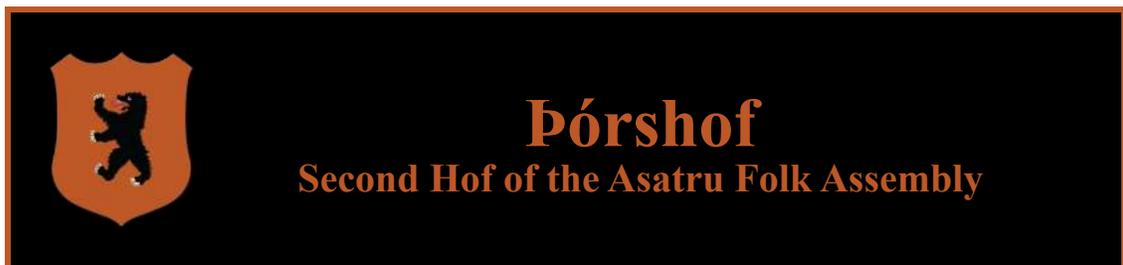
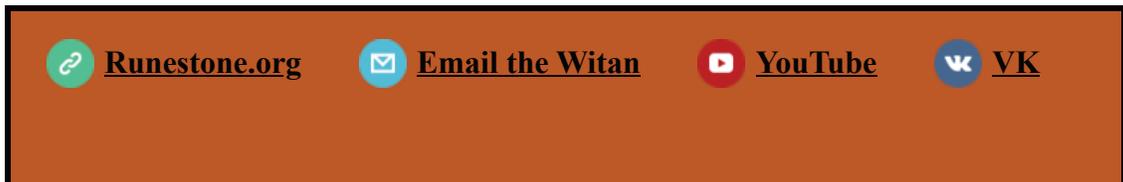


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## Words from the Alsherjargothi



2023 is off to an amazing start! We have been busy this month as this issue of the Runestone will show. We have progress on several exciting fronts and perhaps the most exciting for me, in January, was the event at Sigrheim. The picture is of us giving blot to lord Týr at the site of the hof we will build for him in the coming years.

If you are reading this and you have remained solitary, 2023 is your year to fix that and join in on all the amazing things we are accomplishing together. If you have non-member friends and family that should be sharing in the blessings and accomplishments of the AFA, what is holding them back from joining? Have you invited them? Let's make this the year that more folk come home than ever before. Let's make 2023 the best year yet for our AFA!



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## Words from the Witan

### *Charming of the Plow*



Charming of the Plow is one of my favorite holidays and blots. Being a farm kid raised on a dairy farm in the middle of nowhere North Dakota, February was always a hard month. I remember wearing 5 layers of clothing just to do chores and still being cold! Everything seemed so much more difficult in February. I was tired of winter by then. The snow was no longer welcome. The NoDak plains no longer looked pure and untouched, covered with sparkling snow and icy creeks. It just looked like a frozen tundra with a never-ending winter. At that age, I couldn't see ahead, only behind me. I didn't see the preparations we were making for the spring, I could only see the misery of being out in the cold. I could only think of how long we had had to shovel snow, break ice, unbury equipment, and trek around the farm in 32 below temps. I didn't see

the increasing in daylight, the beauty of the sunrise earlier every day, or the happiness the bellies of the heavily pregnant cows put on the faces of my family. I just saw work. I didn't see the prosperity. I didn't see the preparation to make sure our family would succeed another year.

Age brings appreciation, I suppose. I no longer just see a cold and barren, snow covered plain. Instead I see earth starting to awaken beneath it. February is no longer a miserable month of cold weather and endless chores. It is time to be industrious. It is time to prepare our tools with intention and care, to celebrate the end of winter rather than focusing on how hard it has been. It's a time to look forward, to plan, to prepare. It's a time of excitement rather than angst.

My family holds a blot to Gefjon at Charming of the Plow. We take the month of February to work hard for the big goals, to make our plans and prepare ourselves for the work spring will bring us. We take our inspiration from her as her story from *Gylfaginning I*:

King Gylfi ruled the land that men now call Sweden. It is told of him that he gave to a wandering woman, in return for her merry-making, a plow-land in his realm, as much as four oxen might turn up in a day and a night. But this woman was of the kin of the Æsir; she was named Gefjun. She took from the north, out of Jötunheim, four oxen which were the soils of a certain giant and, herself, and set them before the plow. And the plow cut so wide and so deep that it loosened up the land; and the oxen drew the land out into the sea and to the westward, and stopped in a certain sound. There Gefjun set the land, and gave it a name, calling it Selund. And from that time on, the spot whence the land had been torn up is water: it is now called the Lögr in Sweden; and bays lie in that lake even as the headlands in Selund. Thus says Bragi, the ancient skald:

Gefjun 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 field's wide: booty, | and four heads in their plowing.

And again told in the *Ynglinga Saga*, Chapter 5:

There goes a great mountain barrier from north-east to south-west, which divides the Greater Swithiod from other kingdoms. South of this mountain ridge it is not far to Turkland, where Odin had great possessions. In those times the Roman chiefs went wide around in the world, subduing to themselves all people; and on this account many chiefs fled from their domains. But Odin having foreknowledge, and magic-sight, knew that his posterity

would come to settle and dwell in the northern half of the world. He therefore set his brothers Ve and Vilje over Asgaard; and he himself, with all the gods and a great many other people, wandered out, first westward to Gardarike, and then south to Saxland. He had many sons; and after having subdued an extensive kingdom in Saxland, he set his sons to rule the country. He himself went northwards to the sea, and took up his abode in an island which is called Odins in Fyen. Then he sent Gefion across the sound to the north to discover new countries; and she came to King Gylve, who gave her a ploughgate of land. Then she went to Jotunheim, and bore four sons to a giant, and transformed them into a yoke of oxen. She yoked them to a plough, and broke out the land into the ocean right opposite to Odins. This land was called Sealand, and there she afterwards settled and dwelt. Skjold, a son of Odin, married her, and they dwelt at Leidre. Where the ploughed land was is a lake or sea called Laage. In the Swedish land the fjords of Laage correspond to the nesses in Sealand. Brage the Old sings thus of it: --

"Gefion from Gylve drove away,  
To add new land to Denmark's sway --  
Blythe Gefion ploughing in the smoke  
That steamed up from her oxen-yoke:  
Four heads, eight forehead stars had they,  
Bright gleaming, as she ploughed away;  
Dragging new lands from the deep main  
To join them to the sweet isle's plain."

Below is a simple blot, similar to the one my family will celebrate to honor the Goddess Gefjon, one of our Ásynjur.

Items Needed:

2 bowls

Sprig

Horn

Mead

Tools of Industriousness (Items that you use to support your family & folk)

Pour the mead into the horn and have the women bless the mead if present. Gather your folk, entering the space in a clockwise motion.

Welcome:

“Holy Æsir, mighty Gods and Goddesses of our Folk! We invite you to join us and witness our devotion!

Honored Ancestors, mothers and fathers as far back as time remembers! We ask you to join your sons and daughters in celebration!

Friendly vættir, spirits of this land and this place! We invite you to witness what we do today and to see our deeds!”

Holding the horn high, call on the Goddess Gefjon:

“Hail Gefjon!

Beguiler of Gylfi with merriment

Land-churner,

Giver,

Generous One,

Strong and industrious –

Hear the voices of your folk,

Receive our devotion!”

Gather the gifts of the Folk for Gefjon:

“Folk, place your hands over your hearts. Feel the heart beat beneath your fingers. Feel it’s strength, it’s steady-beat. From that strong and noble heart, gather your gifts for Gefjon. From your heart to your hand, and from your hand to the horn, give the best and brightest of yourself to her today.”

In a clockwise movement, gather the gifts of the folk into the horn of mead. Returning to the central altar, hold the horn above you head and offer them to Gefjon:

“Holy Gefjon!

This horn is heavy with the gifts of your folk,

The best and brightest of themselves that they have to give.

If you find these gifts worthy, accept them from us.

Hail Gefjon!”

Pour the contents of the horn into the bowl.

Fill the second bowl with the remaining mead and hold high above your head.

“Gefjon!

You have accepted our gifts, and we ask for your blessings in return.

Give us strength in the last holds of winter.

Inspire us to be industrious.  
Remind of the victory ahead in times of struggle.”

At this time you will be blessing the tools, the Folk, and their hands.

Using the sprig and the blessed mead, sprinkle the tools with the blessings of Gefjon:

“Gefjon, we ask that you bless these tools.  
Inspire us with your strength and devotion to task.  
Remind us to be joyful in our work.  
Let us see that victory our industriousness brings.”

Ask the folk to prepare themselves to receive the gifts of their goddess and if they choose, to hold their palms upward to have their hands blessed.  
In a clockwise movement, bless the gathered folk with “The gifts of Gefjon”, asperging them with mead.  
If the folk have palms upward to receive the hand blessing, bless each hand with mead using the Gebo rune, “May the hands of the folk be strong and industrious”.

Closing the Blot:

“Holy Gefjon,  
We have given you our gifts,  
Our devotion, and our worship.  
We thank you for your gifts.  
We thank the Aesir for their blessings,  
The honored ancestors for their presence,  
And vættir for their watchfulness.  
This blot has ended.  
May we depart as a family,  
And with victorious intent.

Hail Gefjon!  
Hail the Gods!  
Hail the Folk!  
Hail the AFA!”



## Words from our Gothar

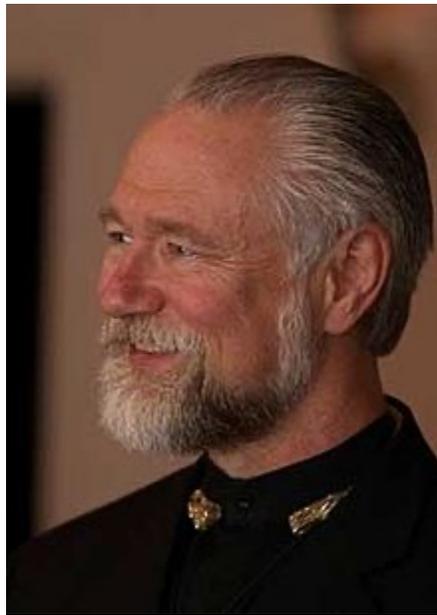
### *On the AFA Being Asatru's Spiritual Authority*



There has been a bit of online drama lately regarding spiritual authority among Asatruar and people claiming to follow Asatru. This issue comes up every so often, and it will likely continue to do so.

However, I hope to squash some of that discourse here by offering you a few facts through this short article.

There is no spiritual authority in Asatru besides the Asatru Folk Assembly. Our founder, Stephen McNallen, was specifically inspired by the All-Father to revive Asatru and bring our Folk home. He was the first true Goði in many centuries, and served as the spiritual authority during his tenure as Alsherjargothi of the Asatru Folk Assembly and its precursors before that.



In 2015, Alsherjargothi McNallen's efforts through the AFA were further blessed by the Gods themselves when we purchased Newgrange Hall, which was later named Óðinshof. This was the first temple to our Gods in a thousand years, and still serves as a symbol of the Gods' favor towards us.

At the very first Midsummer at Óðinshof, the torch of spiritual authority was passed from Founder Stephen McNallen to Goði Matthew Flavel, who became our second Alsherjargothi. When that position was passed on, the authority and blessing of the Gods passed with it. This may seem like shaky logic by itself, but bear with me.



Since 2016, we have gained three more Hofs and the land that will hold Sigrheim. Not only did blessings from the Gods continue... they multiplied. Just as our Founder was chosen by the All-Father to lead Asatru, Alsherjargothi Flavel was chosen to continue that mission. Spiritual authority now flows from him, and anyone that he has ordained as a Goði or Gythia.

This authority lies with the Asatru Folk Assembly alone. Not the Norroena Society. Not the Odinic Rite. None of the universalist pretenders. The AFA alone carries the torch of Asatru into the future.



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*Inner Conquest: Being the Stillness In the Eye of a Storm*



Meditation is the tool of kings and conquerors. It is the foundation of a gentleman's "Sprezzatura" and a Lady's "Grace". In our modern times, we are bombarded with an overabundance of stimuli, information, and feedback that one can get lost & overwhelmed in the storm. Contempt for what does not serve us well, and scrutiny in accessing what does wins the day.

First, however you must be able to still yourself and be unmoved in the onslaught. Take a deep breath and let it out. Take another, and let it out slowly. Take a third only through your nose, and out slowly through your mouth. Then repeat this last step for as long as your concentration or time allows. With time this will become a reflex or instinct. Till then work on clearing the images in your head when your eyes are closed until you can

hold a blank slate. Learn to not just hear the rhythm of your breath as you relax, during your first few attempts, but work up to experiencing traveling across a room. Focus on becoming aware of the pulsing of your heart and learn to command it when it tries to run on you.

These are all exercises that build a foundation for steeled nerves, bridled & Tru strength, and decisive split-second decision-making. Your stress levels will drop, and your humility grow, or at least the perception of it will. You may also find yourself experiencing more time in a day, or realizing some fights aren't worth the effort, which can be put towards more prosperous endeavors. The clarity and precision with which you can foresee your friends and foes maneuvering in business or conflict can win you the day. Just a few fruits that may come to fruition when you began to master the skill of meditation and find strength in "Isa."

Standing on a foundation of steeled & tempered mind, you can begin the work of the Gods and create order from chaos, rather than being engulfed by it. When in a storm, possess it, and command it, by being the eye in the center of the storm. You have the divine spark to shape the world, use it.



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*Cyclical Time and Our Lore: The Slaying of Ymir*



In last month's edition of The Runestone, we discussed how we can view our Lore through the lens of Cyclical Time orientation. We saw the story of Ask and Embla, and how we can interpret the story with cyclical time in mind.

This month we'll discuss the slaying of Ymir, and how we can see that continue to unfold right before our eyes. It's important to understand that these are my views, UPG, as it were, and is subject to change as things play out in our time. It is my opinion that our Lore stories can have multiple meanings, some exoteric interpretation and some esoteric.

Out of Ymir's flesh was fashioned the earth, And the mountains were made from his bones; The sky from the frost-cold giant's skull, And the ocean out of his blood. -  
Vafþrúðnismál, Poetic Edda, Bellows Translation

“Then Gangleri said, ‘I hear of great happenings. It was wondrous work and skillfully done, but how was the earth set in order?’ Then High answered: ‘It is circular around the edge and surrounding it lies the deep sea. On these ocean coasts, the sons of Bor gave land to the clans of the giants to live on. But further inland they built a fortress wall around the world to protect against the hostility of the giants. As material for the wall, they used the eyelashes of the giant Ymir and called this stronghold Midgard

[Middle Earth]. They took his brain, threw it up into the air, and from it they made the clouds.” Gylfaginning, Prose Edda

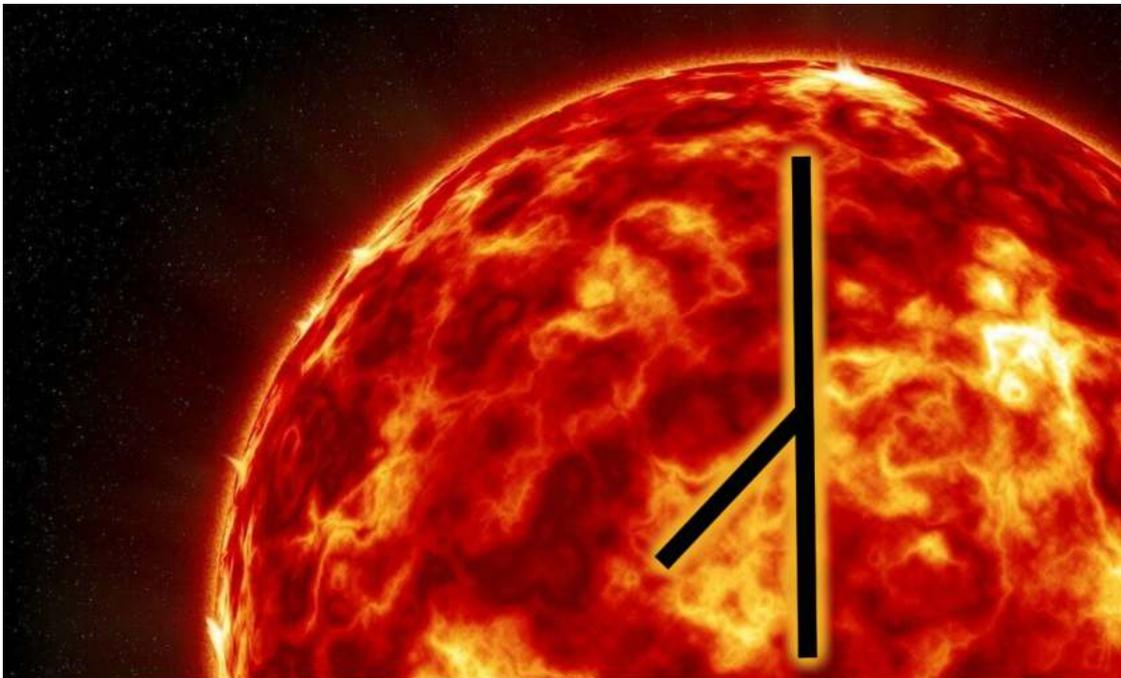
We can see that the earth was fashioned from the body of Ymir. Another way of viewing this passage exoterically, is that in our world, society began to take root. The establishment of order, both cosmically and here in Midgard. The creation story has parallels in our history as a people. As we discussed last month, the first generation of our Folk were given consciousness, sacrality, and goodly hue. Now the slaying of Ymir could represent our Folk putting things in order.

In Today’s Asatru, we can also find parallel circumstances. From our Lore, we understand the Ymir was what existed before. It was refashioned by Odin in his tripartite form to make the dwelling of man. We, as a church and as a folk, have refashioned places of worship and dedicated them to our Gods. Parkers Grove Methodist Church existed in Linden NC for over 100 years. The Asatru Folk Assembly purchased that property and the buildings and refashioned them towards the spiritual needs of our people. What existed before was not beneficial to our current needs. What exists now is akin to the body of what was, but repurposed, beneficial, and provides a sanctuary for our Gods, and their worship.

This is not, of course, the only example. We have repurposed 4 temples in total for the needs of Modern Asatruar. They are, Óðinshof, Brownsville CA, Þórshof, Linden, NC, Baldrshof, Murdoch, MN and finally Njörðshof, White Springs, FL. These are all examples of using that which was, into that which is in line with Cosmic Order, that which is beneficial.

It is my hope that you find this beneficial. Our lore should rarely be taken literally. But, there is truth in it. We can see it happening in front of our very eyes. Asatru is what we do. It isn’t just stories. The Asatru Folk Assembly has no peer in this regard. Our continued success is proof that we are on the right path with the blessings of our Gods.

***How The Gods Interact with Us—My Experience***

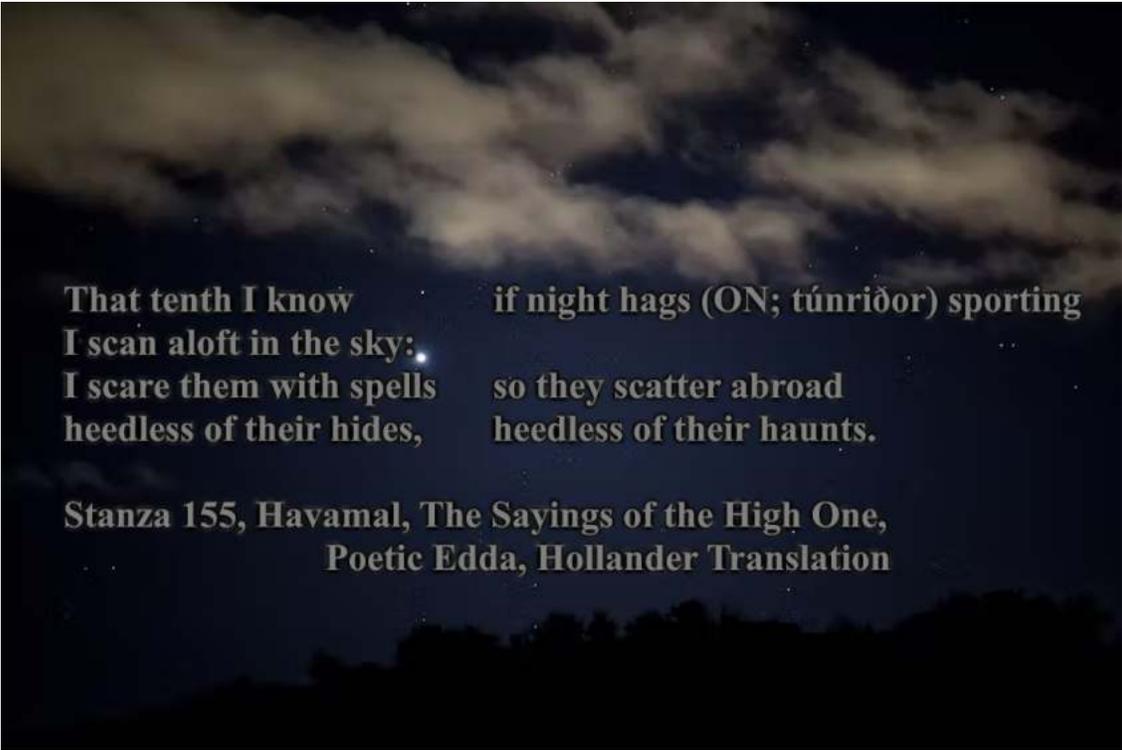


I found Asatru late in life, as many have. I found Asatru while I was in my 30's, around 2012. The road to my discovery of faith was a long one, and one that has been filled with learning experiences.

As a young man, I had fought with a phenomenon called night terrors. In South Carolina, it's commonly called *Riding the Hag*. Science calls it *sleep paralysis*. In Greek Lore, a succubus. My experience was not dissimilar to many others' experiences, it starts off with the feeling of a presence in the room. At some point, terror overcomes you, and you can't move. I can't scream, I can't do *anything*. It'll feel like someone is literally sitting on your chest, and breathing becomes a problem. It's something I dealt with all my life. I would often wake up screaming once the grip was loosened enough for me to shake myself awake.

At some point in 2013, I decided to give my devotion to the Gods of Europe. I remember where I was, I was standing beneath a tree on the property behind my house, a very large oak. I offered a drink to Odin himself, and promised to give my devotion and worship, and asked that he reveal himself in some way. And he did. I just didn't know it.

After I joined the Asatru Folk Assembly in 2018, I was having a conversation with a fellow AFA member about my experience with night terrors. And I had mentioned that they suddenly stopped in 2013. He got back with me a few days later after going through the *Havamal*. And he explained to me he had read through the Old Norse and found something unexpected.



That tenth I know            if night hags (ON; *túnriðor*) sporting  
I scan aloft in the sky:  
I scare them with spells    so they scatter abroad  
heedless of their hides,    heedless of their haunts.

Stanza 155, Havamal, The Sayings of the High One,  
Poetic Edda, Hollander Translation

This portion of the Havamal is commonly referred to as the *Runatal*, as the *Havamal* is a collection of 3 poems which were combined in *The Codex Regius*. You'll recognize where the *Runatal* begins, as it begins with the story of Odin hanging upon the World Tree, and the runes are revealed to him in that state. The *Runatal* goes on to describe the 18 spells (correlating to the 18 runes revealed to him) that he knows, with the above tenth spell being among them. I shared my experience with our *Alsherjargothi*, and we discussed the Armanen rune that would relate to that passage from *Havamal*.

It is from the *Runatal* that Meister Von List drew inspiration for the Armanen Futhark, which were revealed to him while he suffered from temporary blindness. So, after having this discussion with *Alsherjargothi*, we started looking to *The Secret of the Runes*, by *Guido Von List*.

*ar, sun, primal fire, ar-yans, nobles*

*I use the tenth, when through the air  
ghostly riding-women fly:  
when I began that magic, they will fare  
confused in form and effort.*

*The "ar" the "urfyr" (primal fire, God) the "sun" the "light" will destroy spiritual as well as physical darkness, doubt, and uncertainty.*

*The Secret of the Runes, Guido Von List, Translated by Dr. Stephen Flowers*

The book goes on to describe that the Ar rune is a glyph that represents the Eagle,

perhaps the eagle atop Yggdrasil. The primal fire is that divine spark that resides in all Aryans. It is that fire that is bellowed by the cosmic breath of Odin himself. The concluding line of text in *The Secret of the Runes* goes on to say "*Respect the primal fire!*"

It is my sincere belief that Odin used Ar to scatter to the winds my night hag terror. I believe that in every way. I have not experienced a single episode of night terrors since that day beneath that big, beautiful oak. I gave my reverent devotion to Him, and in turn, He gave this gift to me (and to my wife, as my night terrors obviously kept her up, and terrified her).

This was all the proof I needed to understand that the divine do in fact reveal themselves to us, in a very personal way. Perhaps Odin himself. It does not mean that we pray to Odin, and he will allow you to win the lottery. But, in a very real and tangible way, they can and do insert themselves into our lives.

How have the Gods or ancestors intervened in your lives? If you truly begin to have faith, real life faith, you might just find an experience like mine.

Hail the Gods!

Hail the Folk!

Hail the AFA!



Gothi Daniel Young

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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 41.41% so far) If every member donated \$147 we would be able to pay this off today!
2. We need to raise our monthly donation average by 10%. (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 the patient and resolute. As we progress, I will keep you all updated on our progress!

Hail Freyr!

Matthew D. Flavel



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## Sigrheim: Home of Victory



In January, we had the amazing experience of exploring the Home of Victory! This amazing land is more amazing than I had hoped or imagined. One thing we all noticed is just how expansive the property is. I have looked at this place for months on Google Earth and in pictures, but the feeling of space was so much different in person. The plan is to build the great hall on the flat land near the road and to build Týrshof up on the ridge top. We did an emotional blot to lord Týr on the site where his hof will be built.



I want to keep you all informed as progress occurs. Our first couple of steps are 1) We need to determine who the first pioneers moving to the Heim will be and to help those folks with their planning and developing. 2) We need to develop the roadway that cuts through the property and runs along our ridge line so that it can accommodate any necessary equipment and normal cars.



However far along we are or aren't, we will be hosting the first annual Sigrblot at Sigrheim this July, and we hope to see you all there!



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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

odyssee.com/@AsatruFolkAssembly:e

twitter.com/FolkAsatru

youtube.com/c/AsatruFolkAssembly



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## AFA Homeschool Program



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

Hello parents and students, and all AFA members.

Our students have been working hard and we are halfway through the traditional school year! Ostara will be here before we know it and all the warmth of spring.

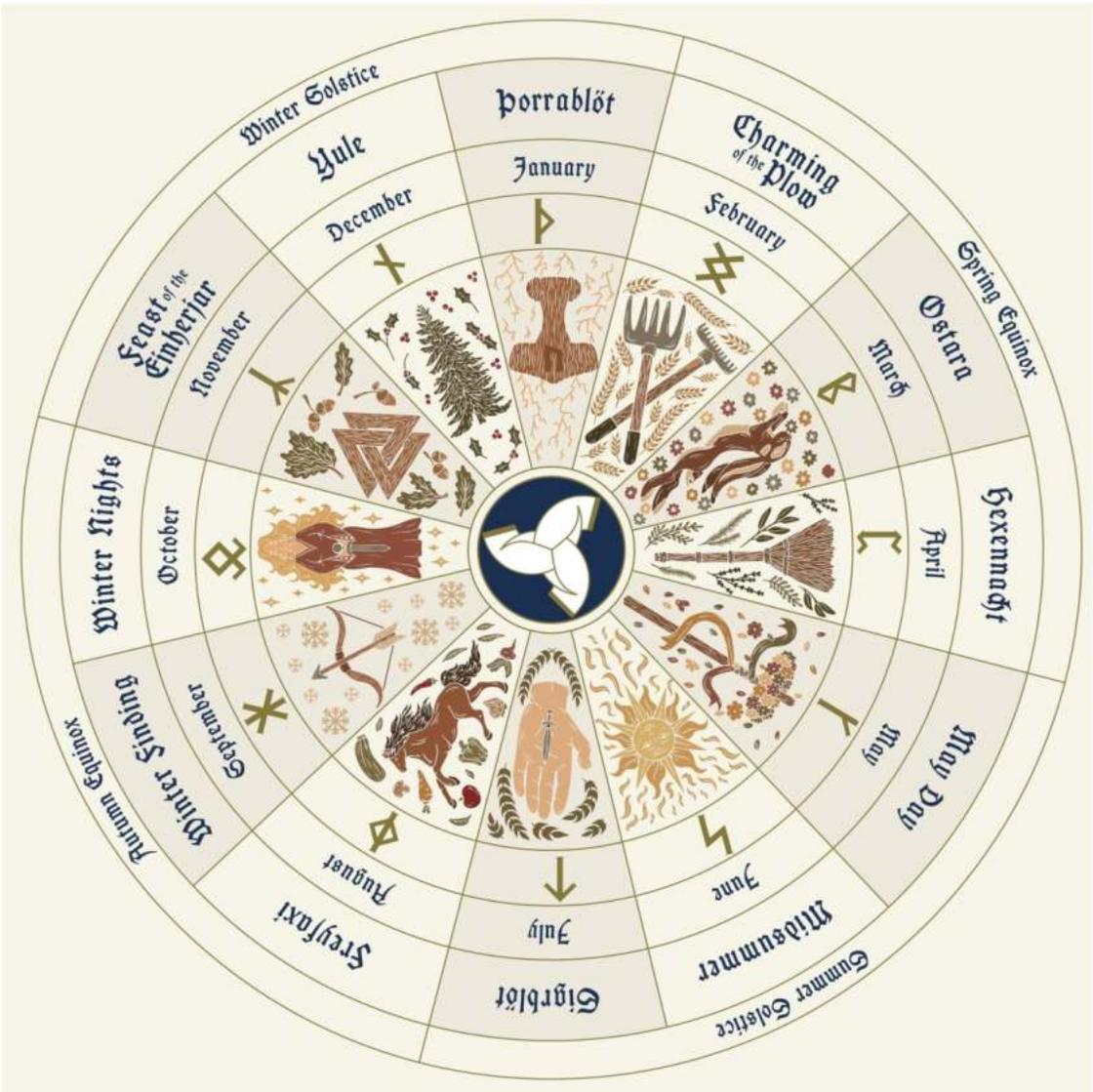
I want to remind our members that next school year, we will be enrolling kindergarten through second grade!

Look out next month, as we showcase some student projects right here in the Runestone!

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# Remembrance and Holy Days



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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Observance</b>
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 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 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 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



Near to what could be considered the beginning of the Christian conversion of Norway, under King Olaf Tryggvason, there was a farmer of Noble stock who stood against the king and his attempts at conversion.

Eyvind (Pronounced Ivin) Kinnrifi was called to make plans against the upcoming invasion by his friend Harek of Thjotta, who had very recently returned home after himself refusing conversion to Christianity. Eyvind answered the call, and for the sake of haste, he traveled with only a small retinue of men. He was well welcomed by Harek, but shortly after his arrival Eyvind was ambushed.

Unbeknownst to Harek, he had been followed by some of Olaf Tryggvason's men. They forced Eyvind to Thronhjem, where Olaf attempted to convert Eyvind, first with offers of land and gold, and then with threats of torture and death. Unwilling to turn him back on his faith, Eyvind was eventually killed.

So what can we learn from this story?

On the 9th of February, as we stop to remember Eyvind Kinrifi and his unwavering faith despite the consequences, take a moment to consider what in your own life is important to you. Have there ever been times in which you had to choose between keeping your faith and losing something else? A Job? A friend? Family?

Even in these times, when we are living with unparalleled freedom of choice, it can be difficult to choose faith over all else. It is sometimes easier to hide behind the idea of a pseudonym or to keep your faith hidden from those in our lives that should matter. Remember, when you think of Eyvind, what truly matters. Stand strong with and take pride in your Folk.

Hail, Eyvind Kinnrifi!



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## Holiday

### *Charming of the Plow*



Charming of the Plow is a ritual that takes place at the early beginning of the planting season. As the name implies the plow, or other tools used, are blessed and offerings are made to the Gods for a productive growing season. Traditionally, after blessing the plow, a ceremonial furrow was dug and then filled with cakes and other offerings. For our ancestors, this was a crucial time of year. Poor preparation often led to a poor harvest and a poor harvest led to starvation.

Asatru is the modern celebration of our ancestral heritage. Charming of the Plow symbolizes our willful penetration of the unyielding soil. It is with our own industriousness, our own will, that we create, that we change, that we provide. In the Asatru Folk Assembly, we often celebrate the Charming of the Plow by planting a tree.

Inflict your will on your world. As Asatruar, this is a time to “charm” the implements of your own productivity. Entreating the divine to bless your tools and your plans for the year is essential to starting things off right. Inviting the divine into our plans and intentions is a great way of making us aware of the sacrality that should be a part of all you do. The AFA encourages all Asatruar to be industrious in all that we do. Dream grand dreams. Make solid plans. DO big things. And after hard work, reap a bountiful harvest.

And what can you do to celebrate Charming of the Plow? Though most of us do not rely on growing our own food to survive, now is a good time to consider starting a small garden, or even just growing some herbs on the patio. Make a plan. Choose a small patch of yard and map out your garden beds. Bless the shovels and spades. Dig up the soil and begin fertilizing it with eggshells and coffee grinds. Prepare. If you cannot plant a small garden begin planning some project. Sew a quilt, built a chair, take an idea and make a plan, and then put that plan into action.

Inflict your will on your world.



Gythia Catie Erickson

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

## 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

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

## Be A Doer



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

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

Please email [volunteer@runestone.org](mailto:volunteer@runestone.org) to help us make a difference in our world.

## Baby Blanket Project

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

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

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



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

## 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)

**Artisans of the AFA  
Support Our Folk**



The Celtic Craftsman is a general craftsman by trade. He and his wife are growing a young family in the Midwest (USA). Together they raise chickens, garden, hike, and sing and dance at the local Irish pub. In puzzling out the True history of our people, studying their languages, and practicing their arts (culinary, musical, visual, etc.), our family hopes to keep the Fire of our Volk ablaze forever.

Handmade art to honor the ancestors and inspire the Volk. Our work examines Truth—perhaps the most fundamental of which: 1. We are a distinct People marked with a history of heroism, courage, exploration, and conquering. And 2. We have the duty and privilege to carry this torch into the future.

Blood and Honor! Hail the Volk!

Work can be found at: <https://t.me/celticcraftsman>

For serious inquiries, comment on our channel. We'll reach out via Private Message.



Folkbuilder Timothy Dumas

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

**Cooking for Our 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 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)

## Ladies' Mysteries Podcast

*Ladies' Mysteries Podcast*  
February 19th @ 1:30 CST  
*Personal Practice:*  
Hosts :  
Witan Brandy Callahan  
Gythia Anna Plourde  
Guest Folkbuilder Mélisa Mills  
Folkbuilder Christine Dumas  
Folkbuilder Sara Ault  
Contact [cdumas@runestone.com](mailto:cdumas@runestone.com) for details

The poster features a purple-to-pink gradient background with a white line-art illustration of a woman in a long dress sitting cross-legged, her right hand raised in a gesture. The background is decorated with white stars, a crescent moon, and a sunburst. The text is written in a mix of white serif and cursive fonts.



Folkbuilder Christine Dumas

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

## AFA Sisters Chat

### *AFA Sisters Sunday Chat*

*Sunday 2/12  
&  
2/26*

*Contact Apprentice  
Folkbuilder Ali  
Clausen for details*

*Links will be posted  
the night before*

*All AFA womenfolk  
welcome*

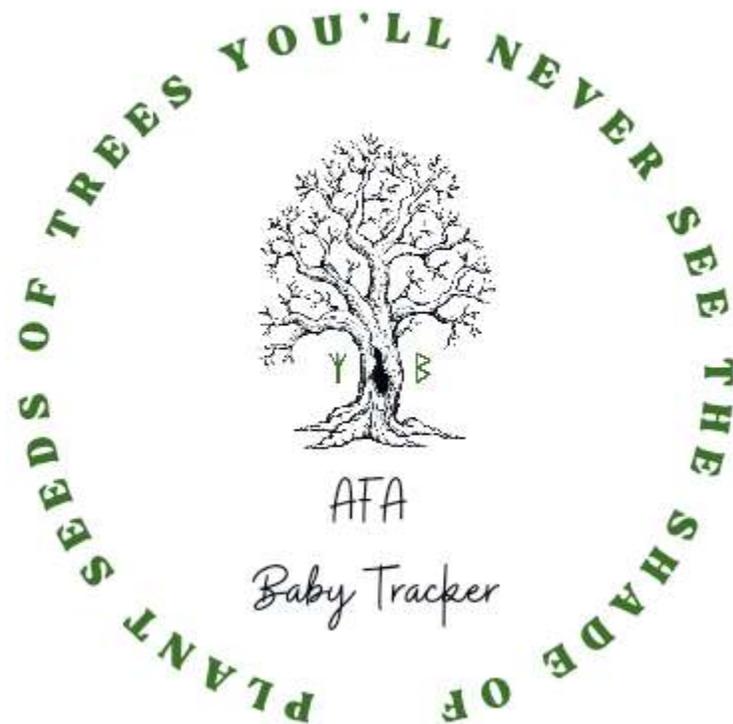
Alison Clausen

Apprentice Folkbuilder

[aclausen@runestone.org](mailto: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 2022: 49

Total babies born in 2023: 3



Jessica Keller  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[jkeller@runestone.org](mailto:jkeller@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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:sduffy@runestone.org)

## **Þórshof**

**Food Pantry at Þórshof**



Thorrablót weekend was started with our usual monthly food drive, which is always very successful. It's always a rewarding experience to interact with the people who have come to rely on us every month and to know how much they appreciate us being there for them.



Robert Shotwell  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[rshotwell@runestone.org](mailto:rshotwell@runestone.org)

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## Holiday at Þórshof



On January 28th we celebrated Pórrablót at Þórshof in Linden, NC. The event was smaller and much more personal than usual, but it made for a great experience.

After the food drive, we all sat down for a class led by Witan Svan Herul about what he does when performing a Blot. He went into great detail about the beginning, middle, and conclusion, the steps within each, the origins of a few of his prayers and rituals, and some variations that others will do. It was a very informative class that gave everyone something new to take away.

After the class concluded, we processed into the Ve then Witan Svan led us all through Blot. Being Pórrablót, hammers were blessed before we galdred the rune Thurisaz. After the ceremony, we all joined in Rumpf Hall for dinner. Everyone said their goodbyes and started home. It was another successful event full of laughter, conversation, good company, playing children, and the privilege to participate in the gift cycle with the Gods in one of their temples.



Robert Shotwell  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[rshotwell@runestone.org](mailto:rshotwell@runestone.org)



## Upcoming Events at Þórshof



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## The Boasting Corner

*BJJ Bragging*



My nephew coming 2nd in one division and 3rd in another. Despite the odds against him being the smallest competitor in the tournament, he showed courage and strength by fighting as hard as he could and pushing through his nerves and placing 2nd and 3rd in this tournament. He was super nervous, but he swallowed the emotions and dug deep and it payed off. Super proud of him for being so brave and not letting the odds overcome him but he overcame the odds.

Hail the Doers! Hail Hank the Warrior!

— Member Chase May

***Birth Announcement***



I'm excited to announce the birth of Wernher Von Boden Keller, born Friday December 30, 2022, on the 11th day of Yule at 8:45pm to the parents of Jared and Jessica Keller. Weighing in at 7lbs 12oz and measuring at 19 1/2 inches long. He was the last baby of the year born within the AFA.

You hear the cliché phrases in life sometimes like "he's a miracle baby" or "this baby was truly a blessing". Sure, all babies are gifts and blessings to our existence, but to truly connect with words such as those, I had to experience it for myself in order to truly understand the depth.



During my second year as a mother, being pregnant and caring for a toddler came with good and bad days, but the one thing I kept coming back to reflect on was my patience. I thought long ago this was something I overcame however, I realized at this time in my

life it was something I needed to reevaluate. Jump forward to my labor and delivery experience with my second son, although things could have been more complicated, the situation itself truly gave me the gift of gratitude and patience all at the same time.



On Friday December 9th, 3 weeks before I gave birth, my family and I decided we were going to honor Frigga and Odin. We gave gifts and offerings to our gods and spent time reflecting. The very next day I thought I was going into labor, but things tapered off. This continued for 3 weeks which tested my patience and challenged my mind to be calm and just accept I have no control over his arrival. The morning of his birth, I woke up and felt calm, and so I went on to pull my daily runes, I pulled Dagaz for the day and so I decided to go for a walk with my first son to reflect. From the moment I came out of the house until I returned, several hawks and crows/ ravens circled over me, calling. I just kept focusing on them. When I returned home, I decided to give offerings to Frigga and Odin once again and consulted with the runes and yet again pulled Dagaz, then Othala and then Ehwaz. Things progressed quickly from that point. I was standing facing north at our family altar just listening to the quietness and as I called to Odin and Frigga for guidance, my water broke. It was time! 4 hours later he was born. He was born with the cord around his neck and a knot within the cord close to his belly button. The midwife said she is surprised he is alive due to the cord knot and the amount of clots that are formed inside of the umbilical cord. She said most babies that are born with a cord knot usually are still born. This was explained to us why my body was

experiencing labor for 3 weeks, as he was losing oxygen, my body was trying to get him to safety but he wasn't full term until that Friday, I made it to 39 weeks.



For us, this was a reminder that life truly is a gift. As I mentioned before things could have been more complicated, but this situation was important for us to journey through as it brought the gift of patience and gratitude into our life, helping me see this through those eyes so that I may go into other situations seeing others and their situations with that sight.

We are truly grateful that he is with us.



Jessica Keller  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[jkeller@runestone.org](mailto:jkeller@runestone.org)

### *Baby Naming*



On January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Erika Viola Green was named before the Gods and her Folk with auspicious gifts from the Norns. The horn was passed and blessings from the Folk gathered were given.



The Asatru Folk Assembly, and the Keystone Tru Folk welcome Erika to the folk with the warmest regards!

Hail the Folk!

Hail the Asatru Folk Assembly!

and

Hail Erika Viola Green!



Gythia Catie Erickson

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



## Indiana

### *The Strong Survive the Winter's Woe*



Friends and Folk,

We here in Indiana enjoyed a rather low-key January. As you are aware, this month marks Thorrablot. In celebration of this auspicious month:

We lifted weights in honor of Thor.



We punched one another in the face, also in honor of Thor.



We even played some electric music, to further honor the Thunderer.



In fairness, our decision to mix music with punching one another in the face wasn't really in honor of anything, sometimes we just enjoy being dopes.



One of us engaged in swordplay while yard cats loyally stood guard, though they appeared ultimately unimpressed with the display.



We closed the month by traveling to Kentucky, to visit with good friends who we don't see as often as we'd like. Our gracious hosts showed us a hospitable time; regaling us with music and feeding us some home grown paw-paw (which were delicious despite resembling moldy potatoes).



To show our appreciation to our hosts I...

Sort of tried to chop one of them into pieces with an axe. Now I'm not proud of my behavior, but I have grown from it; I now understand that it is not polite to try and chop sleeping friends and will refrain from this behavior in the future.



In an effort to make amends, we visiting pilgrims patrolled the (very cool) bamboo grove that our host has grown on his property, ensuring there were no feral Kentuckian pandas lurking within.



Any of you familiar with my previous Runestone entries may notice that this is a much subdued article. You may be asking yourselves "is this writing so lackluster because Jon is a lazy jerk who simply whipped this month's article out at the last minute?" Well... yes, actually that did happen; but it's still a rude thing to say and I intend to hold a grudge against all of you for it. Here is a picture of one of my guys, actively holding a grudge against you (also actively holding a pretty cool hammer he wanted to show off).



Despite your earlier betrayal, I am now going to put our differences aside and share some good news about some great people! Join me, if you will in congratulating one of

our loving Asatru couples who are now happily engaged in Michigan and basking in the in-fiance'd bliss that comes prior to planning a wedding. We are incredibly happy for them and look forward to spending time with the family they will forge.



Additionally, one of our local members has been promoted to the position of sous chef by his employer. Apparently he applies the same rigid work ethic and dedication to quality in the kitchen as I have noticed in his role as a father and practitioner of our faith.

Hail!

**February 18th**  
**2:00 pm**  
**Richmond, IN**



Folkbuilder Johnathan Rock

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



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## Maine

### *Northern New England*



This past month, we had a moot at an awesome German restaurant in Brunswick, Maine. We arrived early, before the restaurant opened, so we walked around the town and visited several of the shops there before heading over there for dinner. Next, we are going to a pub in Dover, New Hampshire which I am told has some really good food as well. If you're in the area and can make it, stop by and join us for lunch there!

### *Upcoming Events*



Moot at the June Cork Pub in Dover, NH  
Feb 11th at noon  
contact apprentice folkbuilder Daniel Mason for details  
at [dmason@runestone.org](mailto:dmason@runestone.org)



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

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## Maryland

*The Strength of Frith*



This has been quite a month for many. The Yuletide celebrations are done (as are our bank accounts) and it is “time to get back to the grind” as it were. Many of us have begun on our resolutions to become better, oftentimes going against the grain of the sickly society that plagues our people.

There are those who make grandiose claims to stand for our people, our Folk. Many of them do seem to have good intentions and we wish them the best, even individually seek to assist them however we can. We look for them to stand up and do as they say. We seek good men and women to build our Folk with. Often, we look past or outright ignore any naysayers, calling it simple “drama”, to be avoided at all costs. In the current society, this is necessary for our mental health. After all, what does it really matter what some people halfway across the country argue about on the internet?

Anyone who has seen the Thorshof flag knows well our motto: Words are Wind. Deeds are Iron.

What a man does is far more important than whatever flowery words he speaks about his good intentions. We see these days that there are many who will speak on behalf of our Folk. These people draw to them many good men. Men who are more than willing to assist them with their stated goals, both with money and service to the cause. Many friendships are formed through these actions. Much Frith is built amongst our Folk. This is magnified when you have multiple such groups of people meeting and working together. It is a dream to see our Folk gather in larger numbers for the betterment of all of us.

But as with all things, it is too easy for sickness to set in. Like mold growing on apples that have been hoarded away in a miserly manner, rather than used to feed the people. Oftentimes it can be attributed to greed or egotism: the people who claimed to stand for our people are instead living off the money they have collected (rather than using it for the betterment of the Folk) and begin to think they ARE “the movement” (an utterly foolish thought and claim).

They begin to mistreat people, to place themselves above the men and women they claim to serve. They allow others they know to receive the same treatment “for the greater good.” I myself have seen men that I have drank and laughed with, women whose children I have held close and played with, grow cold and turn their backs on their closest friends, to allow their friends to be slandered amongst others in their extended circles.

They misplaced or have forgotten their Frith. Frith that brought them together and forged the bonds that made them what they are in the first place. So much so that they attempt to slander anyone that disagrees with or inconveniences them: as liars, criminals, etc. They even go so far as to demand that all their supporters cut off ties of friendship with the people simply on that basis, even when those people live across the country and have nothing to do with their “drama”.

I have seen this occur myself. I have seen a good man, a young man who believed in “the cause”, be taken advantage of by such people. I have seen how he was treated when he simply stood up for himself, and I have seen the attempts made to sow division and “burn notice” (to borrow from a movie) everyone who stood by him.

Now these days, it would be a simple thing to toss one man aside “for the greater good”. There are those who would say that he should have sacrificed himself and allowed himself to become homeless (after living in a house in severe need of repair) and jobless (as his so-called friends purchased a mansion) and just suck it up. All for the “good of the movement.”

However, what I saw instead was a massive outpouring of support for this man. This man had worked hard, built bridges between so many different groups, and was a friend to so many people, that instead people stood up against the “celebrities” and people who “ARE the movement”. For the sake of a single man, they stood strong and did not allow for him to be baselessly slandered or abused. Even as more and more mud was thrown upon them all (I even got a spot of mud tossed at me) they stood with him. As demands were made to cut off entire social groups, men stood strong. They chose to put their “leaders” to task and remain with the men and women they had built Frith with.

THIS is the Strength of Frith! All for a single man who stood with us in Frith, our Folk stood up to those they held in esteem and respect (a task that I often find is far harder for people to do than stand against an enemy) and stood with the man they knew. Where some would find despair at the fact that this kind of “drama” occurs, I find great

hope and joy at the end result: This radical ingroup preference and outpouring of Frith that has shown we as a people can stand strong and united despite any attempts to break us apart.

This happened right before Thorrablot. I was proud to be able to raise a horn of raw goats milk and toast the strength of our Folk, both against our enemies and false friends. Most inspiring of all to me was that, despite the seeming whirlwind of drama, the AFA stood strong and unmoved by it all, a mighty oak standing strong where others would bow and break.



James Bethard  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[jbethard@runestone.org](mailto:jbethard@runestone.org)

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## North Carolina

*Appalachian Happenings*



Southern Appalachia has been a tough nut to crack. While we have good membership numbers in the region, we are also spread out throughout the region, making it logistically difficult to gather everyone together at one time. In the spirit of our 10th Noble Virtue, Victory, we have settled on the strategy of taking moots to the membership, with the goal of every member in the region having at least one moot every other month within a 1.5 hour drive from their home.

The first of these moots was held earlier this month in Johnson City, Tennessee at Mulligan's Irish Gaming Pub. We had a great turnout, with several familiar faces and the opportunity to meet hitherto unknown Folk as well! While the kids played Candyland and Monopoly, the adults were able to discuss the Lore, share our experiences at Sigrheim, and plan our next moot. While it is always difficult to say goodbye to our Folk, we parted with plans and promises to see each other again in February at Charming of the Plow, which will be held on February 19th in Kingsport, Tennessee.

I would like to see anyone local to the region come out and get active, to build bonds with your Folk and to DO Asatru together, the AFA way! Let's make Southern Appalachia one of the most active regions in the country.



EAST TENNESSEE

# Charming of the Plow

Join us in Jonesborough for a potluck celebration on Sunday, February 19th at 2 PM. Bring any garden tools you'd like to bless.

CONTACT APPRENTICE FOLKBUILDER  
TYLER BETHEA  
TBETHEA@RUNESTONE.ORG 828-707-7851



# CAROLINA BIERGARTEN MOOT

February 25, 2023  
Greenville, SC  
Contact Apprentice Folkbuilder  
Tyler Bethea for details  
[tbethea@runestone.org](mailto:tbethea@runestone.org)



Tyler Bethea  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
[tbethea@runestone.org](mailto:tbethea@runestone.org)

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Ohio

*We are a Noble People*



We Aryans are a noble people; it is the very meaning of our name. We have a built-in moral compass in our minds and hearts. So much so that at times in our ancient history we had no written rules or "commandments" it was written into our very souls and DNA. We would laugh at those who sought to command us. There is a vile poison though now that has festered on this plane for quite some time now. It seems to have become a sordid veneer over the very souls of some of our people and the modern world not only perpetuates it, it encourages it. I say that to say this. We have all fallen victim to it and I think it's high time it be regularly vocalized and recognized. What was once wholesome is now cheesy, what was once good virtue is now nerdy. I think most of us here have recognized this. It is to you I make a request. Let us now turn the tide. Make it known when you see such things and explain to those who can hear and see the folly of their ways. Every time they mock another, every time they think to look at pornography, and every time they shirk a duty let us put the voice of our ancestors in their ear. We are on the ground floor of a powerful resurgence of our mighty and honorable folk soul. Let us usher in a new golden age of glory not only for us but for our descendants. It is with us the future begins. What story will we write? Will it be that of a roaring lion or a shameful coward. It is up to all of us to decide.

Until next month.

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



Folkbuilder Joe Drotos  
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*Under Ash + Oak Thorrablot*



In Central Ohio, Under Ash + Oak Kindred hosted Thorrablot. Our kin mates opened their home to our kindred, to new and current AFA members, along with their families. We had ten children and twenty adults celebrating Thor with laughter, games, and feasting.





While the men began chopping wood for the fire, the women were in the kitchen finishing up our meal preparation. What a feast we had! I created a fish board, prepared with goat cheese, smoked salmon, cucumbers, herring, tomatoes, sardines, berry goat cheese, caviar, pickles, crackers, and a cheese tuna dip. Then our host prepared pierogis from scratch, they were the best pierogis I've had. Our Folk added to the potluck with bacon-wrapped glazed meatloaf, Parmesan chicken pasta salad, venison stew, cheesy potatoes, date balls, plokkfiskur, homemade bread, a fruit veggie platter, and Icelandic beer.



Tim created wooden Mjolnirs for all who attended. The children and adults gathered around the table to personalize their Mjolnir with paint markers. The children ran around the backyard yelling, "Hail Thor!"





The fire was ready, and the altar was set to Thor. The women cleared the space by walking the parameter and Gauldring Laguz, Kenaz, and Thurisaz led by Kindred sister, Mary Jane. After the women blessed the mead and the space was hallowed, Kindred brother Kam called upon Thor as the drum beat loudly. As his voice rang up toward the sky, our offerings were placed in the fire, devoured by the flame. He blessed our Mjolnirs with fresh rainwater and ended a fierce Blot.



In honor of Thor's devout strength, the men led physical endurance tasks of pushups. As our shot-caller kept count, the men kept pushing. At the point that the men had begun building up an appetite, our feast was finally ready.



After everyone had their fill of our lavish feast, it was time the women test our strength. We mirrored Thor's arm-wrestling contest when he was challenged by old age at Utgard-Loki's castle. To make the stakes even higher, the first match involved both women wearing our babies in our carriers. All three of my opponents were strong, however, I defeated them all. Until I lost to the strength of a six-year-old boy, who lives up to his name, Magnus.

I am very proud to be a part of Under Ash + Oak Kindred. Not only are we the biggest AFA kindred, but we are all constantly striving to better ourselves and our community. In the past two years as a Kindred, I have seen exponential personal, physical, and

spiritual growth within my Kindred, it is phenomenal. I've witnessed Tru solidarity and unity. These bonds we have created, the oath we have taken, and the goals we have established propel us forward as we continue to build our Folk, our Community.



Folkbuilder Christine Dumas  
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### *Wassail in Southern Ohio*



Due to illness, we missed Twelfth Night with our Kindred so to recover the loss of Frith and embrace the Anglo side of my heritage I decided to get together with as many Under Ash + Oak and local Folk as we could for a Wassail of my big old apple tree!



My wife spent the morning preparing a wonderful Guinness Beef Stew full of garlic and veggies, a charcuterie spread, Hawaiian rolls, and a delicious traditional Wassail punch. We gathered and spoke about exciting plans this year and our vested interests to give Ingvi-Freyr his house on Midgard!



After dinner we gathered around the tree singing a traditional Wassailing song and gave offerings for it to produce for us the next year. Last year we were overflowing with apples that we used as offerings and incorporated into delicious pies.

To call it luck would be a misnomer, what we have together here we have built. What we will have in the future will be on the tight foundation we have made for ourselves. You cannot harvest what you do not sow.

Hail to the Lord!



Folkbuilder Timothy Dumas

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## Pennsylvania

*We are Together for a Reason*



I'd like to go on a little journey for a moment. We are born into a certain family. They are ours and will always be so. Good, bad, or indifferent we cannot escape this fate.

Growing up through the years we meet many friends. Some stay and some go. My mother always said that at the end of this time "if just one stays, you are a lucky man." That one person came for a reason. To think if you weren't in that same school or same class at that same time, through all times...you would have never met. You were meant to find them and them you.

We now come to the cornerstone of life, our spouse. Of all the people in the world somehow you ended up together. If you didn't make this choice or that, the chance encounter of you coming together, would have never been. For some of us, if we follow the path backwards, we can be thankful for the good choices we made and, in some cases, the bad that ultimately led to this union. A union of eternal love that whispers

through the Ages.

Throughout all this particular life and once again at this particular chance in time, we all felt this calling inside of us. That there was something more or maybe missing. Choices, many, along the way started to add up. All at once, all of us and then we find ourselves in the AFA. Why did we find each other? I don't have that kind of vision or many of the answers, but I do know something beyond us is at work and we have been urged "here" and not "there." And to think of how many "theres" it could have been.

And now it's time to follow the path not backwards, but forewords. Urd and Verdundi have spoken for all of us. Now it's Skuld's turn. We are together for a reason. A chance occurrence of the eons to take up this Great Work. And we shall do just that.

No more fate, just destiny.

Hail the Gods!

Hail the Folk!

And Hail the Church that brought us together!



Folkbuilder Adam Hudak

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*Shady Maple Moot*



January 28th, 2023 was an unseasonably warm day as we gathered at the Shady Maple Smorgasbord. The restaurant was swarming with people ready to eat a good meal, and we were right there with them! For several hours we sat and ate and enjoyed the company of our folk. When everyone was full (and the babies a little sleepy!) we retired from the restaurant and made our way to the Green's abode to build Frith, and, more importantly, to celebrate their daughter with a baby naming!

Hail the Folk!

Hail the AFA!

*Upcoming Events*

# Toddler Moot!

And moms, too.

We can't wait  
to play  
with you!

Join us at Seabase Family Fun center  
for a few hours of climbing and  
playing! And conversation, too.



Seabase has something for all ages,  
including a baby and toddler  
section. Come spend a few hours  
with Gythia Erickson and her kids  
playing and shaking out some of  
those winter wiggles.

**Thursday February 09th, at 11 am till whenever. No outside food is allowed, but they do have a cafeteria. Contact Gythia Erickson with any questions and to rsvp!**

**Visit [seabasefun.com](http://seabasefun.com) for venue details, located in Greensburg PA**

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## Niagra Falls Moot

Join us in a Canadian side Niagra Falls Moot on April 22, 2023!

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



Contact Witan Clifford Erickson [cerickson@runestone.org](mailto:cerickson@runestone.org)  
or Gythia Catie Erickson [cm.erickson@runestone.org](mailto:cm.erickson@runestone.org) for  
more information! We hope to see you there!

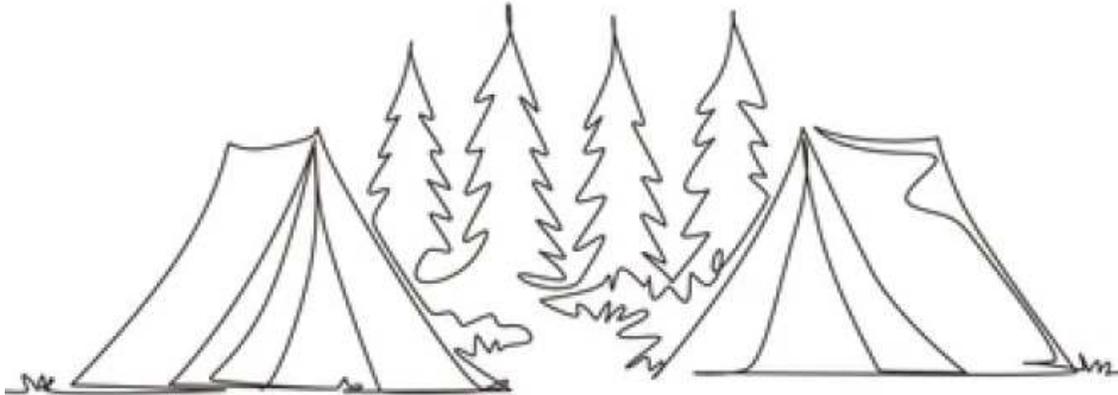


Join Cythia Catie  
for a  
traditional Garden

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

Contact Cythia Catie for more information  
[cm.erickson@runestone.org](mailto:cm.erickson@runestone.org)  
Located in Erie, PA

Join the Keystone Tru Folk and the Sagert family on a  
**Midsummer Camping Moot!**  
Friday, June 23rd- Sunday, June 25th



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

Join us for a day of Fun in the Sun at  
**Presque Isle Beach Moot**  
Saturday, July 24th, 11 am @ beach 10,  
with dinner to follow. Rain date TBD.

Please contact Cythia Catie  
[cm.erickson@runestone.org](mailto:cm.erickson@runestone.org) with any questions!



Keystone Tru Folk invites you to join  
us for our  
**2nd Annual Gettysburg Feast  
of the Einherjar!**  
Saturday, November 18th @11 am

Tour this historic Battlefield with facts about the war  
from the  
Malseed Family. Celebrate the Einherjar with a blot  
on the Battlefield, and join us for Dinner afterwards!

Contact Gythia Catie for more information!  
[cm.erickson@runestone.org](mailto:cm.erickson@runestone.org)

We look forward to seeing you there!



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

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**South Carolina**

*Grateful*



I should start by saying I never intended to be Asatru. But it was put in my path, and I have been so very blessed by it. Asatru has changed my life in so many ways. There was a time in my life where I shut everyone out, and didn't trust people. It was me and my family. I was scared to do even the most mundane things, like talk to strangers on the phone. I didn't even make my doctor's appointments, my husband had to do that for me. I was always afraid I'd be seen as dumb, or less than. No one would want to hear what I had to say.

My family joined the Asatru Folk Assembly in September of 2018, and everything changed. I let people in, and it was ok. I had found value in myself, and that I was

valuable to other people. What I had to say held value. Which was something never happened outside my household.

While all this was so new, there were some things that were familiar. When my children were little, we lived in a rural logging town in South Carolina. We didn't have much money, and my kids didn't have video game consoles. So we would go on Fairy hunts on the logging land behind my house. We'd see mushrooms growing on the ground, and I'd tell them "See? that's the footprints of a fairy!" Then later as an AFA member I learned about land wights, and it reminded me of those times when we were younger. I had always taught my kids about my ancestors, as I have always honored them. In 2011, I lost my grandmother, long before Asatru and the AFA had come into my life. I always knew she was still there, watching, cheering me on.

I became a folkbuilder for the Asatru Folk Assembly in December of 2020. Now came the test. Could I contact members that I didn't know? How about contacting applicants, strangers? What I feared, I found I could overcome for the Folk. For our Gods! Being a Folkbuilder has helped me push myself to do things I never would have done before. From putting myself out there, to doing the opening ritual at Þórshof for Yule, to appearing on Victory Never Sleeps with our Alsherjargothi. None of this could I have imagined for myself, and I appreciate the opportunity to do these things. I have made more friends, real friends. I have pushed myself further than I would have ever in my life before Asatru. If I had to sum up my Asatru journey with one word it would be GRATEFUL. I'm grateful to those who have welcomed me home, a home I didn't know I had. I can only hope to repay it in a way that measures up!

Hail the Gods!



Folkbuilder Heather Young

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**Sweden**

*Þorrlót in the North*



Preparing for Þorrablót appropriately required me to dig out a space large enough for us to perform our blot to Thor. Waist-deep, packed hard snow. I managed to work up sweat for that, and considered it part of my sacrifice to the Thunderer.



We held the blot in the evening. In the dark, cold and quiet, we lit a fire and candle, and brought out the feast we wished to offer. Cured fish and meat, newly baked buttered bread, cookies and sauerkraut. We called out his name, and asked him to be with us in the light of the fire and candle.

In return for our gifts to Thor, we asked that he lend us some of his awesome strength and courage for us to pursue our goals and would be victories in this year of 2023. Strength to help us overcome, and courage so that we may seize upon any opportunity that may come our way this year.

Hail Thor! Hail the Folk! Hail the AFA!

### *DnD With Friends*



In the morning after the cultist attack, Idolf and his mercenaries suddenly hurried away eastwards.

It turned out that what caused Idolf and his mercenary gang to flee were the royal standards and trumpets. King Sigmund Haakon II was traveling through his land,

accompanied by scores of soldiers, his personal advisor Bryce, one of his generals, and High Cardinal Bennet of the Church of the Creator.

The king took pity on the distraught farmer and promised both men and gold to restore the farmstead to its former glory.

With the king's party traveled another agent of the crown - a young woman named Erin (a druid played by Caitlin). Erin was informed that she was now to travel with our already established party of incredible people



Our adventurers were invited to the royal camp that was established by the farmstead while the soldiers and horses rested. As our heroes explored the camp and interacted with both known and previously unknown people, twilight fell. With the last few rays of sunlight gracing the open landscape, High Cardinal Bennet declared to the camp that the two surviving cultists from the farmstead arson attack were to be burnt at the pyre. Almost all at the camp were shocked at this proclamation. The high cardinal himself set the two heretics aflame with his powerful command of fire magic.

The next day, our protagonists were puzzling over why the cultists had been killed outright instead of being sent to be interrogated and imprisoned in the dungeons of the capital.



Eventually, our team of heroes were summoned to speak in private with the king's advisor, Bryce Haskett. Bryce shared his worry with the party about a potential war with the nation's eastern neighbor, Camborra. Bryce hinted that there are powerful factions in the kingdom that want to declare war on the Camborrians.

Bryce, in his attempt to keep the peace, has established communication with one of the many chiefs of Camborra. As part of his effort to gain the trust of this chief, Bryce wants the party to return the chief's runaway daughter, who supposedly has made her way to the shores of Dawnland. The mission is one of discretion and utmost importance.

While the adventurers are wary of continuing their forced servitude to the crown, they

reluctantly accept, as Bryce gives them their word that if all goes well, in the end he will personally elevate them to the nobility.

The party leaves for Kathos Rock, the harbor city, where the chief's daughter was supposedly heading. The journey is a long one, and after a few days of travel they are ambushed by lowly bandits, who the party easily disposes of.

As clouds fill the sky and heavy rain falls down on our heroes, they find a dark cave they decide to check out. Soon, Sexred's wolf is seemingly caught in a web, and Grug hears skittering in the darkness...

Will our party survive their exploration of this cave smelling of rot? Will they find the chief's daughter before other factions do?

Find out next time, on DnD with friends...

### *A Step Towards Self-sufficiency: Chickens*



I got my flock back in 2019, and I have not regretted getting chickens a second since then. I've stumbled along the way. I've lost several chickens to hawks, disease and loose hunting dogs. And instead of letting those failures get me down, I've instead seen them as opportunities to learn and do better next time.

What do you need to have chickens? The most basic is a coop and a little yard for them

to forage in. The coop needs to do a few things for your chicken. It needs to keep them protected from wind, and it needs to be dry. Some people will tell you that they need supplemental heating if temperature drops below freezing. I have not found this to be true. In winter we see temperatures like -13 Fahrenheit, sometimes even -22 Fahrenheit. Sure, the chicken might not like it when it is that cold, but I have never lost a chicken to cold. Chickens are hardy birds, and if you still feel angsty about the cold, then perhaps consider getting a more cold-hardy breed of chickens.

Your coop also needs places for your chicken to roost. They want to sleep high up. Again, it doesn't need to be fancy. I have sourced pine branches for my roosting bars, and they work just fine.



You need somewhere for your chicken to lay their eggs. Make little boxes for them. My experience is that they like them secluded, dark and a bit cramped. I would imagine it makes them feel safe and secure. Have several boxes for them to lay their eggs! It is likely that they will want to lay their eggs at the same time of day, and the ladies will get cranky if all the boxes are occupied.

For the yard you need to secure it so that the chickens cannot get out, and nothing can get in. This means some sort of wire roof so that no bird of prey can snatch your chicken up.

Chickens will eat anything you give them. Kitchen scraps and leftovers that nobody wants to eat will be highly appreciated by your chickens. You never need to feel you are

throwing away good food when you have chickens. If you are able to provide your chicken with enough room to forage, then I'd strongly recommend doing that. If you are not able to do that, you can feed them grain, which is what we do for our chickens during winter.



You also don't need a rooster to get eggs. You only need a rooster when you want chicks to hatch out of the eggs!

As our Alsherjargothi often mentions in regards to blot, but applies as much to the mundane as well: Don't let perfect be the enemy of the good. You don't need the fanciest looking coop on the market. You don't need the rarest heritage breed most suitable to your environment. You don't need to be self-sufficient on eggs right out of the gate.

Every egg your chicken lays, is one egg closer to you decoupling from a failing food infrastructure and possible collapse. Start small, and get the first few victories. Make mistakes and learn from them. Expand, refine and reap the rewards. And if you have kids, get them involved as much as you can! Give them the tools they need to be self-sufficient themselves one day. They are, after all, the future.

*Upcoming Events*

# Charming of the Plow

11th of February

Haparanda, Sweden

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



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## Tennessee

### *Counting Blessings as we Move Forward*



With the year soon to see spring, we must count out blessings! Things are moving even farther for Tennessee and the AFA as a whole, and we can take heart in seeing our success as a community! The coming months are sure to be filled with hard work, and as we take time to think back on where this all started, we must be grateful to the Gods. "What would they think about where we are and where we are going?" are often the questions we ask ourselves. Still, we must remember that they are with us, guiding us as we move forward.

We are starting to see a coming together across the country. We have pulled together and weathered the storms that tried to pull us down, but we push forward and upward to Sigrheim!

The Gods and Ancestors are with us!

Hail to the Folk!

Hail to the Land!



Russell Brown  
Apprentice Folkbuilder  
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## West Virginia

### *Mid-Atlantic Þórrablót*



You know you've got a winning recipe when you can recreate a past success. Even better when that past success comes back bigger and better than the first time!



This year's Þórrablót, presented by the self-dubbed Mid Atlantic Team, was a regional event held in Montgomery, PA at the Oak Grove Community Center. Hail and thank-you to our Frith fellow David Bryson for taking the initiative to secure for us this fantastic gathering hall!



Built on the foundation of last year's blót in Virginia, the event followed and reenacted the trials of Thor in the hall of the giant king, Utgarda-Loki. We we came dressed for action and, placing our Mjöltnir pendants before the altar to be blessed, honored the Thunderer through a series of active tests of strength, speed, skill and will. We ran

(while the giant Skrymir walked); we picked up the giant's "cat" (a deadlift barbell and rock toss); we sprinted against "thought," and we wrestled "old age."



New additions this year were the drinking of the "ocean," actual salt water from a large drinking horn, and an eating contest against "fire," simulated by chicken wings with ghost pepper sauce - a downright evil concoction known as "black mamba venom." As you might imagine, it took some concentrated willpower, in addition to strength and agility, to get through this memorable set of challenges!



The evening ended with a proper three-round Sumbel, for which we used local raw milk from Chambersburg, PA.



Once again, I am deeply honored to have had an opportunity to serve on this regional team, and I can foresee even bigger and better triumphs yet to come for our region.

Hail Thor, Hail Thorshof, Hail the Folk, Hail the Aesir, and Hail the AFA!

Please join us February 18th at Allison Park, PA for Charming of the Plow.



Folkbuilder Patrick Cook

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