

Asatru Folk Assembly's The Voice

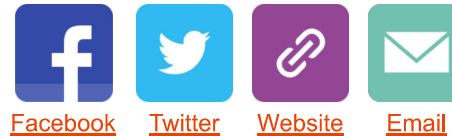
Asatru Folk Assembly's The Voice



The Voice is back, bringing you current news from the AFA. We aim to publish this newsletter every month. In this issue of *The Voice*, we are covering 2012; What happened in the AFA Programs for the year? What events leadership and members have attended both locally and large national events? Also we will always have information on any upcoming events. Your input is needed for *The Voice*, please feel free to submit any events, news or photos to thevoice@runestone.org.

Hail the AFA!
Channcie Bean

Donate to the AFA



The next *Voice* will be published on March 15th and we will cover what has happened in January and February of 2013. Please submit any events, news and photos of happenings in your area no matter how big or small. Deadline for the following *Voice* is March 11th, please email Channcie Bean at thevoice@runestone.org.

AFA's Clergy Program -

The 2013 Clergy Program is underway with new students. Watch for updates and news.

RunePepple -

The spring issue of the *Runepepple* will be published on April 1st. The *Runepepple* is in serious need of volunteers to contribute work. Please contact Rebecca Radcliff at hljod.huskona@gmail.com.

AFA Family Safety Program -

The Asatru Folk Assembly Family Safety Program was little more than a concept and a plan - new, untested, understaffed - when news arrived that Sandy was on the way. We decided to use Sandy as an opportunity to test our systems and check our ability to mobilize and to communicate with the Folkbuilders, Clergy, and general membership as we dealt with the challenge.

Folkbuilder Program -

Hello my AFA brothers and sisters! We have had a fantastic 2012 and we have an even greater 2013 ahead of us, that being said, I wanted to take a minute to talk about the great things going on in the Folkbuilding front this last year. 2012 saw a number of new Folkbuilders step up and take responsibility of building the AFA folk in their area. Sylvia Sawyer of New York is now sharing the work in the North East. Bryan Wilton of Oklahoma has been steadily and vigorously building the the AFA in the Central Corridor. Heather Clinkenbeard of southern California has been steadfast in her work in the West. Also in

Something that we are tremendously proud, the AFA now had a Folkbuilder dedicated to the unique needs of our current and former military members, Bodi Mayo of Georgia brings discipline and deep dedication to caring for these honored members of our folk. Last of these new Folkbuilders but certainly not least, Daniel Updike of Alberta has made heroic efforts to energize and organize the folk in Canada, he has personally build a swelling community in his area and through innovative conferencing programs and his Northern Runes Radio podcasts he has done more than his part in making us a truly international organization and tribe. (be sure to check out these podcasts at northern-runes.blogspot.com). Our Folkbuilders worked hard to help make both Midsummer in the Sierras and Winternights in the Poconos smashing successes. Marc Mcleod worked long and hard to get our Californians to come to Midsummer in numbers, and this paid off with it being the best Midsummer I have been to yet, we certainly set the bar high for this next year. Folkbuilders Marc Mcleod of California, Thorgrunn Odden of California, Brad Taylor-Hicks of Florida, Bryan Wilton of Oklahoma, Pat Hall of Pennsylvania and myself were all in attendance for Midsummer in the Sierras. In October a truly epic event occurred, Winternights in the Poconos, a first for the AFA in the East and a fantastic and powerful event, special thanks is due to North East Folkbuilder Pat Hall, she worked tirelessly to make this event truly historic. Folkbuilders Denny Boltenhouse of Ohio, Sylvia Sawyer of New York, Pat Hall of Pennsylvania, Bill Shelbrick of New Jersey, Bodi Mayo of Georgia, Brad Taylor-Hicks of Florida and myself were all in attendance for Winternights in the Poconos. In 2012 the folk has grown in quantity and quality, 2013 will see even greater results. I encourage all of you to be in touch with your local Folkbuilder, we are here to help and are always ready to do what we can for the AFA.

Hail the Gods!

Hail the Folk!

Hail the AFA!

Matt Flavel OAC

AFA Folkbuilder Coordinator

Folkbuilder for Alaska and Hawaii

New Folkbuilders in 2012



Sylvia Sawyer - New Folkbuilder for the Northeast



Daniel Updike - New Folkbuilder for all of Canada

The Asatru Military Program -

2012 was the start of this new program. It was as established to provide information, connection and support for our past and present service members. Bodi Mayo, was elevated to the position of Folkbuilder for the Asatru Military Program. Since that time he has been talking with and giving information to service members who have stepped forward. The program has coordinated with members across the nation in mailing packages to deployed members. More news to follow as this great program grows. As a reminder if you are a former or current service member, please contact Bodi Mayo at bodi@runestone.org.

Events that happened in 2012

Midsummer 2012 - Note from Stephen McNallen

They came from one end of the continent to the other. Local folks, of course, and a trio from Alaska. A carload of young folks drove all the way from Florida. New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Washington, Oklahoma, Maryland, Arkansas - plane tickets and gas receipts from a dozen states bore witness to their pilgrimage. Some had planned their journey months in advance, some not so. One came in response to a cast of the runes.

All, strangely enough, were coming home.

Midsummer 2012 was designed to be a meta-ritual, from the first gesture of the initial blessing to the last word of the closing. Everything - the presentations, the sumbel, the meals we ate together in the hall, was part of this great, all-encompassing meta-ritual. Specifically, the objectives included a noticeable degree of spiritual evolution for each and every individual present...the evolutionary advance of the Asatru Folk Assembly as a whole...and the application of that evolution to the objectives of the AFA.

Throughout the gathering, I felt like an arrow in flight: focused, committed, unstoppable, pure.

My main presentations followed a sequence. First, one on the "how" of individual evolution. I mentioned runes, the connection between Odin's mead quest and kundalini yoga, the idea of pushing yourself! "Pain is just weakness leaving the body." My second one was titled "Awakening and Will: Ourselves, Our Folk, Our Mission." The title says it all.

Other presenters supported this theme. Perhaps most relevant was Brad Taylor-Hicks' talk on "Eddas, Vedas, and the Odinic Quest." Pat Hall gave two sessions on "hexology" - the application of Pennsylvania Dutch traditions to modern Asatru symbolism, including the runes. Ann Taylor taught us about meditation techniques. Marlene Slichter led us in a session on runic divination.

our purposes not just for that moment, but for the entire gathering - it was not undone until the last day. In it, we asked for the blessings of the Gods and Goddesses, the ancestors, and the wights of the place. The Midsummer blot was next day, when we placed our spiritual offerings on the sunwheel and burned it in the roaring fire. Immediately afterward, we performed a healing rite for all those in need. The web of folk, surrounding the afflicted ones and sending might through each other to those requiring it, was a humming net of healing and love.

Perhaps the high point of the event, ritually, was the blot to Odin. Late at night, torch-lit, with Dylan Sheets of the band Lasher Keen pounding out our passion, we honored the All Father and asked for his blessings - again, in the forms of individual and collective evolution, and for the destiny of the AFA!

But next day's Wayfarer Blot, performed by Clergy student Matt Flavel as his final requirement for ordination, was also spectacular and particularly moving. Immediately afterward, he took the oath of gothi in the AFA.

The final ceremony was the next day, in which the camp was returned to its original condition and the meta-ritual concluded. After the last of the folk had departed the area, I stepped outside the circle of standing torches...and the rite was done.

All the rituals and presentations made up the framework and the anchor points of AFA Midsummer in the Sierras, but other things made up the blood and flesh. Take our meals, for example: We followed AFA custom, in that (1) every meal was blessed before we ate, (2) we all ate together, (3) children ate first, leadership ate last - and most definitely (4) no one went away hungry! Kitchen-meister Diane has prepared and served us food for decades now, and her daughter Emily has born a big share of the burden for years. We saw her daughter Elle, generation three, in an apron for the first time this Midsummer. (Emily did all the wedding provisions as well as all our breakfasts!)

A host of informative talks, workshops, and activities filled out the themes described earlier in this report. Sheila on genealogy...Knut with his telescope...David James on Germanic naming...half a dozen different crafts...Jim on preparedness, me on building resilient

shirts" prepared by Sean of Northlanders. Inc. were the perfect prizes for the winning tribe, the Franks). Marc, who along with Knute organized and led the games, later broke his hip and had to be taken to the hospital. His health was toasted many times in the days that followed and we are sending healing folk-love to him still.

Lauren's wedding to Jonas deserves mention all by itself. It was a storybook scenario - the bride was stunning, the groom handsome, the wedding party delightful. Their oaths were sworn on the ring, and sealed with a horn of mead. Afterwards, we shared a little more mead and champagne and, after lots of good conversation, headed over to the hall for dinner. It was very elevating for all of us.

The marriage of Lauren and Jonas capped a day of drama. Earlier, Bryan Wilton's youngest son had managed to get trapped on a cliff, unable to move up or down. Bryan tied a rope to a tree, made a bowline in the other end, and went down to rescue his son. The young Ashmore boys, sons of Bobby and Roxie, pulled them up. That's the kind of folks we have in the AFA.

Music tied it all together and fed our souls. Robert Taylor and Nicholas Tesluk of Changes regaled us with song and story as they described "A Fifty Year Odyssey." The next evening - just prior to the late-night Odin-blot - they joined our friends with Lasher Keen for the musical peak of Midsummer. Mystical Dylan, vivacious BlueBird, and wise Sage led us in a journey into ecstatic spaces in an experience none will forget.

The days have passed since I stepped so deliberately outside the circle after that last ritual, of the last day, of AFA Midsummer in the Sierras, 2012. Already the sun rises a little later and sets a little sooner, and life goes on. Has anything changed? Speaking for myself, yes. Speaking for the AFA as a whole, I must also answer in the affirmative. The light of the fire and smell of the smoke, the folk feasting in the hall, the (surprisingly) chill nights, the laughter and friends and all the rest remain...waiting to be renewed when, again, the sun approaches her highest point next year.

It is good.

Winternights in the Poconos

In October a truly historic event occurred named Winternights in the Poconos. The AFA hosted it's first major event in the Northeastern United States. The gathering was held at historic Camp Netimus in the beautiful Poconos Mountains of Northern Pennsylvania among the crisp fall leaves. It was a weekend full of powerful rituals and deep fellowship. It was another spiritual charged weekend with new and old friends.











News and updates from Members across the Nation:

Here's a mini-report about yesterday's Nevada County Food and Toy Run where the AFA had two booths. Emily and Diane had spent preceding weeks shopping, baking, and roasting pork so our "Pulled Pork Plates" were ready to go when the 2000 bikes rode into the fairgrounds. Meanwhile, Sheila set up a booth right next to it with AFA materials, and stayed pretty busy talking to the folks wandering by. We had perfect weather with clear skies and about 60 degrees, in the prettiest fairground setting in California. It was simply a great day, very busy and upbeat.

Thanks go out to all who helped: Diane, Jim, Sandy, Katie, Thorgrun, Knute, Linda, Marc, Lindsey, and Sheila. And a very special thanks goes out to Thom Staser, friend of the AFA and organizer of the Toy Run for twenty years, who offered us free space and who encouraged us to have an information booth. How did we do? We cleared about \$500, including some book sales.

Charlotte Hoxie, appentance Folkbuilder of the Deep South. We had a pretty busy year here in the Deep South during 2012. Towards the beginning of the year the Asatru Alliance held a day moot at the European Street Café in Jacksonville. We had a great turn out of AFA members at this event. Shortly thereafter the Asatru Alliance held a weekend moot in Georgia that was attended by several AFA members. There, we were privileged with

handful of us traveled by air and car to attend the AFA's Midsummer in the Sierras, and what a spectacular event that was. Several of us attended a Njord blot that was held for a friend's deployment. Yet again, we had members who drove and flew to attend the AFA's Winter Nights in the Poconos. As to be expected with the AFA's major events we had great speakers, musicians, and very powerful rituals. There was a luncheon held in downtown Savannah, which afterwards we visited some of the city's historical sites. A small group of our Deep South members partook in a beach clean-up in St. Augustine. Out of all the groups that attended the event, our AFA members collected the most trash. We also had many small meet ups with members throughout the year. - Charlotte Hoxie

Sylvia Sawyer, one of the Folkbuilders for the Northeast attended the Buffalo Pagan Pride day for the AFA, she met a lot of people there and got the news out about the AFA. She and husband, Alan, attended the Winternight in the Poconos. Alan and Sylvia led a small Kindred in West New York area and have monthly book studies for Asatru.

Mark Macleod, one of the Folkbuilders for the West, attended the yearly event, Midsummer in the Sierra's in June. With the help of his kinsfolk, they attended and helped with the March Moot at Camp Norge, hiking and picnic at the Sequoia Big Tree State Park, BBQ at Jack London State Park and their day trip Muir Beach. They did fundraising at the Nevada City Toy Run for the AFA.



Denny Boltenhouse, Folkbuilder of the Midwest. He set up a table to advertise the AFA at a huge outdoor market. He organized a moot at the Hofbrau Haus in Pittsburgh. He spends his time meeting with people interested in information on the AFA throughout the

Bryan Wilton, Folkbuilder for Central Corridor, He attended the Ostara Meetup at Heavener Runestone, A midsummer event in Eureka Springs Arkansas hosted by White Wolf Kindred, He held a small Winternights celebration in his home. Him and his sons drove to CA to attend the AFA midsummer event along with Robbie Ashmore and his family.

Judy Floyd, Folkbuilder for South Central, Co-hosted a 4 day event in April and hosted a 1 day event in August.

Daniel Updike, Folkbuilder for Canada, started folkbuilding in September 2012. Note from Daniel - In September Har's Hall Kindred (which started in January of 2012) was established enough to create a membership criteria. At the same time we took part in the "Pagan Pride" celebration in Edmonton, where we represented Asatru to the community at large. We passed out a great deal of literature to the public about the AFA and I gave a 45 minute lecture on our faith to those in the general Edmonton community who had come to see the event. Most were non-pagan.

We held a pubmoot in October for Kindred members to bring interested people to for information on Asatru. We had a turnout of 10 people.

In terms of the rest of the country, we are starting online public meetings through an ingenious software platform called "anymeeting", which is a free service that allows conference with up to 200 people at once. We held a meeting this month, and had a small turnout of 4, but this is new and will grow. It is the situation in Canada (a LARGE territory) that many AFA members are scattered and isolated. It is my hope to use the technological toys of our age to provide a way for our people here to unite and break the isolation barrier—that everyone can feel that they are an active part of what's going on here in our own country in the AFA.

AFA members in Har's Hall Kindred along with myself are also putting out a bi-monthly podcast called "Northern Runes Radio" in an attempt to bring a sense of connection to our folk, both here in Canada and around the world. Also to attract listeners who are not yet awakened to who they are, and give them inspiration to look into their true ancestral heritage. So far, NRR (Northern Runes Radio) is now listened to with varying audiences in

Northern Runes Radio

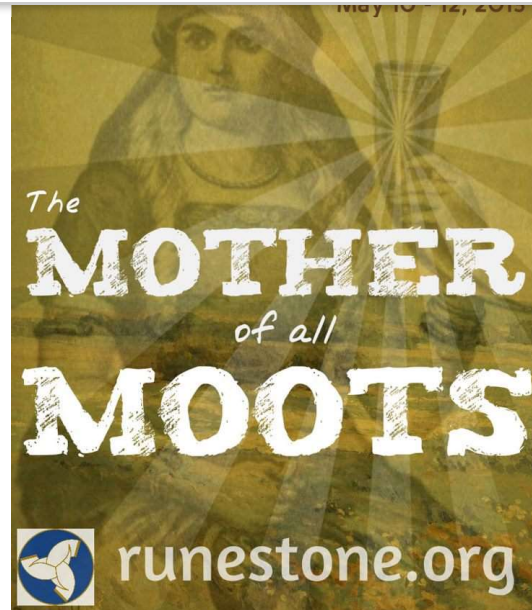
In Alaska, we started the year with a small gathering for Ostara, where we feasted on rabbit stew. It was a record year for snow and we walked down a path with 4 feet of snow on each side, to preform a Blot at the edge of a beautiful lake under the bright stars. Half way during blot we had realized that we had built the fire on top on the dock not the lake!

We completed the blot and then laughed at the large burning hole in the dock. The first large gathering we had was Midsummer. We feasted on a turkey that was raised by Matt Flavel. It was an all day event in which everyone, old and new friends, helped prepare the feast and blot. We enjoyed an amazing blot by Matt, then feasted. It was a good feeling that the only hitch was we had to find another table for all the guests. The night ended with a moving stumble and then Matt, Channcie and Eric being whisked to the airport to catch a flight to Midsummer in the Sierra's. We had various other gatherings throughout the year including but not limited to a flag blessing, Day of Remembrance for Radbod, Day of Remebrance for Hermann of the Cherusci, Day of Remebrance for Erik the Red, Winternights, Feast of the Einherjar and Yule. Matt and Channcie were able to attend the wonderful Winter Nights in the Poconos. As a group we had decided that we wanted to meet everyday of Yule, that was harder then planned. But during the days and nights of Yule we met for Mead Tasting, Gift Exchange, Dinner, fires with a large feast and blot on Mother's Night.

Upcoming 2013 Events

**Mother of All Moots May 10 - 12, 2013,
Enchanted Hills Camp, Napa California.**

A flyer will soon be describing many
exciting aspects of this particular



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AFA event. This will be no different. It's also a perfect Springtime event in the lush and fertile Napa Valley with special attention being given to the Mothers. It is Mother's Day weekend after all. What could be more natural?

For those flying in, Napa is slightly more than 1 hour from San Francisco, Sacramento, and Oakland airports. If you need to fly out on Monday, we have permission to stay Sunday night for \$20/each, meals not included. Registration forms have been posted to the FILES section of the AFAMembers Yahoo group.