for a time, and undoubtedly other renowned rebels also. The Danes practiced Asatru, the religion of their ancestors, and historians have increasingly begun to look at the possibility that the destruction of Irminsul, the defeat of Widukind, the massacre at Verden, and the near-genocidal treatment of the Saxons by the Franks triggered a response from the Danes and the wider world who worshipped the Aesir. Though the Danes and other Scandinavians must have balked at the idea of taking the Franks and their Slavic allies head on (at least in the 790s), it seems like more than sheer coincidence that the raids on Christian strongholds throughout Europe increased right as news of the massacres of the Saxons spread north. The fact that the invasion of Britain and raids throughout Europe by the Scandinavians in the ninth century may have been in retaliation for the treatment of the Saxons by their Christian enemies is worth considering, and seems likely. Additionally, Viking raids eventually did take the Frankish empire head on, and in both 845 and 885 Paris found itself under siege by a large army of Scandinavian Asatruar, which was decidedly out of the norm for Viking warfare, which usually avoided protracted sieges. I think it is intriguing to consider the idea of the Viking raids into Christian Europe as not merely opportunistic acts of plunder but a campaign of retaliation for the crimes committed against the Saxon people and the Gods of our Folk.



I have included a photo of the modern recreation of Irminsul because I want to do blot in its shadow one day, and because it's important to remember that even though the original Irminsul was destroyed by Karl, there still is an Irminsul standing tall in Saxony to this day, waiting for us. Like the Saxons, we are only ever truly defeated if we admit defeat. Let's keep pushing forward to Victory.



Last month, I got together with several of our Folk here in Southern Arizona, and enjoyed my time catching up with them about their various projects and ambitions. It is an exciting time to be in the AFA here. For March, we are going to attend a college baseball game together and enjoy some family-friendly fun. Hope to see you there!

Upcoming Events

A poster for a 'Baseball Moot' event. The background is a photograph of a baseball field at dusk. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top, 'Baseball Moot' is written in a cursive font, flanked by three horizontal lines on each side. Below that, 'FAMILIES AND KIDS WELCOME!' is in a bold, sans-serif font. 'CORBETT FIELD' is in a large, bold, sans-serif font. A dotted line separates this from the address '700 S RANDOLPH TUCSON'. Below the address, 'SUNDAY MARCH 12' is in a bold, sans-serif font. Another dotted line separates this from the time 'AT 1PM / 1300'. A wavy line follows. 'Tickets will be provided' is in a cursive font. Below that, 'REIMBURSEMENT IS APPRECIATED' is in a bold, sans-serif font. An arrow points to the right, above the text 'PLEASE RSVP' in a bold, sans-serif font.

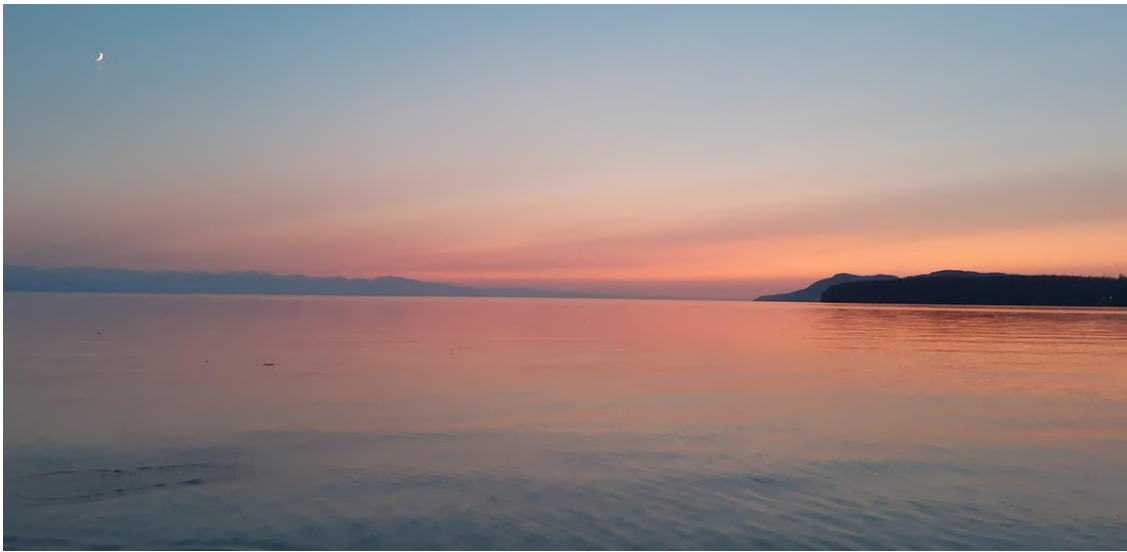
Baseball Moot
FAMILIES AND KIDS WELCOME!
CORBETT FIELD
.....
700 S RANDOLPH TUCSON
SUNDAY MARCH 12
.....
AT 1PM / 1300
~~~~~  
*Tickets will be provided*  
~~~~~  
REIMBURSEMENT IS APPRECIATED
—————>
PLEASE RSVP



Lou Nickerson
Apprentice Folkbuilder
lnickerson@runestone.org

British Columbia

Welcoming a New Apprentice Folkbuilder



Please welcome Travis Polehoykie of British Columbia as our newest apprentice Folkbuilder for the Óðinshof District! We are excited to see the success Travis will achieve in the coming months and years.

Hail Travis Polehoykie!

Hail the AFA!

Hail Óðinn!



Travis Polehoykie
Apprentice Folkbuilder
tpolehoykie@runestone.org

California

Tan Boots, Folk Moots



I have often found myself chasing that feeling inside my chest; the one that burns when you envision yourself saving the day or hitting the homerun in the bottom of the 9th with the bases loaded. For as long as I can remember, I knew that I had the potential to be something more. Where did that come from? Is it real? Do we all have that feeling, and if so, should we trust it? At 36 years old, I have a much different view on that feeling than I did as a teenage boy. I have learned to focus, and manifest that spark in a realistic manner. When you're young and idealistic, that spark can take you to all sorts of places. And I suppose that's why Uncle Sam's target demographic isn't 36-year-olds.

Saving private Ryan was released in 1998, and it was almost my 12th birthday. My Stepmother took me to the movies to see Parent Trap; a happy go lucky film about cute girls and their playful hijinks. Though, after an issue with one of the projectors, rather than leave, I decided that Saving Private Ryan would be a suitable alternative. After all, at that time Major Payne was a favorite film of mine, and the military seemed "pretty neat." And so, after some easy convincing, we sat for over two and a half hours as my 11-year-old mind absorbed every ounce of fiction that was thrown at it. I left the movie theater set on my life's mission. Sports posters, South Park stickers, and even my Land Before Time hand puppets didn't survive the transformation; as my room became a shrine to the armed forces. As I aged, Army unit flags, camo netting, and a cassette tape of US Army marching cadences became my identity. That feeling I often had about being the hero, standing in the spotlight as I hit a home run in the bottom of the 9th, was replaced; I was now going to take the hill for my country, or gladly die trying.

Now, I'm sure one could unpack all sorts of information from that excerpt. "it was just a movie kid...", or "this guy has some internal need to be seen", and so on. Though, something happened in the early 2000s that I think stirred that heroic emotion inside all of us. If you were old enough to see it, you know what I am referring to. You can imagine what that event did for me as I was already hellbent on joining the Infantry.

And so, without much pomp or grace I found myself in a rifle platoon, wearing the desert camo I had seen on tv. I was trained with weapons I had used in video games while saying and doing all the things one does when surrounded by hard individuals. That spark inside my chest should have been brimming with heat, as I was living my life's mission. But these individuals drank Jack Daniels from the bottle, used foul language, and seemed completely devoid of higher ideals or that heroic spark that rested so heavily in my 17-year-old heart. These men didn't care to plant the flag in some hill, or even know the date of the Normandy invasion. There was nothing idealistic about them as honor seemed to come in last behind cheap beer and fast cars. But the one thing they could do, and do well, was fight; and the time I spent with them overseas, we did a lot of that. And I thank the gods that those were the men I was with.

An idealistic 17-year-old in over his head, surrounded by men of the real world. While I was looking for glory, and the ideal circumstance in which I could swoop in to become a hero, they lived their lives. I have learned that living idealistically is nice, though I have found that there is no real substance to it. Planting flags, bands marching, troops in lockstep singing songs in unison is a wonderful sight. It's just that, a sight, or a glimpse at the polished surface. Beneath that, those same men you see marching and singing would have no problem grabbing you by the throat after having kicked in your front door. And that heroic spark that keeps one's mind focused on delusions of future success, suddenly fades. The ideals we strive for, only matter when you're far from reality. That spark can take you to the door, but when it comes down to it, are you willing to kick it in? On the other side of that door is a fight. That fight is nothing like the depiction in Saving Private Ryan, and nothing like a video game. It is a bloodless fight, it can be thankless, and arduous. But most of all, it is a necessary fight. It is stepping up to take action and having the courage to act without the validation of others. Trust in yourself and those you have allowed to be around you. Even now, I still have that spark in my chest; far from 17, it still burns. When I see my sons rough housing, or when I see young men come to the Hof, sharing stories of their exploits. My spark ignites with ideas of future success for the Folk. No longer envisioning hills to die on, but businesses to start, kids to educate, and Folk to bring home. Our children are our future. The young men around the Odinshof firepit, you are our future. Those of you with that spark, I would encourage you to grab it, and aim it in a direction that uplifts not only you, but the rest of the Folk around that firepit. Real action, no matter how small, is still real. After years of delusions of heroics I am finally home, in a very real place, where I can do the most good for people who actually know my name and will remember it. My first small step was becoming an Apprentice Folk builder; what will yours be?



Daniel Odom
Apprentice Folkbuilder
dodom@runestone.org

Charming the Plow



This past month, we were celebrating Charming of the Plow at Odinshof. I had spent a few weeks searching for a plow and it seemed to be to no avail. Then with only two weeks until the event, a beautiful old horse plow comes up on Craigslist. After speaking to the seller and explaining that this beautiful antique would be used as a ritual item for our religious organization and would be decorated and well cared for in our possession he came down on the price to \$100 for us. Gythia McNallen went and picked up the plow and brought it to the Hof for us. While folks were inside enjoying lunch, Gythia

McNallen and I went out to decorate the plow with flowers and ribbon to prepare it for the ritual. Once all the flowers were carefully placed and the ribbon was tied on, we had the plow carried into the ritual circle, where we all took turns asperging the plow with holy mead, even the children taking part in this. Now this beautiful antique will remain a symbolic ritual item for us for years to come!



Folkbuilder Sierra Chapman

schapman@runestone.org

Overcome and Conquer



With the new year came a myriad of new challenges and obstacles. So much so that myself and Michael had been forced to step back from certain duties as Folkbuilders in the Óðinshof District for a short while. These setbacks, as hard as they were for our family, cannot slow us down in the long run and in fact, made us stronger. In doing such we move forward at full speed, planning many exciting things to build our area, organize events, connect with folk, welcoming new members to the AFA and so much more. Luckily there are several ways to keep up on such events via Óðinshof.org website's calendar, Óðinsfolk Facebook page, MeWe, and your emails! I will especially be sending flyers and keeping our district members updated on all of the goings-on in our area and things we are leading via Email so remember to check your spam!

I hope to connect with all of you in our wonderful district in one way or another and together grow our passion for the Gods and our church. Keep an eye out and feel free to contact either myself or Michael as we are here to guide and support our folk family as we dominate another year in the Asatru Folk Assembly.

Upcoming Events

Folk Skate Moot at Viking Skate Country

APRIL 29th
5pm



**\$1200 Admission includes
skates**

**Folkbuilder Ashley Stockton
707.800.5333**



LAKE SHASTA CAVERNS MOOT

SAT MAY 27TH
LAKEHEAD, CA
TOUR BEGINS AT NOON

WE WILL BE TAKING A MOUNTAIN BUS RIDE, CATAMARAN
ACROSS THE LAKE, THEN JOURNEY INTO THE CAVERNS.

WILL BE HAVING A PICNIC LUNCH

TICKETS ARE \$35.00

CONTACT: ASHLEY STOCKTON 707.800.5333

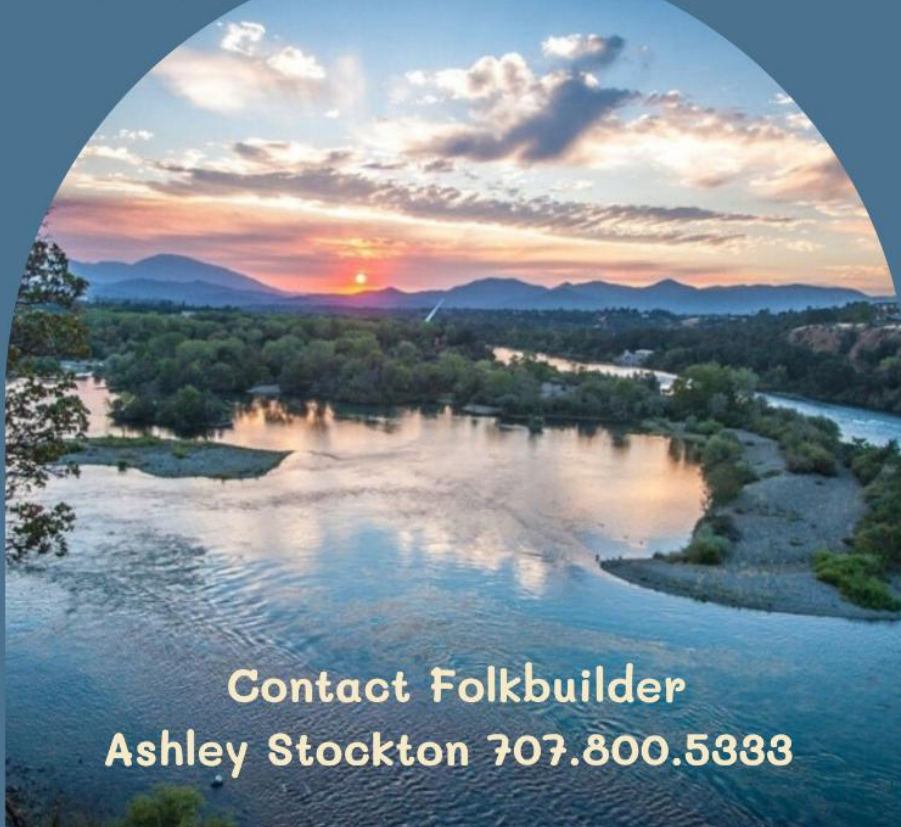
[HTTPS://WWW.LAKESHASTACAVERNS.COM/](https://www.lakeshastacaverns.com/)

SAC RIVER FLOAT MOOT

SAT JULY 8 2023

11:00AM - 6PM

Bring your sunblock, lifevests, and inner tube as we float the beautiful Northern Sacramento River in Shasta County. Snacks and water provided and a BBQ where we dock to follow!



**Contact Folkbuilder
Ashley Stockton 707.800.5333**



Folkbuilder Ashley Stockton
astockton@runestone.org



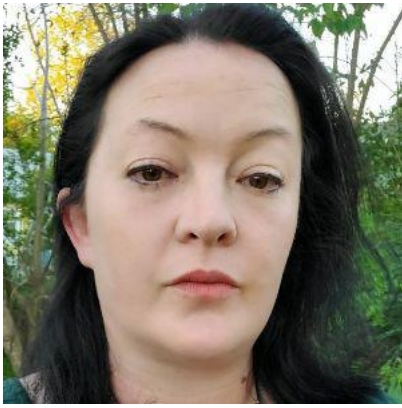
This past month a group of us gathered at the Johnston's home for a craft meet up and BBQ. Before the meet up we gathered supplies and built our moulds and deckles for the paper making process. Danielle selected some scrap paper and we got to go through the process of making recycled seed paper. The paper contains local wildflower seeds so that it can be planted which opens many possibilities for use. The evening was lovely and a great time for folks to get to know each other. Thank you so much to the Johnston Family for your hospitality!





Considering our spring time winter snowfall the May camping moot will likely be moved to July to allow time for snow to melt. Keep an eye out for upcoming meet ups in the Sacramento area!

Folkbuilder Krystal Podbreger
kpodbreger@runestone.org



Upcoming Events

A promotional poster for the Calaveras Celtic Faire. The background is a landscape photograph of a stone castle on a hill under a cloudy sky, with a white building in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image.

Calaveras Celtic faire
Saturday, March 11, 2023 Calaveras County Fairgrounds
Angels Camp, CA

Not to be missed! <https://calaverascelticfaire.com>
Questions? Gythia Sheila McNallen sheila@runestone.org



Gythia Sheila McNallen
sheila@runestone.org

Hike Moot



We had a great turnout for our hike at the Garden of the Gods. We went off the beaten path, searching for the right spot to give an offering to Óðin. Dusk approached as we came to a rock formation that reminded all gathered of an altar. We all spoke words to the All-Father and poured out offering. Our voices boomed throughout the mountains for all to hear.

Afterwards, we descended and enjoyed great conversations between us, so much so we got a bit lost. Once we found our bearings, we all gathered at a local brewery and enjoyed great conversation, food, and drink.

Colorado Charming of the Plow



With fresh snow and bright sun, we gathered around a ritual fire to perform Blot to Freyr, tools and items were placed on the altar to receive blessings. We welcomed the changing of the seasons and made our offering and received gifts from the horn. Our ritual was very powerful and moving. Once concluded we returned inside to share a meal, and drinks and build Frith with new members.



Sumble was very special, and very emotional.

The Gods were hailed, heroes, and then ancestors. We spoke about the items and tools we had blessed and the stories behind them and why they are important to us. Once concluded we enjoyed toasting, great conversations late into the night.

Upcoming Events

Bowling and Brews

SOUTH DENVER

MARCH 18TH

RSVP:

Apprentice Folkbuilder Travis Bowdish
tbowdish@runestone.org



Travis Bowdish
Apprentice Folkbuilder
tbowdish@runestone.org

Idaho

Northern Idaho Plunge and Rune Study



Hails! This month in North Idaho we gathered for our Rune study and ice plunge, then gathered at Silver Mountain in Kellogg Idaho for a ski moot and blot to the god of winter martial arms Ullr.



We are really starting to galvanize a great group here in the Couer d' Alene area, so don't miss out on the fun and come on out! In March we will be meeting again for our Rune study, TBD.



Gothi Joe Rozanek
jrozanek@runestone.org

Montana

Montana Charming





Charming of the plow was held here in Helena MT, on February 18th. While we were celebrating a time that, traditionally, would have been the beginning of the planting season, the ground here was far from being thawed. Persistent winter weather and frozen ground did not deter us.



We came together at the home of James and Sheila Greaney to do our part in coaxing the slumbering soil, under its blanket of ice and snow, back into fertility, and to awaken once more. A late lunch was had, which was mainly in the style of the "Plowman's Lunch" (various pickles, cured meats, cheeses, etc.), loaves of bread were baked by the children to offer up to the Earth, and a discussion on the traditions, the holy tide, and our own personal growth took place before ritual.



Bundling up, we stepped outside and held Blot to the all giving Earth. Runes were Galdred, and a variation on the Æcerbot was recited, as the loaves were placed into the Greaney's garden. Gifts given, we hope for gifts in return, as we make our way towards Spring.

Upcoming Events

Ostara 2023 in Montana at Elk Horn Hot Springs

March 18 – 19th

*** Ostara Blot * Soak in the Hot Springs**

*** Enjoy Frith and Nature**

Very rustic/primitive lodging is available at the Hot Springs.

Be sure to reserve your cabin or lodge room now.

Elkhornhotsprings.com

339 Hot Springs Rd, Polaris, MT

406-834-3551

Please contact the Harlan's if you will be joining, need more info
or have questions.



Ostara in Montana is coming up! We're hoping for a good turnout, and have a great location picked out. We'll greet the Goddess of the Dawn, and the return of the Sun at Elkhorn Hot Springs in Polaris MT. Please see the flyer for further details, and reach out

to us with any questions. If we don't see you there, may Ostara bless you, and warmer days greet you!



Folkbuilder Ryan Harlan
rharlan@runestone.org

Nevada

Upcoming Alsherjargothic Dinner



Bring stuff!

Alsherjargothic **DINNER**

March 4th



Reno NV

The weather has not been cooperative for February in Northern Nevada. Dinner was cancelled but I am expecting great things for our March dinner. The plan is Coconut Martinis and Creamy Pumpkin Tortellini (yes, it is a fall dish, but I gleam the cube). Looking forward to seeing you all there.

Matthew D. Flavel

Alsherjargothi, Asatru Folk Assembly

mattflavel@runestone.org



Oregon

Introductory Introduction Introducing the Introduce-able



My name is James McDaniel! I am a new Apprentice Folkbuilder in between the Eugene and Salem areas of Oregon. I will start here and give you a little back story on myself.

I was adopted at a young age by a very Christian family (amazing people nonetheless—they gave me an amazing life compared to what it would have been), and I was forced to go to church and partake in all sorts of church and group things; I was never asked if I liked it or wanted to partake. So without giving you my whole life story, by the age of 14, I had found a deck of Tarot cards (looking back, I had no idea they were Tarot cards), and I was very intrigued and loved the design on them. They felt natural to my

mind as if I'd seen them before. I later found out that they were actually Rune cards, but they were confiscated during my stay at a youth facility ("Devil Cards," they called it, and said it made the other kids uncomfortable) anyways. I ended up in Oregon, where I ended up living with another very Christian family (I mean VERY, VERY...but they didn't force me to go to their church or force any of it on me). Later on, I started to see Runes on people's shirts on the coast! So I started my research! I began learning the different sets. My favorite still to this day is Elder ƵŃŦHFR<!

So during my research, I was looking into many groups and different folk, but they didn't sit or feel right. I couldn't get into their views. I'm sure you all know what I mean! I ran across some writings of Stephen McNallen & Ron McVan (to whom I owe a great thanks!) and ran across the AFA through them. I loved the main screen of the website! Asatru is about roots... It's about connections... It's about coming Home.

After joining, I saw the only other local I knew recently left. That sparked my interest in becoming an apprentice Folkbuilder! It's time to spread the word around Oregon! We must and we will! Thank you all for the warm welcome, and I cannot wait to meet many of you and many more!



James McDaniel
Apprentice Folkbuilder
jmcdaniel@runestone.org

Washington

New Face in the PNW



Hello, my name is Mason Howells, the new apprentice Folkbuilder in the PNW region. It has been an absolute pleasure and an honor to be involved with the AFA, and I hope that I can put my skills to use for our folk and this organization.

A brief biography about me; I am a 20-year-old Germanic/Celtic man who lives in Western WA. Originally from Texas I enjoy shooting, BBQ, and most other stereotypical hobbies from Texas. I also enjoy hiking, training martial arts, playing and writing music, swimming, video, and board games, reading, and studying history/philosophy. I am currently going to community college and even though degeneracy and anti-European rhetoric are constantly shoved in my face, it's too late for them as I have already come back to my roots, to my folk.

My journey to becoming Asatru started with seeing yet again, degeneracy and anti-European rhetoric. I first came to Christianity, as that's what I'd grown up with, and what seemed to be a shield against the modern world. I started researching the origins of Christianity and Indo-European paganism. I felt that the teachings of Aryan spirituality spoke to me on a much deeper level. I felt a true connection that I didn't feel with Christianity. I found the AFA a few years ago and the rest is history.

I met Mason Johnson and was inspired. I fell in love with the new family I had just joined. No group of multicultural high school friends had ever made me feel this way. This was a true tribe. And this tribe inspired me to step up and lead. I've been a community organizer in the PNW for some time now, networking with Folkish people even if they aren't necessarily AFA. Folkbuilding seemed like the next logical step. Some of the people I've networked with have even been convinced to join the AFA.

All in all, I look forward to meeting and working with you all for the betterment of our Folk. Hail the folk! Hail the Gods! Hail victory!

This Wednesday, I performed a blot to give thanks to Odin and the rest of the Gods for my new position and to give me strength in the coming times. It was pitch black in the woods, with nothing but a flashlight to show me the way. I gave a small offering to the land wights and moved through the forest no longer fearful. There is a grove I come to often. It has a stump in the middle perfect for giving offerings. After hallowing the space I called out to the Gods. I offered milk and kefir sweetened with honey, along with ham. I had no alcohol in the house to offer, unfortunately, but I believe the Gods enjoy this dairy alternative as I've given it multiple times. I thanked the Gods for listening, receiving, and giving, and hiked through the woods alone. At this point, I felt no fear. The Gods, the land spirits, and the ancestors were with me.



Mason Howells
Apprentice Folkbuilder
mhowells@runestone.org

Nordvestri Dísablót



This month members of Nordvestri kindred gathered to celebrate the ancient tradition of the Disting that was historically held in Sweden from time immemorial. At the end

of Wintertide, we held a Blót to the Dísir, or the ancestral female spirits and clan mothers of our folk. We celebrated the importance of motherhood, especially as it pertains to the expansion of our folk into the New World, where women played an especially important role in ensuring the safeguarding of our blood. After the Blót we proceeded with a Sumbel, calling upon the gods, heroes, and ancestors. At the conclusion of the celebrations, we spent the remainder of our evening spending time together and building Frith.



Carter Shafer
Apprentice Folkbuilder
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