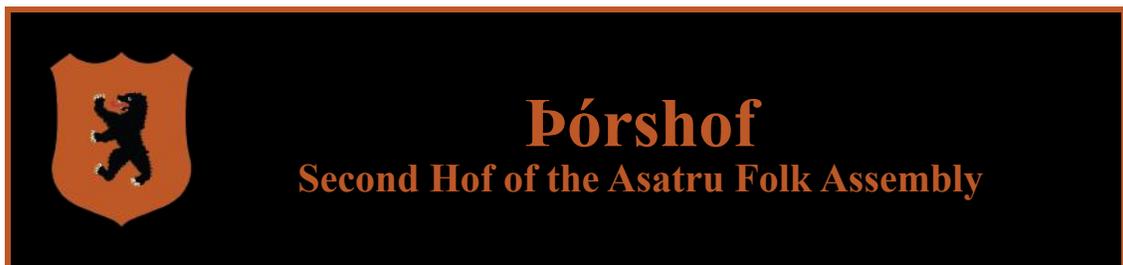


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<http://www.thorshof.com/>



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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 aware 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

mattflavel@runestone.org

Mitch Loveless 7/16/1988 - 2/10/23



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 the 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
cerickson@runestone.org

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
bcallahan@runestone.org

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.

aturnage@runestone.org



Witan Allen Turnage

aturnage@runestone.org

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.

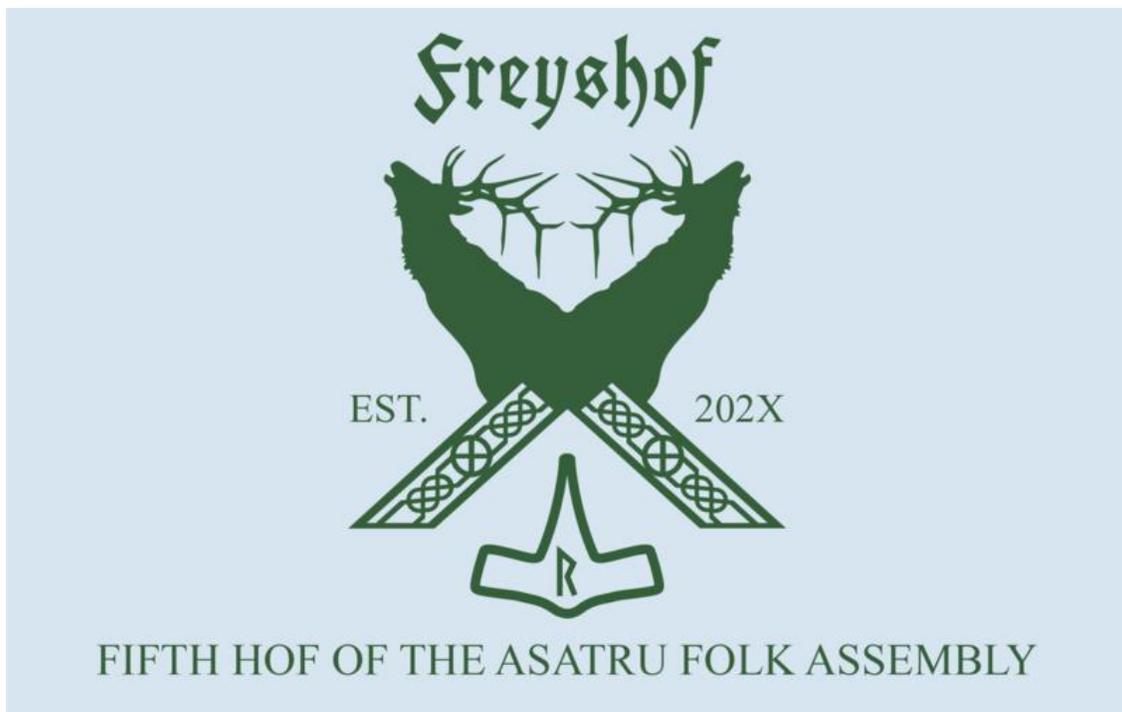


Gothi Jason Plourde
jplourde@runestone.org

The Quest For Freyshof

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

– Gylfaginning



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

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

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

1. We need to pay off Njörðshof. (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!

Matthew D. Flavel
Alsherjargothi, Asatru Folk Assembly
mattflavel@runestone.org



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.

Matthew D. Flavel
Alsherjargothi, Asatru Folk Assembly
mattflavel@runestone.org



Victory Never Sleeps

The Asatru Folk Assembly Presents

Victory Never Sleeps!

Wednesdays at 6pm PST / 8pm EST

vk.com/asatrufolkassembly

entropystream.live/app/MattFlavel

odyssey.com/@AsatruFolkAssembly:e

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Matthew D. Flavel
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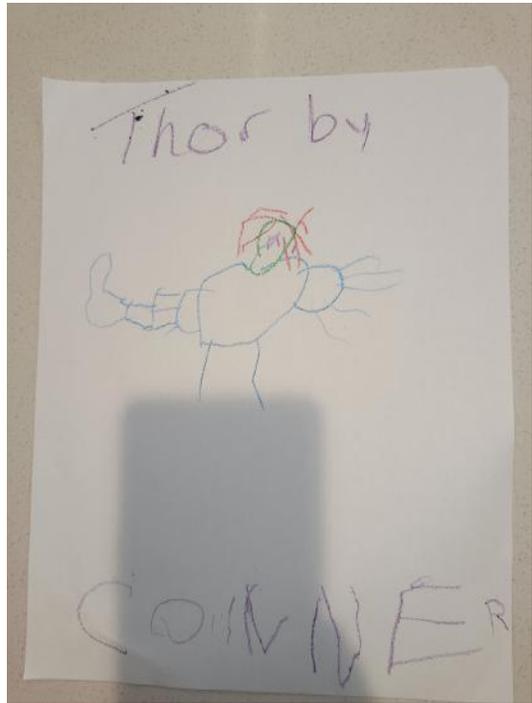
AFA Homeschool Program



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!

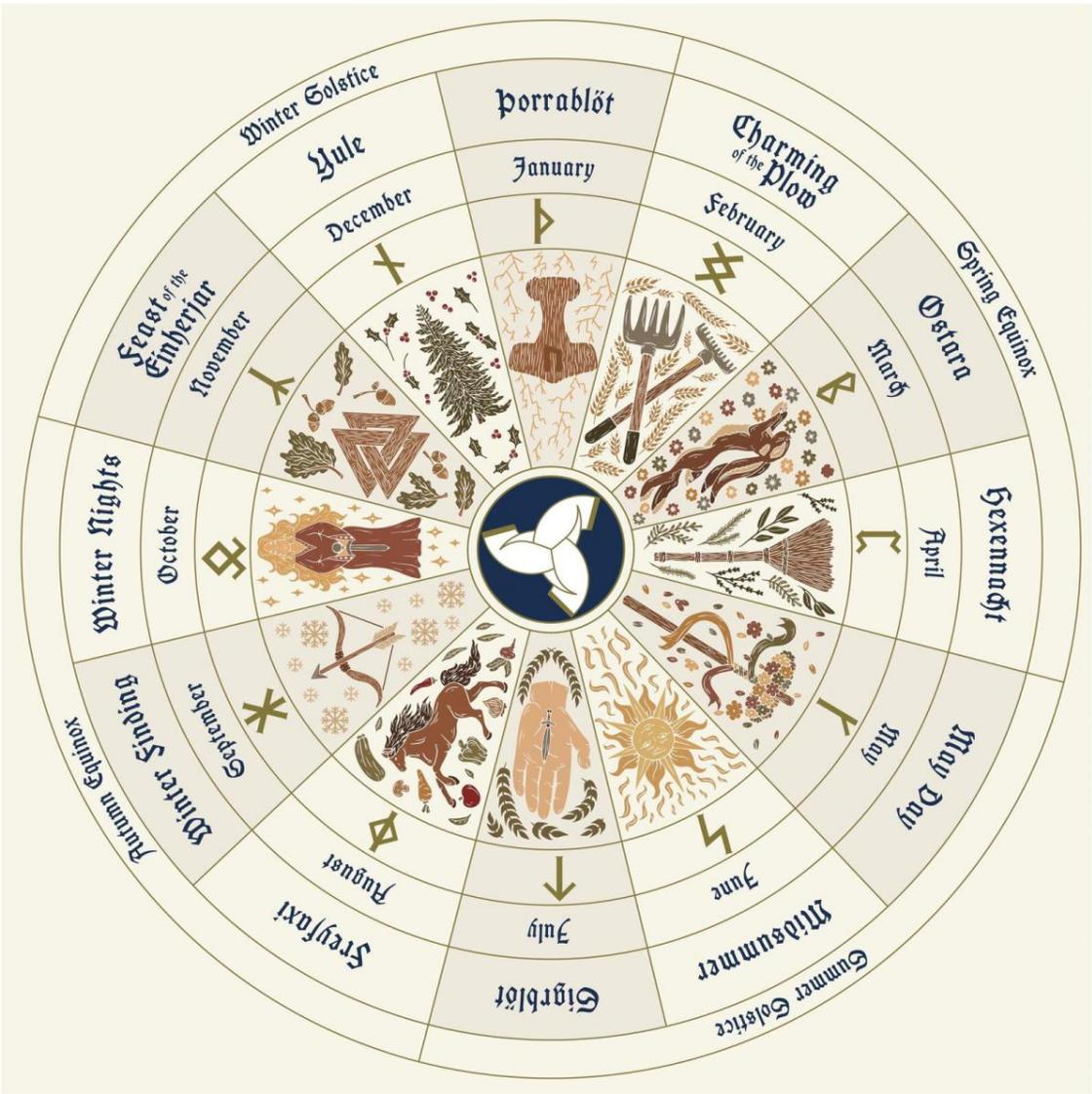


We are proud of our students and all their hard work this year, and certainly of their beautiful art!



Gothi Robert Stamm
Dean of AFA Academy
rstamm@runestone.org

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.

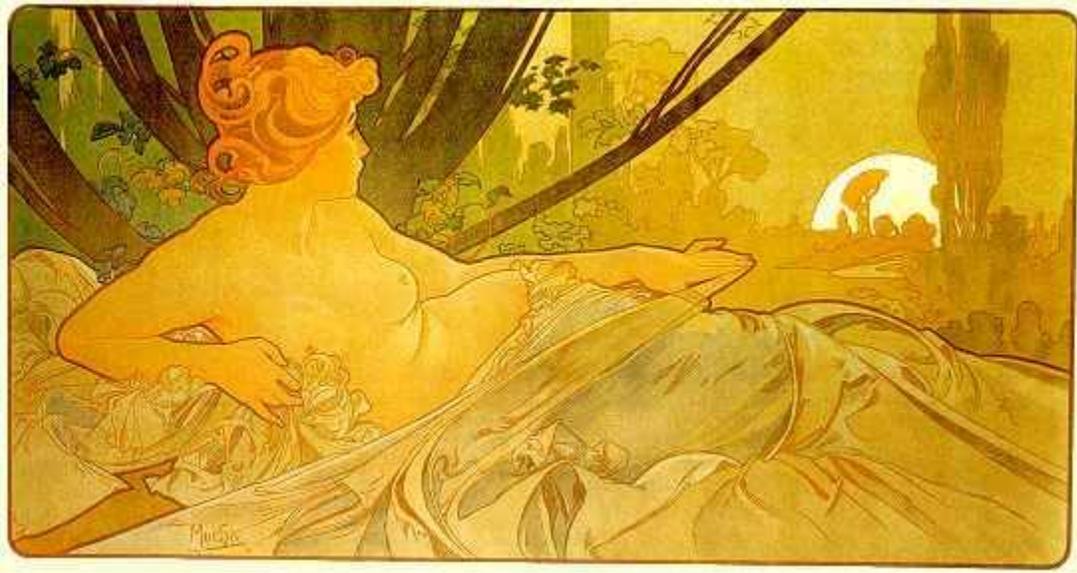
The Gods and the Ancestors are watching.



Gythia Catie Erickson
cm.erickson@runestone.org

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.



Gythia Catie Erickson
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

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
sheila@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,



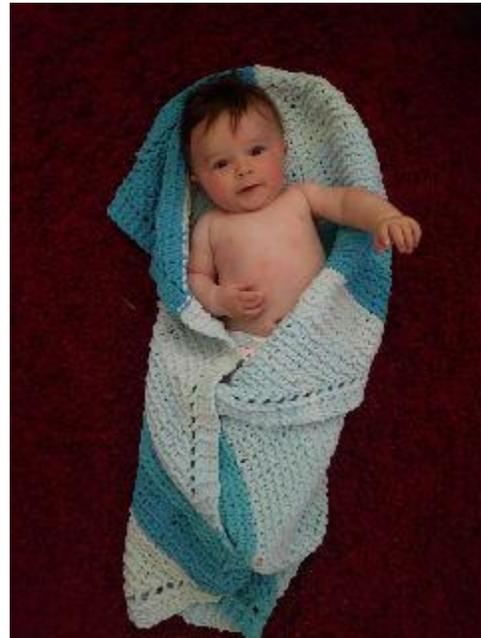
craftswomen, and more. See the list of amazing projects we have below. We will find a way for you to help our Folk.

Please email volunteer@runestone.org 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 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 with details of when and where it was served (Hof/moot).



Mike Joyner
Apprentice Folkbuilder
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.

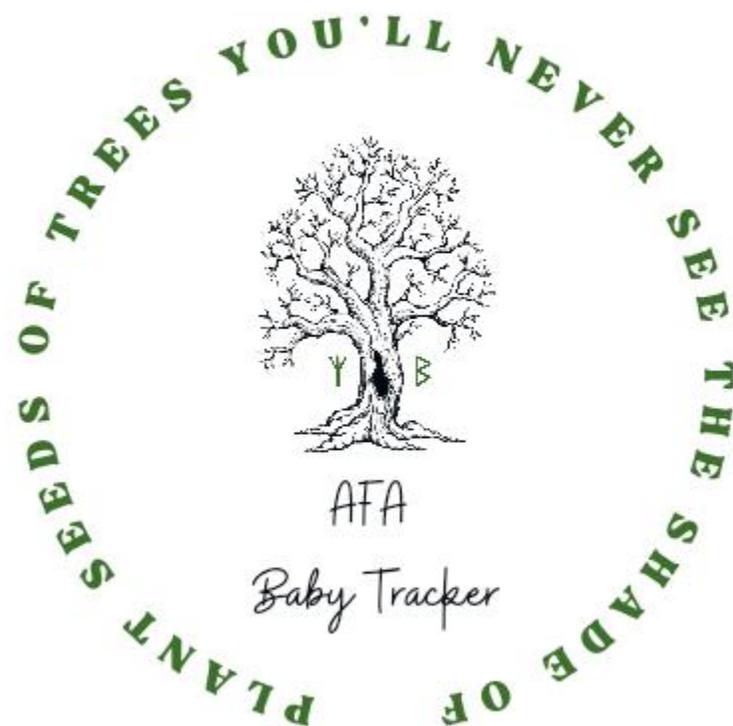
I think it's easy to play victim and complain about St Patrick and many other similar tangents, but then which side are we on: crybaby liberals or Noble European Folk? We can't be victorious stuck in a victim-mindset, being contrarian, and claim to be Asatru at the same time. We have to steel ourselves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



Folkbuilder Timothy Dumas

tdumas@runestone.org

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

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 Sisters Chat



Sunday 3/12
Sunday 3/26
10 am central

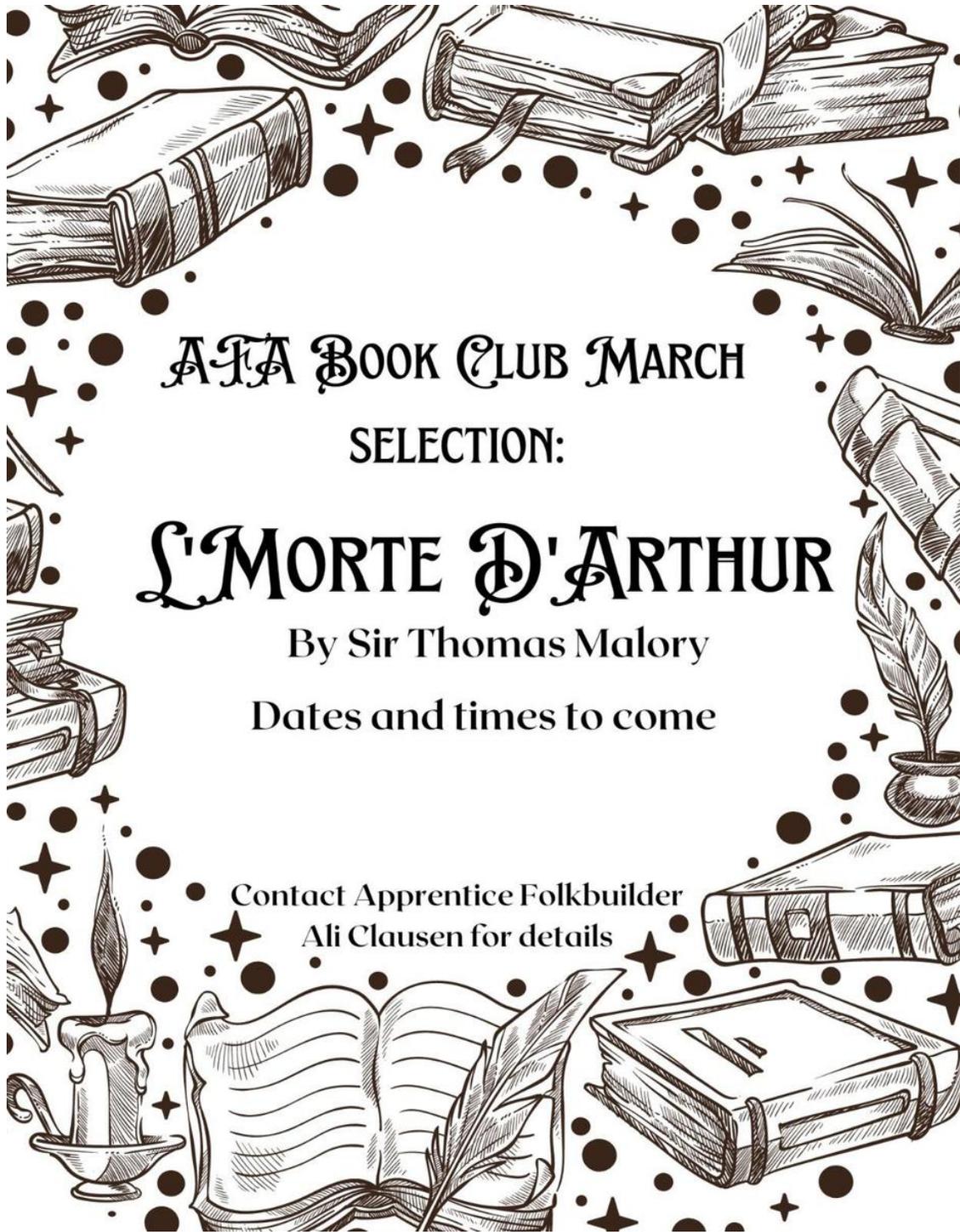
*Contact apprentice Folkbuilder Ali
Clausen for details*

All AFA womenfolk welcome!



Alison Clausen
Apprentice Folkbuilder
aclausen@runestone.org

AFA Book Club



ATA 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

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 Hof's 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.



Shane Duffy
Apprentice Folkbuilder
sduffy@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

Now Available in the AFA Store



Find Your Roots! Folk Kom Hem!



Runestone.org

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

Þórshof

Food Pantry at Þórshof



February was marked with our usual monthly food drive, which is always very successful. It's 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.

Charming of the Plow at Þórshof



Here in the South our mild but dreary winter has started to draw to a close. Nothing brings me greater joy than celebrating Charming of the Plow as it is a clear and poignant holy day that focuses the mind forward and upwards towards the season of light, warmth, and productivity. We gathered at Thorshof to do just that, and to give thanks to the Holy Freyr Ing, the time is nigh for him to return to the arms of his beloved Gerd and this union will blossom once the gates of Dellingr's Hall is flung open by Ostara and the warmth of summer tide flows through.

We held our food drive firstly in the morning until just after the noon. Once the local residents were helped and tended we then shifted attention inwards in preparation for the Blot because this year we had a very special addition to our observances! Two baby name fastening ceremonies were also to be held!



We held class on cosmology and the importance of Yggdrasil within heaven being the circulatory system of the divine cosmos. Then we wrote our goals of the summertide, our “seeds” if you will, upon pieces of paper to be buried before the Gods to focus and hone our will toward achieving glory! We processed into Thor’s holy Ve stead and the harrow was bedecked with candles, and the censor was ready to receive the sacred incense. The plow of Thorshof was waiting to be anointed by the mead that would be shared by everyone present, with their piety and reverence placed within the sacral nectar that brimmed in the drinking horn blessed by our lady folk. We tied ourselves to the Holy Gods and this blessed time of year in Wyrð. Our union between the Folk and the Gods under the soft glow of the setting Sunna in the Ve was beautiful.



Before the procession of the Plow to plant our resolutions of the season I got to introduce two new members of our Folk to the church. I drew runes three from the Nornir to see what insight could be made known. Then taking the small baby bundles they were anointed with the mead imbued with the Ond of the Folk and the might of the Gods. Then sprinkled with fresh water, I was given the pleasure of returning the newly arrived children to their parents so that the Father could declare their names before the Folk, the Ancestors and the Gods! For the good Folk that couldn't be there I would like to announce the arrival of Kayleigh Marie Diane Gibson and Bourbyn Lee Lawrence Horner into our Folk. Frigga and the Maidens of Fensalir have blessed these two families and our church with healthy babies!



Under Sunna's warmth, we then carried to the grounds of the Hof and used the blessed Plow to cut a furrow in the soil. We wheeled around one by one placing our written intents and goals within the ground. With our seeds planted we sounded one triumphant horn to begin the feasting in the Hall and conclude another wonderful observance of Charming of the Plow at Thorshof!

Witan Svan Herul

sherul@runestone.org



Upcoming Events at Þórshof

2023 events at Þórshof

December 15-17 Yule	January 28 Thorrablot
November 25 Feast of the Einherjar	February 18 Charming of the Plow
October 28 Winter Nights	March 10-13 Ostara
September 30 Winter Finding	April 29 Hexennacht
August 26 Freyfaxi	May 27 May Day
July 29 Sigrblot	June 24 Midsummer

My name is Michael Butler



My name is Michael Butler and I am a new apprentice Folkbuilder for Indiana and southern Ohio.



Our first moot was at the Irish Heritage Center of Cincinnati. There is a pub with live music and all the money spent on drinks goes right back into the Heritage Center. We had a great time building Frith and a future for our Folk! Hail the Folk, Hail the Gods, and Hail the AFA!!!



Michael Butler
Apprentice Folkbuilder
mbutler@runestone.org

More Charm than a Cow can Plow



Friends and Folk,

As you are aware, February is the month in which we celebrate the Charming of the Plow. Now, I know that many of you want to celebrate this still-important holiday but you are unsure how to do so. You think to yourself "I WANT to celebrate this auspicious occasion, but what if my methods are not backward and ignorant enough? Where can I find a series of religiously-themed antics that are ludicrous enough to fit MY needs?"

Ladies and gentlemen; I welcome you to Indiana. We arranged our games to pay honor specifically to Goddess Gefjon, whose mighty sons were known for their prodigious plowing skills. Lacking a walk-behind plow of our own, we did what any rational person would do; we tied a yoke to a barbell and ran races with it. Now, before you say "but won't it veer wildly behind you, drifting into trees and such before momentum eventually sends the weights rocketing through the back of your legs" ask yourself instead "why do I hate being cool?" and "what have ankles ever really done for me anyhow?"



Those familiar with the Folk-tales of Gefjon will recall that her sons plowed so fiercely that they created a great lake with an island in the middle of it (modern Zealand, the largest island of Denmark). The primary fault with this tale is obvious to even the most elementary reader, "didn't this newly created island need to have firewood rounds launched at it?" Yes, yes it did. We sought to redress this oversight in our lore with a contest delivering firewood to our Danish brethren over a pavement lake. You're welcome Denmark.



In this modern "age of equity" throwing defenseless wood-rounds smacks of "supremacy." Thus we chose to redress these wrongs by allowing wood to throw us as well. Naturally, like most social equity movements this was primarily a thinly veiled pretense for serving my own interests. I reasoned that, as we often engage in collar-and-elbow wrestling at our moots (and I am always soundly defeated) it was at least

possible that rasslin' on top of a downed log might offer me some unforeseen advantage. While I maintain that my reasoning was sound, in reality I just succeeded in adding a three foot fall to my inevitable defeat.



Now, as the sort of guy who blames society for the fact that I am a bewildering savage. As such, I enjoy concocting new and inventive ways to exact my revenge on a world that has (yaknow, probably) wronged me. This month I chose to visit my doom upon

the human race by singing a song during our Charming of the Plow ceremony. While I tried my best, it is telling that those within hearing distance ran out immediately afterward to buy all of the canned goods that they could afford. Unless our Gods should happen to have been suffering from Thor-induced tinnitus during the proceedings, I prophesize a rather meagre harvest this coming spring; which is also why we stopped to gorge ourselves on the way home; CheckMATE America.

Upcoming Events



Ostara!
March 25
Louisville, KY

Blót & Festivities

JROCK@Runestone.org for details



Folkbuilder Johnathan Rock

jrock@runestone.org

Northern New England



We had a great moot this February, with the largest turnout I've seen! Our membership in northern New England has been steadily increasing and so I'm hoping that we can make this next one even better. We're planning on getting together in New Hampshire again in Rochester on Saturday, March 25th at 1pm. Thank you to all of our members here who keep coming to these gatherings and making them fun and memorable!

Hail the Folk!

Upcoming Events

New Hampshire Moot

March 25th at 1pm in Rochester, NH
Contact App. Folkbuilder Daniel Mason for details at
dmason@runestone.org



Daniel Mason
Apprentice Folkbuilder
dmason@runestone.org

Maryland

A Day of Frith



Over near the coast, we met at a nice little meadery in Milton, DE. While there may have been some hornswoggle attempts by certain people claiming there would be a “day of hate” what we instead had was a day where we delighted in each others company. A baby was passed around (and multiple puppies got to kiss him while receiving their due in pets) and men gathered to discuss their lives and their views on the world. Much of the discussion was on the desire for cooperation and Frith to be built amongst our people, along with the desire to see our people create great and enjoyable art (in all available mediums) in the face of the current culture of sickness and decay. And of course, much good mead was had. I look forward to the day when I have all of you there to join us and we all shall raise a glass to the Gods, the Folk, and the AFA.



James Bethard
Apprentice Folkbuilder
jbethard@runestone.org

Michigan

February Fire Fests



This February we attended the Michigan Nordic Fire Festival. There are a few things that I always enjoy about this festival; blacksmiths, recruitment opportunities, people cosplaying in "authentic" outfits that would have caused our ancestors to pillory them, that comforting feeling that comes from being awash in superiority over pop-culture pretenders. At one point, after seeing a man dressed as a deer "furry" while holding a shield and large foam weapon, I recall thinking to myself "that is neither the least practical nor most ridiculous outfit that I have seen here."

While my obscure sense of decorum (for whatever reason) tells me that it is rude to take pictures of these characters for the sake of mockery, capturing pictures of our Folk's disapproving bewilderment feels like fair play.



What's that you say? "You're acting awfully superior for a guy who sleeps in a hotel room with a bunch of half-naked guys doing morning yoga?" Well... ok, that's actually pretty fair. But at least I have the basic human decency (is that the right word?) to mock my physical superiors for bettering themselves by photoshopping their bodies onto ballet dancers.



Now this is not to say that the entirety of the festival is without its charms, there are some interesting reenactors who attend to provide demonstrations and sell their wares, as well as (I am told) some very fine mead selections. I am further of the opinion that pipe and drum music (even poorly performed and lacking context) is generally pretty great. These highlights inspired us to embrace the spirit of the event in the most authentic way we know, engaging in the time-honored traditions of vengeance and petty-violence. Here you can see one of our fine men standing tall and proud, enjoying himself like some honorable sea-captain of old... and then being sucker-punched in the stomach because that's what you do to your friends when that situation arises.



There are a couple of regrets that I have about the evening, and really they are my own fault. We get together at events like these and we have a good time together, but as our members come and go among tents and such maintaining a cohesive plan is difficult. While there were a number of factors that caused me to determine that the coveted "group picture" was not really a viable option in this case (a regrettable situation when there were so many good Folk in attendance) my true failure was not holding blot with our people during the event. I thought at the time that it would be inappropriate to do so (some of our Folk will be absent, outsiders attempting to join in, the heretical surroundings of a festival with a DJ literally leading attendees in hailing Loki, etc.) but I have learned to trust my intuition on such matters, and I feel definitively that not engaging in religious ceremony with the faithful in attendance was a lost opportunity on my part. If we return next year I will plan to find a quiet place and do so.



One thing that I do NOT regret is going out to a fantastic local diner with some of the guys afterward and sitting directly beneath the head of what a city-boy like myself assumes is an elk. If you have not eaten a meal while staring directly up the nostrils of one of these creatures, I recommend you do some soul-searching and get your life in order.



Folkbuilder Johnathan Rock

jrock@runestone.org

North Carolina

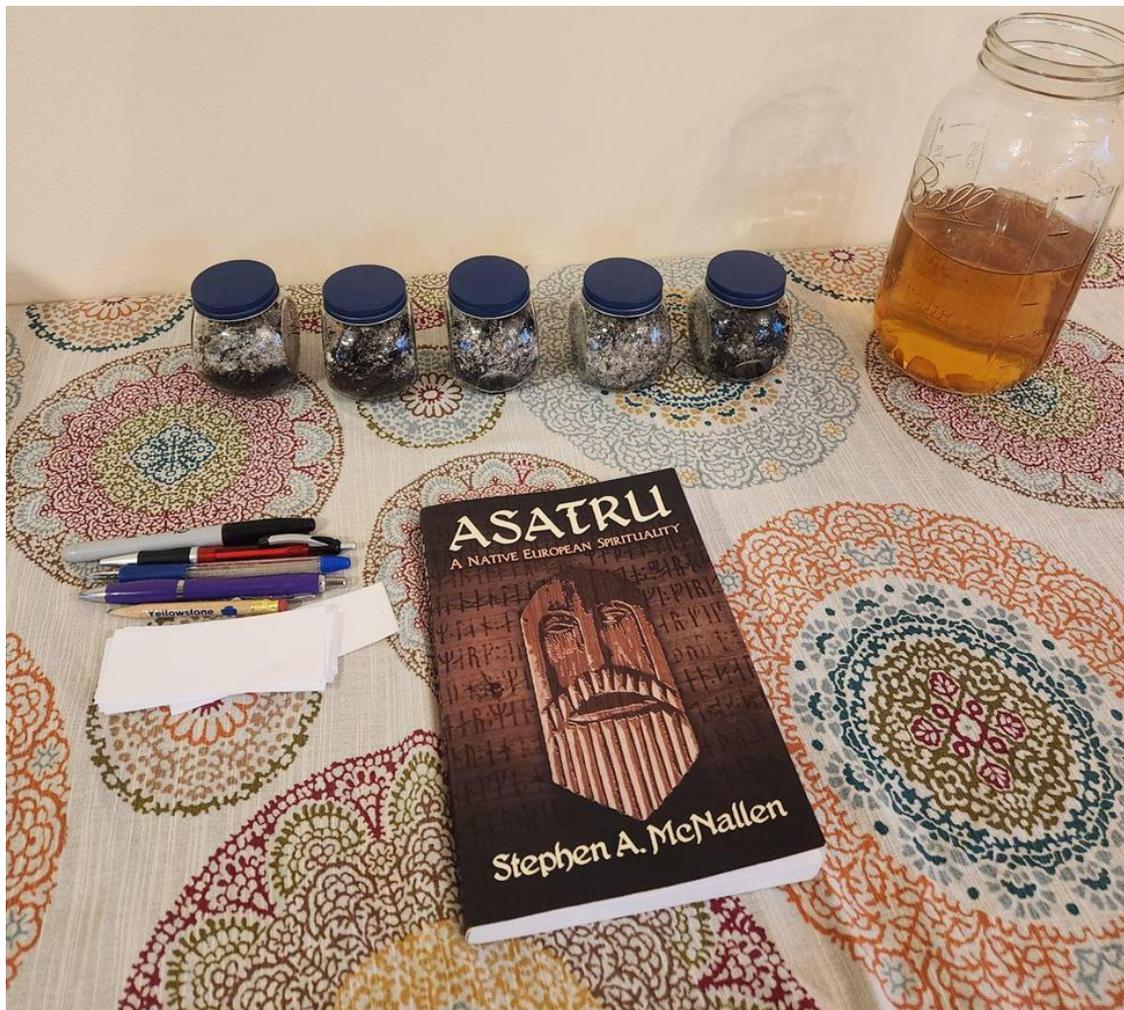
Appalachian Happenings: Charming of the Plow, East Tennessee



This month, we gathered in Jonesborough, Tennessee, for Charming of the Plow. We had a great turnout, with members coming from Tennessee and North Carolina, as well as some local Asatruar.



We had 7 adults and 4 teens in attendance, which made for a very intimate event. We began our event with a class on backyard horticulture from our hostess, Rachel Kinsler, followed by finger foods such as einkorn bread, cheese and charcuterie boards, and homemade mead and mulled wine.



After the ritual was complete, we transitioned back inside to a hearty meal of shepherd's pie, brussel sprouts, einkorn bread, beans and homemade sauerkraut. During the meal, we discussed the history and protocol of Sumbel, which was conducted after the table was cleared from dinner. After the ladies spoke their warm wishes and words of positivity over the mead horn, we had an excellent Sumbel with an extra round dedicated to our 10th Noble Virtue of Victory. During this round, we spoke of the challenges faced and overcome by the Asatru Folk Assembly, the Victories in our own lives, and the Victories to come.



Following Sumbel, most of the Folk parted ways, except for a few which had discussions on the Lore and the nature of living Asatru well into the night. It was an event that will not soon be forgotten by anyone in attendance.

Carolina Biergarten Moot



Later in the month, members from North and South Carolina gathered in Greenville, South Carolina, at Hans & Franz Biergarten to share food and frith. We had an excellent turnout, with 7 adults and 3 children in attendance. In fact, they didn't have a table big enough for us, making conversation a bit challenging as we were spread out over a table and two bars.

We had the chance to build bonds with Folk that we had never met, and solidify bonds with those familiar to us. Topics covered everything from geo-politics, the Lore, Sigrheim and even very personal matters: we found out that the same doctor had delivered three people in attendance - A mother and her 6 year old son, as well as another member's newborn baby!

Gathering together with your Folk is always a great experience, but it is made all the more sweet when demonstrating our Nobility and Frith radiates into the greater Folk without; one of the employees quietly pulled his hamer from under his shirt and gave us his contact information, saying that he would be submitting an application soon. Never underestimate the impact your example makes on the world around you!

Upcoming Events

NORTH CAROLINA HIKING MOOT MARCH 18TH

Join your Folk for a picnic and hike atop stunning Mount Jefferson in
Ashe County

Contact Apprentice Folkbuilder Tyler Bethea for more details

Tbethea@runestone.org (828) 707-7851

Please join us in West Jefferson, North Carolina, in mid-March for our first hiking moot of 2023! We have a picnic shelter reserved all day, and will be having a picnic and Lore study, followed by a hike to the top of the mountain where we will participate in Wotan on the Peaks! We hope to see you there.



Tyler Bethea
Apprentice Folkbuilder
tbethea@runestone.org

Ohio

Welcoming a New Apprentice Folkbuilder



Please welcome Ethan Lake of Ohio as one of our newest apprentice Folkbuilders for the Þórshof District! We are excited to see the success Ethan will achieve in the coming months and years.

Hail Ethan Lake!

Hail the AFA!

Hail Þór!

Ethan Lake

Apprentice Folkbuilder

elake@runestone.org



Northern Ohio Winter Camp



An early February day brought me and a couple fine Ohio men together for a camping excursion. I suppose to test our mettle and for good company. We met on my family land in northern Ohio with winter gear and jovial spirits. Much more prepared than the prior year. If you were there last year that is significant detail. With our gear in tow, we set out for a nice little spot at the edge of a field, prepared our firewood, and took inventory of our provisions.



After camp was set and amid good conversation, we took a bit of time for recreation and relaxation in nature's beauty. After a nice 4-wheeler ride and preparing the fire to cook I began cutting the meat and making a stew with veggies and venison I had killed myself. After some fire heated tea, a delicious stew, and some good drink we took to more conversation and thought to have a nice nighttime hike. It betrayed the beauty of nature in the winter dark.



Upon returning to camp unfortunately one of our party began to have a headache so he decided to retire. After a little more time my other companion decided to take sleep which left me alone to contemplate in the peaceful setting. After some thoroughly enjoyed time in solitude, I decided to go to sleep myself, though cold, very contented.



I recommend more of you come next year; it is a wonderful experience.

Hail to you all until next month!



Folkbuilder Joe Drotos
jdrotos@runestone.org

Women's Group at Charming of the Plow



My family and I had the pleasure of attending Charming of the Plow in PA hosted by Adam Hudak, Pat Cook, Jessica Keller and Spencer Kerns. I felt honored when Jessica asked if I would lead the women's group.



Our ladies group began with discussing the characteristics of an Aryan Woman. The points we discussed were honoring our Gods, following the laws of nature, acting nobly and courageously, taking responsibility for our actions, accepting our fate weaved by the Norns; protect, love and reproducing beautiful white babies; living a life of honesty and loyalty while building Frith, allowing our ancestors to live through us by keeping their memories alive, learning about our ancestral heritage, looking to our elders for wisdom, honoring our husband/boyfriend and place our family first, following through with our words by action and good deeds, being aware of our surroundings to keep us and our children safe, and living in harmony with our Folk.



I created a set of elder Futhark beads. I placed a runic bead on the stem of each cored apple. Each woman chose an apple at random. Then I asked each woman to look at the rune and remember that symbol. I proceeded to guide the women through a meditation, in which they visualized themselves planting the seeds from their apple and making it grow. They then visualized the rune they picked at the close of meditation. Next, we took time to reflect and write the growth we would like to create in the upcoming season.



When each woman was done writing their reflection, I took the candle for Freyr and Gerda that was lit the beginning of the day outside. Each woman rolled their paper, lit it on fire and placed the paper inside their apple. Transmitting their words of growth into their apple.



During Sumbel, the women offered their apples into the furrow made by the plow. The apples and other offerings were then covered with soil. We are thankful that the Gods and the land gladly accepted our offerings. Now it is our turn to grow and achieve our new goals.

Upcoming Events

UNDER ASH + OAK KINDRED
HOSTS



Ostara

March 25, 2023 @ 1 pm
Central Ohio

*Potluck • Blot • Games •
Kids Activities*

Contact Christine Dumas for more information,
cdumas@runestone.org



Folkbuilder Christine Dumas

cdumas@runestone.org

Pennsylvania

Charming of the Plow PA



I wanted to share some highlights with you from Charming of the Plow, PA to provide insight into how powerful and exciting this experience was!

We started off the day by socializing and getting comfortable with those present. There was an area designated for a seed exchange as well as an area near the antique grandfather ritual plow that invited folks to decorate and adorn the plow with colorful ribbons to symbolize youth and fertility.



Next, we prepared ourselves to enter ritual space for a welcoming of the gods ceremony that was led by Folkbuilder and Gothi student, Adam Hudak which set the tone and intention for the duration of the day.



We then proceeded into the main hall where presentations were given. Spencer Kerns talked to the folk about Freyr and Gerd and their association with the charming of the plow. I then went into a presentation about Yggdrasil during which I passed out offering cake materials for our folk to mold and work their will into them as they were listening to the presentation on Yggdrasil.



Once the presentations were finished, we had the folk split off into men and women groups. The men were off to partake in an archery competition, followed by a tug of war challenge! The tug of war challenge was symbolic as it was said the team on the downward slope had the advantage over the team who was slightly uphill. This represented in the physical the energy that is created when we work against each other how difficult it becomes as opposed to the energy that is created when we work together. This also counter describes the same experience as when we are working against each other how easy it is to pull everyone down with you. The women folk participated in beautiful guided meditation practice as well as an open discussion on what it means to be an Aryan Women led by Folkbuilder Christine Dumas.



After the men's and women's groups came to an end, the women were called to join the men outside to witness the ritualistic land Plowing creating a ground furrow that would later be used during blot to receive our gifts that were made during the Yggdrasil presentation. One element of this activity was to encourage masculinity among our men folk, for the raw, primal power that radiates among brothers as one less layer of modern times places on our folk. The intention behind why the shirts were invited to be removed by some of our men folk was to not only encourage the masculine nature of what they were doing, but it was with the intention to encourage physical fitness as you'd see one another's physique. Another element of this ritual was the lead gentleman was adorned with an ox skull to symbolize the lore associated with Gefjon. There were men who helped pull the plow as well as one who guided the plow, symbolizing the will of our folk when working together how much can be accomplished. I will say this was my first time seeing the plow being pulled by men, and it cut through the earth creating a beautiful furrow with ease.



We then prepared ourselves to enter the ritual space for blot which was led by Witan Erickson. During blot, a wonderful ritual drama was presented to our folk to enact the lore of Freyr and Gerd constructed by Folkbuilder Pat Cook. We ended blot by processing down to the hall once again where a baby naming ceremony led by Folkbuilder and Gothi student Adam Hudak for Wyatt James Kerns and my second son, Wernher Von Boden Keller, took place. This was my favorite part of the entire day, having my son being named by someone we hold close to our heart as a family, as well as having our son named beside folk we consider brother and sister while their son was named as well. It was such a beautiful and special experience. Many were touched and you could see tears of joy upon faces as you could feel the ceremony moved people, including myself. When it came time to hail at the end I was at a loss for words. I only wish I had them to share at that time, how grateful I am for these folk in my life, that my sons will have a mentor like he, an aunt and uncle like them, and a brothers bond with their son much like we share.



Once the baby naming ceremony ended, dinner was blessed and it was time to eat. Everyone brought a dish to share that focused on nourishment. Something we have started doing was encouraging folk to please avoid the bringing of heavy sweets and junk food items. We want to heal our folk not just in spirit but in mind and body as well. Encouragement of nourishment vs. emptiness is something we continue to plan on doing for our future hosted events.

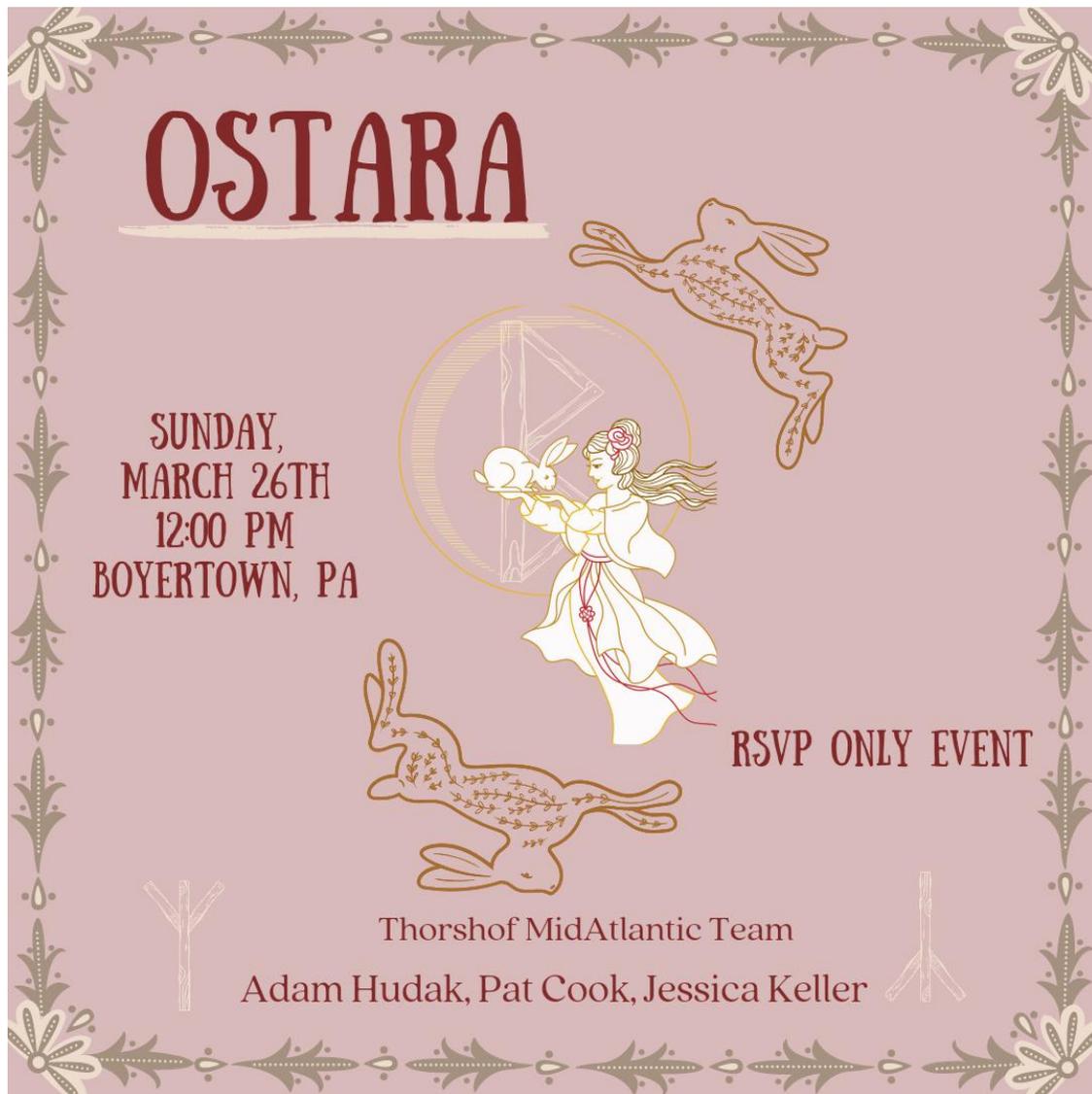


Once everyone had a chance to eat, it was time for sumbel!

This short entry is a glimpse of the true energy that was created that day, and again I am

so grateful for all of the hands that made this day possible. It's truly beautiful when you work in unison for we and not I all of the things that come forth.

Upcoming Events

A decorative poster for the Ostara event. The background is a muted pinkish-brown color, framed by a repeating pattern of stylized green leaves and white flowers. At the top center, the word "OSTARA" is written in a large, bold, dark red serif font. Below it, the event details are listed in a smaller, dark red serif font: "SUNDAY, MARCH 26TH", "12:00 PM", and "BOYERTOWN, PA". In the center, there is a golden illustration of a woman in a long, flowing white dress with a red sash, holding a white rabbit. Behind her is a golden circle containing a geometric diagram of a triangle with internal lines. To the right of the woman, a golden rabbit is shown in mid-leap. Below the woman, another golden rabbit is shown in mid-leap. To the right of the rabbits, the text "RSVP ONLY EVENT" is written in a dark red serif font. At the bottom center, the text "Thorshof MidAtlantic Team" and "Adam Hudak, Pat Cook, Jessica Keller" is written in a dark red serif font. On either side of this text are golden Y-shaped symbols.

Jessica Keller
Apprentice Folkbuilder
jkeller@runestone.org

PA Charming of the Plow



In a way, every month is kind of like Charming of the Plow, a mini cycle in and of itself. In the beginning, seeds (ideas) are put in place and then we go about the work to see them blossom, culminating with the Holy Day. A quick moment of glory and happiness for those few hours knowing that we did something right for the Aesir here on Midgard. And then on to the next one.....



As for that day itself, a better place could not have been chosen. Beautiful landscapes and a perfect hall for our purposes. Multiple states of the Folk also were in attendance. We welcomed in the Aesir and the Ancestors to join us for the day. Many activities took place in the brisk Pennsylvania air. As the afternoon began to fade, Blot commenced. A ritual drama took place in the Sacred Circle, the ground plowed and soon after the Gods were given gifts and we received theirs.



It was now time to welcome the newborn children into the Folk. Our hopes and dreams for them could be felt in the room. Lastly, we ate and closed out the night with good words said over the Horn to the Ones that offer us love, guidance, protection and so much more. To the ones that gave us life and whose stories still guide us and to the ones still found among us putting good deeds into the Well.



A special thanks to Apprentice Folkbuilder Jessica Keller and the Keller family in general. You have done so much for others. You truly understand the idea of not "I" but "We" and many of us are better off for having known you. It's been an honor to have crossed your path in the span of time.

Hail the Holy Aesir!

Hail the Ancestors!

Hail the Folk!



Folkbuilder Adam Hudak

ahudak@runestone.org

Upcoming Events



Western PA

Toddler Moot

Join us at the Pittsburg Zoo
on Wednesday, March 22nd
at 10:00 am
for a silly good time!

For any information please
contact

Gythia Catie Erickson

717-893-9682

cm.erickson@runestone.org

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
or Gythia Catie Erickson cm.erickson@runestone.org 717-894-9682 for
more information! We hope to see you there!



Join Gythia Catie
for a
traditional Garden

Tea Party!

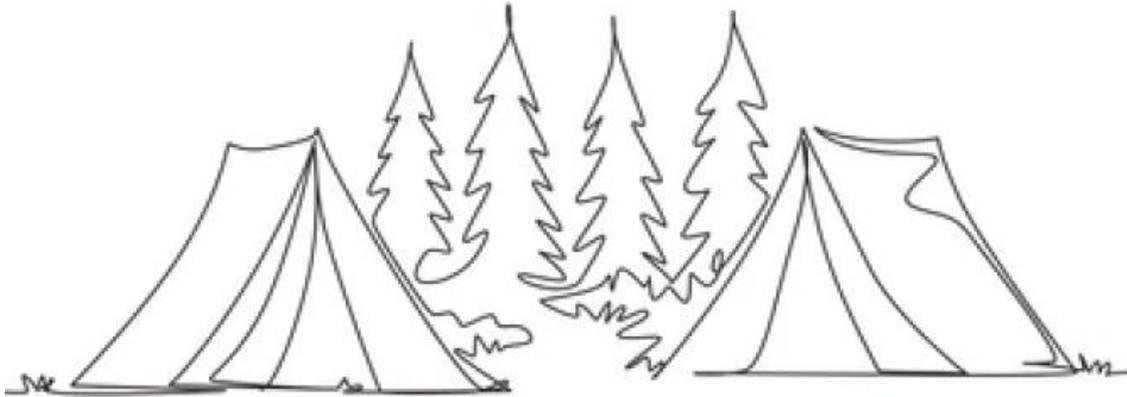
Traditional Fare, Tea Leaf Readings,
and Fancy Hats!
Saturday, May 13th, at 1pm
Rain or shine.
We hope to see you there!

Contact Gythia Catie for more information
cm.erickson@runestone.org
717-983-9682
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 22nd, 11 am @ beach 10,
with dinner to follow. Rain date TBD.

Please contact Gythia Catie 717-893-9682
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

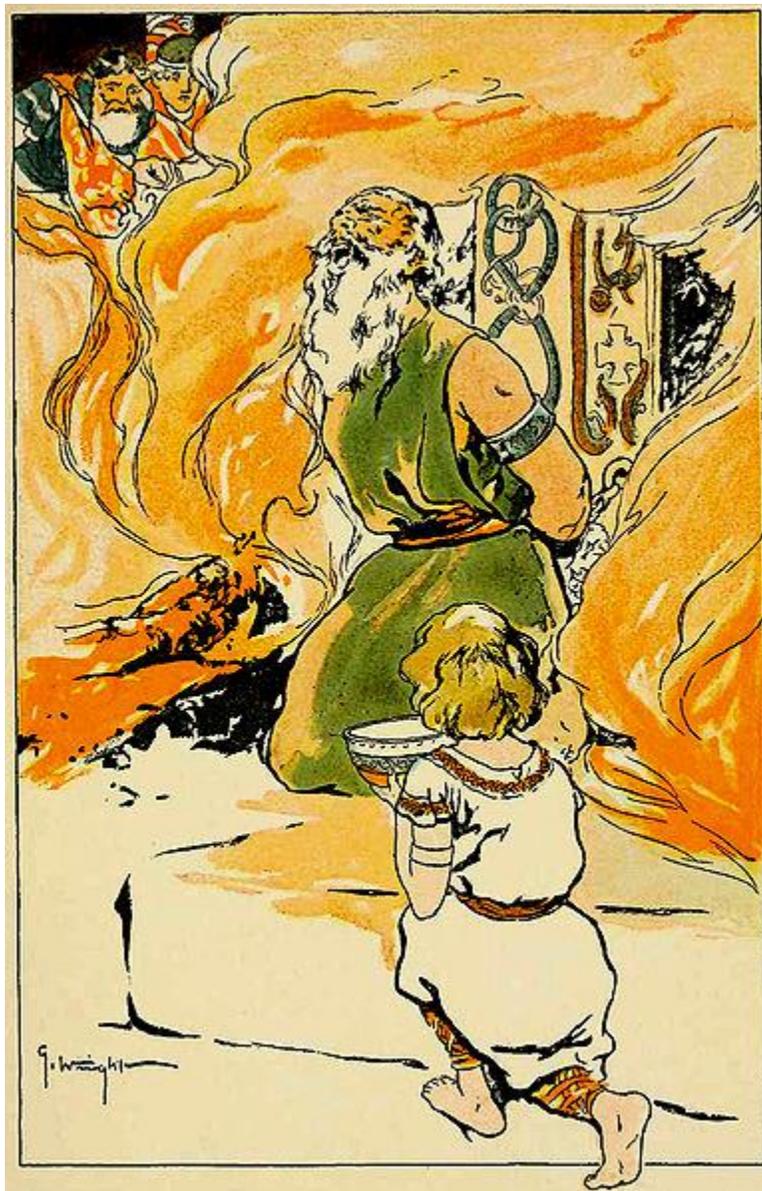
We look forward to seeing you there!



Gythia Catie Erickson
cm.erickson@runestone.org

South Carolina

Grimnismal and Hospitality



King Hrauthung had two sons, one was named Agnar was ten and one was Geirroeth was eight. They went on a fishing trip and a bad storm came up. They were washed to another shore. where they were found by two peasants . The wife took care of Agnar she taught him to be kind. the man took care of Geirroeth he was how to concle and have good judgment. When spring came the couple gave the boys a boat to go home. When they got home, they found out that there dad had died. Geirroeth was named King. Frigg and Odin were looking down over the worlds. Then Odin said do you see Agnar has children with a ogress. Then there is Geirroeth king of the land. Frigg says do you see how greedy Geirroeth is he fills his tummy while his guest are hungry. Odin says this is a lie. They lie out a wager on the debate. Frigg sent her chambermaid to tell Geirroeth to beware don't be bewitched by a warlock that has come to town. He would know the warlock because the meanest dog would not attack him. Cover in a blue cloak Odin went to see him.He told him his name was Grinnir and he would not say anymore. Even after being set between to fires as torture for eight nights. Geirroeth had a son named after his brother Agnar. Angnar was eight years old. He gave Odin a full horn to drink and told Odin the King was wrong to torture him. Odin told Agnar the

history of the cosmos and told him his many guises. Grimnir finished the horn by then the fire had started to burn his cloak. King Geirroeth was sitting with his sword on his knees. It was halfway out the sheath. When he realized it was Odin the sword slipped from his hands fell hilt downward. The king fell and the sword stabbed him and killed him. Odin vanished Agnar was named King and ruled the land for a long time .

This is an example of how important our ancestor took hospitality, one of our noble virtues. Had Geirroth taken hospitality more seriously and acted with nobility, he would have lived and remained King, whilst Agnar acted with nobility and hospitality. He then gained knowledge of the cosmos and the crown. What lessons do you take from Grimnismal?



Folkbuilder Heather Young

hyoung@runestone.org

Sweden

Charming of the Plow in the North



In the last few rays of sunlight, the Lugnet family put together an offering for Gefjon.



This summer we want to expand our vegetable garden and grow more flowers for the pollinators!

We eagerly await the breaking of the long winter sleep.

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

Rejoice in Life with One Another



In these trying economic times, we can rejoice in the things that still don't cost us a cent.

Hugging your spouse is still free of charge. Sharing a laugh with a friend doesn't take a bank loan. Playing with your children does not need to include a credit card.

No matter how light our wallets are, or whatever the balance of our bank account may be, there is always wealth to rejoice in. Family and community are most important when times are tough. Don't isolate. Reach out.

Upcoming Events

OSTARA

25th of March

Haparanda, Sweden

Hosted by Apprentice Folkbuilder Erik Lugnet

RSVP @ elugnet@runestone.org



Erik Lugnet
Apprentice Folkbuilder
elugnet@runestone.org

Tennessee

The Tru: Faith and its Positive Force



Folkish Asatru is a modern form of the ancient Germanic religion that emphasizes the importance of ancestry, heritage, and tradition. While some have criticized Folkish Asatru as promoting racist and exclusionary beliefs, many practitioners see it as a positive societal force that promotes community, individual responsibility, and spiritual growth.

One of the fundamental beliefs of Folkish Asatru is the importance of ancestry and heritage. The Folk believes that our ancestors and cultural heritage are essential to our identity and provide a foundation for their spiritual and moral values. This belief can promote a strong sense of community, belonging, and respect for cultural diversity within human societies. We wish everyone to return to their truest roots to embrace and love their ancestors.

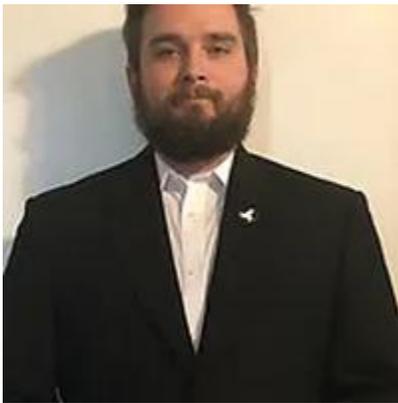
Another key belief of Folkish Asatru is the importance of personal responsibility. Practitioners believe that individuals have a duty to live honorably, uphold their oaths and commitments, and contribute positively to their communities. This emphasis on personal responsibility can foster a sense of self-discipline, accountability, and commitment to ethical behavior and service to others.

The Folk believes our religion can provide a framework for personal development, including meditation, ritual, and study. Folkish Asatru also places a strong emphasis on spiritual growth and self-improvement. This emphasis on spiritual growth can encourage practitioners to develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world and cultivate virtues such as courage, compassion, and wisdom.

Finally, Folkish Asatru can positively influence environmental stewardship and

conservation. Many practitioners see the natural world as sacred and believe that humans have a duty to protect and preserve it. This belief can inspire individuals and communities to take action to address environmental issues such as pollution, habitat destruction, and climate change.

In conclusion, while some have criticized Folkish Asatru as promoting divisive and exclusionary beliefs, many practitioners see it as a positive societal force that promotes community, personal responsibility, spiritual growth, and environmental stewardship. By emphasizing the importance of ancestry, tradition, and personal development, Folkish Asatru can provide a meaningful and fulfilling spiritual path for individuals and communities. We all must live Tru and embrace the past; without it, we cannot chart our future!



Russell Brown
Apprentice Folkbuilder
rbrown@runestone.org

West Virginia

Reviving the Ritual Drama



This February saw the Thorshof Mid-atlantic Team's best attended holy-day observance yet, and I'd like to extend a special thank-you to our Ohio frithfolk for making the trip out to see us, and to Witan Cliff Erickson for officiating our Blot. It was a distinct honor and privilege to have been given an opportunity to play a role in that ritual. Perhaps a bit different from our "usual" format, this Charming of the Plow included a practice that was brand-new but very old indeed: the ritual drama.

We organized a small troop of actors and, appropriate to the seasonal celebration, reenacted the adventure of Skirnir, as told in the Skirnismal from the Elder Edda. In the story, Ingvi-Frey ascends high Hlidskjalf, the seat of Odin, no doubt during one of the High One's many forays out across the Nine Realms. From the High Seat, he sees across the worlds of Yggdrasil and is transfixed by the beauty of the giantess Gerd. Lord Frey sends his servant Skirnir on a quest to meet Gerd and convince her to agree to a marriage proposal. Skirnir meets with Eggther, the Jotunn mentioned by name in the Voluspa, who helps him safely enter the hall where Gerd waits. There, he offers her the Apples of Iduna and Odin's ring Draupnir - perpetual youth and limitless wealth, to go with Frey. When she rejects these offerings, he becomes desperate and threatens to cut her head from her body. Finally, he produces a magic wand and lays a most graphic and horrifying curse upon her if she should refuse a third time. Under the threat of the curse, the Jotunn maid finally agrees.



Gerd in this allegory symbolizes our Mother, the Earth. Frey, our God of Fertility, must bestow upon Earth his blessing of life in order for the seeds we plant to germinate, the crops to prosper, and our way of life to continue. Skirnir, the messenger of the Fertility God, symbolizes the returning Sun after a long winter. Skirnir must resort to any tactic available to him, up to and including the threat of a dreadful curse, to make his mission a success. If Skirnir should fail in this quest - if the Earth rejects the marriage proposal of the God of the Seed, then we shall all surely die and Midgard would become a barren waste! Therefore it is imperative that this drama be performed ritualistically, under the auspices of the ritual circle and in the full sight of the Folk, the Gods, and Mother Earth Herself!

A hearty hail and a very special thank-you to our performers: Rob Burgess as Ingvi-Frey; Spencer Kerns as Skirnir; David Bryson as Eggther, and Elizabeth Pittman as Gerd. They have made AFA history, as this performance was the first of its kind in an AFA ritual of which I'm aware.

Mid-Atlantic Men's Group



In addition to the ritual drama, I had the honor of leading the menfolk in two smaller ritual observances during Charming of the Plow. First was a ritualized archery competition during which we shot arrows at a "heart" shaped target. Reminiscent of the love and fertility imagery associated with Valentine's Day, I feel the symbolism of the heart and arrow strongly invoked fertility, in keeping with the symbolic, agrarian theme of the event. The men were fully aware that during this ritual they were intentionally inviting a certain omen, and the imagery on the targets left very little to the imagination as to what kind of omen they were inviting. (By the way, you know that symbol doesn't really represent a heart, don't you)?







The second of the ritualistic men's activities was to dig the furrow into which would be placed our gifts. In honor of our Goddess Gefjon of the Plow who turns her sons into oxen, we hitched ourselves to an antique plow provided by Jared and Jessica Keller, to inaugurate the Blot. To warm-up for this sacred rite, we summoned the UR-force by engaging in a friendly rivalry between Pennsylvania and Ohio in a tug-of-war...the downhill team won both times.



Gratitude, Hail, and good luck to everyone who helped make this event one for the history books!

Upcoming Events

POV: you are being healed by the forest wights...

CAMPING MOOT

APRIL 14-16
MINERAL COUNTY, WV

Come and go as your schedule allows.
We'll be on private property. Contact
Folkbuilder Pat Cook at 304-268-9209
or pcook@runestone.org for details.



Folkbuilder Patrick Cook

pcook@runestone.org



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