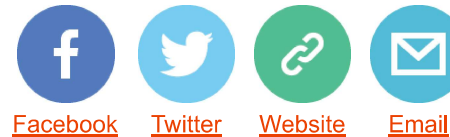


Asatru Folk Assembly's The Voice



Your input is needed to make *The Voice* a publication filled with events, photos and news. Please feel free to submit any events, news or photos to thevoice@runestone.org.

Donate to the AFA



A Few Words from the Alsherjargothi

I'd like to take a moment to summarize some of the remarks on the subject of spiritual might that I made last week at "Ostara in the South." This topic is central to the AFA's attitude on not only our religion, but life in general!

Spiritual might...So what is it? How do we get it? WHY should we get it?

definition is that the greater the difficulty, the greater the spiritual might involved. Such might manifests in the physical realm because Germanic people are all about deeds - but it is not, in itself, physical.

How do we get this might? It's all about will...which, along with deeds, is another Germanic preoccupation! We must develop the sheer will to win...the will to prepare...the will to pay the price for victory. Winning takes work, and preparation, and effort extended over time. By implication, this means we must change ourselves.

This is a gradual process. Consider meditation, for example. Try watching your breath - simply observing the intake and outgo of the breath, excluding all other thoughts. How long do you succeed? How long before you are thinking about how well (or how badly) you are doing, or what's for lunch, or how you like to do meditation but you need to get a pillow to sit on next time?

Meditation - or breaking a habit or a dependency or a compulsion, or changing yourself in any significant way - all require persistent application of will...in other words, spiritual power. You will fail over and over. Each time, you must pull yourself back to the task, and forgive yourself for your all too human failures. In the end, you will succeed.

But why should you go to all this work? Why not just go with the flow?

First, for your own sake, you owe it to yourself to live the biggest, best life you can.

Second, your friends and family deserve to be with someone of worth.

Third, your Folk need you! The challenges facing the European-descended people have never been greater.

Finally, for the Aesir and Vanir! We need them, and they need us. We are in some mystical way dependent on each other.

What will you do to grow in spiritual power today?

Ostara in the South

[Editor's note: we got multiple worthy reports on Ostara in the South, which are collected here with credit to the contributors.]



The Official Report:

Folk-building; family-building! The setting was serene and inviting, with a small barnyard housing farm animals and a large playing field that would soon be dotted with yellow and blue pillars that marked the Kubb course. Fruit trees were in blossom and the first spring leaves were emerging in the forest encircling the camp. Fortsen 4-H Center was the perfect place for a family-oriented event, and the families came! No one was a stranger for long.

The adults were treated to an opening ceremony led by Brad, with a roaring fire as a backdrop. The meta-ritual had begun! Over the next two days, Brad, Matt, Steve, and

morning galdr session. The intensity changed to merriment later, when the children scurried through the grounds searching for colored Ostara eggs.

Saturday afternoon, we all made a procession into the woods where Bodi Mayo led us in Blot to Ostara. The ritual was powerful and heartfelt, and the next day we watched as Allen Turnage swore Bodi in as AFA Clergy. An auction before dinner featured handmade items to include a jewel-bedecked Ostara egg, bottles of mead, knitted hats and scarves, and a painting. Collectible items were there as well, and in half an hour's time, Brad's auctioneering skills raised about \$1300 to help offset the costs of the event. As darkness fell, we again processed into the shadowy glade, this time drawn by a line of torches and a roaring fire, and to the primal sounds of bagpipes, a lur-horn, and drums. Steve McNallen emerged from the darkness to deliver a Wotan Blot to be remembered.

The mood was bright as we returned to the main hall to enjoy a hour of The Billhooks, a musical duo made up of Brad Taylor-Hicks and his kinsman, Tim Preston, both men of great talent. The night ended with a sumbel by flickering firelight in the main hall, where many wonderful toasts rocked the rafters. Sunday morning arrived, with the folk circling again around the impressive AFA banner. Memorable words of praise were spoken by our leaders, Bodi took the Clergy Oath, and farewells were said.

Many wonderful things came from this event. The Asatru Military Program became established under the guidance of ever-enthusiastic Cody Mower. A number of attendees renewed their memberships, and several joined the AFA for the first time. Everyone felt the warmth of southern hospitality. It's no wonder that the numbers at this gathering were double last year's! Ostara in the South has been launched as a major AFA event, thanks to Charlotte Hoxie who did the planning despite living on the other side of the country, in California...and juggling two jobs. Well done, Charlotte! Thank you, everyone who came. Hail the Folk!

**Cody Mower reports:**

It's after sunbel and the folk are merry, joining in drink and music. My son, who is still awake, long after the other children are asleep, watches the laughter and the music play.

Even though he is only three years old, his eyes are restless and awake with wonder.

Taking in all the gifts our culture has to offer, it hits me...this is the future of our folk. In a sense Iâ€™m envious: so young to be learning what took me years to find. I'm envious of how attentive he is to our ways, but if I take a step back, I realize if this is the attitude our



Eric Brunhoeber, Southern Mountains Kindred, reports:

Earlier this March all members of our Kindred were able to attend the Asatru Folk Assembly's Ostara in the South 2015. We were able to build upon old friendships and associations and create new ones, all the while learning from some of the greatest figures in American Asatru.

From an early morning Galdr workshop to thought provoking and memorable presentations about the might of the spirit, the meaning of honor, and the importance of community, we took in information that we intend to use to strengthen ourselves and our Folk here in the Appalachian foothills.

We took part in both an uplifting Ostara Blot and a Wotan Blot filled with awe inspiring energy and fierceness. The urge to take action and push forward against obstacles was and is still present after these rituals and we are grateful for having the chance to gather

The weekend concluded with a good friend to our Kindred - and more importantly a good man and leader - taking up the well-earned mantle of GoÃ°i, and finally a powerful Wayfarer's Blot. Each one of us returned home without incident.

What did SuÃ°ur Fjoll take away from all of this? In my opinion, a better understanding of the importance of unity and community, a reminder of WHO we ARE as a people, and a greater bond built up between ourselves over the past few days.



**Ostara in the North
from Blaine Qualls**



Here in the Northern Plains we celebrated Ostara in grand fashion. About 25 Tru folk from all over the Dakotas joined together for a weekend of friendship and family. Spirits were high and more than a few new faces were in the crowd. I am always amazed at these gatherings; truly this is where I feel our spirituality the most, not in books or Facebook groups, but in the face-to-face connection. The genuine friendships, the bonds forged, the power of the Gods flowing all around, that is our spirituality.....Hail the Folk! Hail the AFA!

Ostara in the East Bay, CA
from Andy LaTour



Three of us from the East Bay gathered before dawn on March 22nd and hiked to the top of the foothills in Hayward, CA.

Our destination was a sacred site.

As we began our ascent, the dissonant hum of civilization began to fade, and soon it was silenced entirely by the wind. Our bodies were warmed with effort as we climbed hill after hill. After about an hour of hiking, we arrived.

The sacred site is a rocky outcropping crowning the highest hill of the foothills. At the center, a small tree stands, and large bushes surround most of it.

We gave blot to Ostara as the sun rose. As we called upon the spring goddess, a ray of sunlight penetrated the clouds.

After blot, it felt as though our call to the spring goddess was answered -- the land surged with life. Two birds flew in a circle around us and landed, performing their mating ritual. One of them (I presume it was the male) began dancing and singing a song, unlike anything I had ever heard. The female was not impressed by the male's dance, but he did not give up. He continued dancing and singing beautiful melodies during our sumbel.

We drew runes. Initially, I did not understand their meaning. After six days of "germination," their meaning was revealed to me. Below I will summarize what I learned.

that results is spiritual might.

Two things are necessary to generate spiritual seeds: energy (effort) and proper techniques.

Our efforts, when combined with proper techniques, will yield results proportional to our level of intensity.

We are only limited by ourselves.

Ostara in Alaska from Steven Morrell

On the 22nd of March the folk in Alaska gathered to honor Ostara as she brings warmth and life back to our land and people. We gathered in the early afternoon to prepare food and to prepare the ritual area for the day's festivities. The ritual portion of the day began with a calling to Ostara to look upon her folk and witness the joy, vitality, and the warmth that she brings to them. A gift of games was given during the first portion of ritual, with two-man teams performing an egg relay, an egg toss, and a tug of war competition. The winners of the events received a hand carved wooden egg with symbols of the season in honor of Ostara. After the games the folk walked to gather around the need-fire placing kale around the area for a gift to the animals and wights of the land, and held blot to the spring-goddess of vitality, victory, and rebirth. Ostara brings her people's blood to a boil, breaking the bonds of winter and filling the folk with a rebirth of energy. All could feel her presence and strength during and after blot as the bonds between her and the folk were renewed and honored.

Hail Ostara!
Hail the Folk!

Managing Your Money - The Key to Financial Success!

Having a good handle on your money will help you attain your life goals, lower your stress, take pressure off your marriage, and improve your self-esteem. It will improve your credit score, and maybe provide the start-up cash you need to go into business for yourself.

But beyond that - your prosperity will give your children, and their children, a good start in life. You owe it to your descendants (and to your clan or log) to manage your money well. It's good for you, for your family, and for your Folk!

But where to start?

The link below is to an article titled "Beginner's Guide to Managing Your Money." It's clear and precise. And the rest of the website is a tremendous resource on financial things. And it's all free!

<http://tinyurl.com/mvghh58>

Midsummer in Occidental

June 5 - 7, CYO Retreat Center, Occidental, CA

Celebrating 20 years of Asatru evolution!

Although its roots go back to 1972 with the Viking Brotherhood - and later, the Asatru Free Assembly - the Asatru Folk Assembly that you're all familiar with was legally established twenty years ago, in the summer of 1995. In celebration of two momentous decades, the AFA invites you to join us for a remarkable three days. In the company of people who helped make this journey, we will retrace the steps that have brought us to this point, and raise a horn to a glorious future! Activities will include lectures and workshops, rituals (even a handfasting!), live music, dancing around the Midsummer Pole, and so much more.

redwood forests. The camp has spacious, modern cabins with bunks (bring your own bedding) and a dining hall that's an architectural masterpiece.

Our Asa-kids will enjoy the swimming pool, basketball court, and expansive lawns. We'll have crafts and activities for them as well. For the adventurous, there are miles of trails through stands of redwoods with several dramatic overlooks. The coastal beaches are a 30-minute drive away.

Single night and day rates are available. AFA members will receive a discounted price. Tickets (through Eventzilla) go on sale next week.

If you can come to only one AFA Midsummer event, this is the one to experience!

Membership Info

Not Hearing from Us? Check Your Spam Folders!

After repeatedly trying to contact many of you over the past year, we've come to the conclusion that lots of our messages to you are ending up in spam folders. Please check them frequently, and contact us if you expected communication from our end. Now that we know there's a problem, we're coming up with more ways of dealing with it. We really appreciate your patience and understanding!

You Can Manage Your Own Membership Account!

Did you know that you can now access your own AFA membership account and make updates and change payment plans? It's easy! Go to the members' website at www.member.asatrufolkassembly.org and use your login name or email address. If you have any problems, write to us or to tech@runestone.org.

[Jim is off on vacation, so I am posting in his place this month!]

Jim has repeatedly stressed preparedness in his articles for The Voice - so, how are you doing when it comes to being ready for emergencies?

Here are a few things you can do to improve your preparedness status: Pick one to accomplish for April!

- Is your Folkbuilder's contact information posted by your landline, and/or in your mobile device, so you can notify him or her in a disaster scenario? Let us know if you're okay - or if you need help from us!
- Do you have food stored for a week-long emergency? A month?
- Similarly, how about water storage?
- Where's your firearm? Do you have ammo? Cleaning supplies?
- Do you have a minimum of three flashlights, to include one in each vehicle you own?
- What is your plan in case you have to evacuate your home? Does everyone in your family know that plan? Best of all, is it written down and placed where you will find it?
- Is there a first aid kit in your home? In your vehicle(s)?
- How's your stock of batteries? Are they fresh? Does your battery charger, if applicable, work?
- How will you cook food if your power goes out?



This should get you started! Pick one and do it!

"Learn a new skill every week." That's what Jim would say if he was here, so I will say it for him!

AFA Clergy

AFA Clergy, Here for You

Several AFA members have recently contacted several of our Clergy members for spiritual/religious conversation, and we are thrilled at that, because that tells us that you know that we are here, in service to all of you. We are here to help if your kindred needs guidance, if your spirit is restless, if you are seeking divine inspiration, or in need of an officiant for your special rituals or rites of passage, even if only for advice or perspective.

You are assured the utmost respect and confidentiality for all your needs. If you, or an AFA member you know, needs to get in touch with our clergy for any reason, please don't hesitate to contact us at Clergy@Runestone.org. Happy Springtide!!

Clergy Announcement

On behalf of the Clergy Board of Directors and our Allsherjargothi, I am pleased to announce the ordination of our newest Clergy member, Bodi Mayo! Bodi was oathed into his noble charge on Sunday, March 22, by our very own Allen Turnage during the AFA's

congratulations!

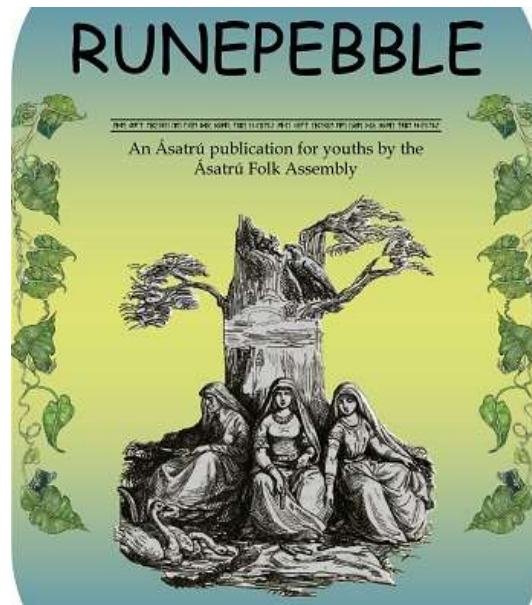
A Reflection on Spring and Spirit

"Hail, O Day,
Hail, O Sons of the Day,
Hail Night and her Kinswomen!
With unwroth eyes
look on us here
and give to us sitting ones victory.
Hail, O Æsynjur,
Hail, O Vanir,
Hail, O bounteous Eorðe!
Fair words and wise hearts give to us,
the excellent twain for man,
and healing hands for life."
- The Lay of Sigrdrifa, stzs 3-4, adapted by Rebecca

For many in the Northern Hemisphere, the cold is now slowly passing in favor of the rising sun in the east. Many of us have honored the time of Ostara, opening our senses to her presence and warmth. If you have a moment this season, find a warm and quiet rock to sit upon. Sit quietly; breathe to relax. Feel your blood flow, the gift of your ancestors, their presence, coursing through your veins. Feel the connection with the earth upon which you rest, and to the kin in your community, near and far. When you feel renewed and inspired, give your thanks and honor. We are all connected by Yggdrasil, by the great wells which carry our words, deeds, and hearts across the axis of life, returning, flowing. We are alive, spring is alive... embrace it, embrace yourself, your past, your community, your life... and rejoice in it!

The AFA Circle of Eir is up and working. A core group performs a monthly healing ritual calling on Eir and naming those AFA members and families in need of healing. If you would like to be in the AFA Circle of Eir Facebook group or if you would just like to submit the name of someone who needs healing, please let me know at patriciahall@runestone.org. The next healing ritual, which is jointly done by AFA members from both the States and Europe, will be performed on Thursday, April 2, at midnight EDT/USA.

Runepobble



Runepobble: An AFA e-publication for Ásatrú families!

The next issue of Runepobble will be available on May 1st, and we are looking for contributors. The theme will be "Summer Fruits." In this issue we will explore fruits that our ancestors enjoyed, and take a look at where the fruits that we enjoy today have come from, how they were used, and why some were sacred to the gods. As always, we accept

suggestions to Rebecca at Runepebble@Runestone.org. All submissions for that issue are due no later than April 29th.

Remember: though this is a publication for children, we always encourage any adults to get involved... parents or not! Children are our future... and so we must work together as a community to see to it that their future is a bright one, one with deep and strong foundations!

News from the Northeast and Upper South from Patricia Hall, Folkbuilder

REGIONAL CONFERENCE CALL

Rebecca Radcliff, who heads up our AFA Clergy program, will be joining us for our next Northeast/Upper South conference call at 8 p.m. EDT on Tuesday, April 7. Come have a chat, ask a question, and talk about this very important arm of the AFA! Toll free number is: 866-730-7514 Participant Code is: 757055

LANSDALE PA HIKEMOOT and PUBMOOT

Our own Cliff Erickson hosts a monthly pubmoot at The Sumney in Lansdale, PA. The next one will be held on Saturday, April 18, from 2 to 5 p.m. Cliff also hosts a pre-pub hikemoot on the same day from 11 to 1:30 for those who need to build an appetite before feasting. Watch for postings about this in the AFA Moots and Meetups Facebook site. If you would like to attend one of Cliff's™ hike- or pubmoots, please contact him directly at cerickson@runestone.org If you would like help with the logistics of setting up a pub- or hikemoot in your area, please feel free to contact me at pariciahall@runestone.org

NORTHERN NEW JERSEY EVENTS

of summer. Our schedule for the month of April is as follows:
Monday, April 6: Lore Study (Mount Olive Public Library, 6:30 p.m.)
Saturday, April 18: New Moon Offering (Byram ve, 7:00 p.m.)
Saturday, April 25: Sumarmal celebration (Byram ve, 1:00 p.m.)
Details can be found on our website, <http://www.skylandsasatru.org>

RUNE/LORE STUDY

If anyone would like help with logistics and materials to start their own Rune or Lore study group, please contact me at patriciahall@runestone.org.

News from the Northwest

NORTHWEST OSTARA



On Friday, March 20th, Northwest AFA members and friends gathered at Rainbow Falls State Park for an Ostara Campout... and then the rains came! We braved the storm for one night, but after discovering the hard way that our tent had a leak, we packed up Saturday morning and convoyed the Folk back to Centralia. More Folk arrived during the afternoon, the sun came out, and after an impromptu outdoor music jam, we processed down to the ritual area for our Ostara blot. Despite the last-minute change of plans, it was a wonderful weekend. We met three new friends, whom we hope to see more of in the future!

On Saturday, April 11th, at 5 p.m., join us upstairs at Fiddlers Coffee in Centralia, WA, for part one of a Lore Study Group series! As requested, we will begin with the Havamal, focusing on stanzas of interest or confusion chosen by the Folk. For those who can't make it in person, we will have a Google Hangout set up for people to video-call-in.

On Saturday, April 18th, Karl and Brian will be hosting another Portland hike- and pubmoot! The hikemoot will begin at the Washington Park Arboretum, and the pubmoot will be at Kell's Brew Pub nearby. For more information, send email to Karl Parker at karl2440@gmail.com.

On Sunday, May 3rd, Rachael will be hosting part 2 of the Lore Study Group series in Seattle, WA! Location is currently TBA, but will be announced in the May publication of The Voice.

Great Northwest Freyfaxi is less than 5 months away! This year's dates will be August 14-16 at Ocean Park Camp & Retreat Center in beautiful Ocean Park, WA. Join us for year 2 of our major Northwest event, which is one not to be missed! Northwest Folk: if you've never met Steve and Sheila, or haven't seen them in a while, this is a great opportunity to do so! Last year we had over 40 AFA members from all over the West and beyond, and this year might be even bigger!

For more information about Freyfaxi or other Northwest events, please send email to esalix@runestone.org.

Hail the Gods! Hail the Folk! Hail the Ancestors!
Hail the AFA!

-E. Salix, Northwest Folkbuilder

Upcoming Events

The following large gatherings are scheduled, with the camps already reserved:

WEST COAST MIDSUMMER, CYO Camp, Occidental, CA, June 5 – 7

GREAT NORTHWEST FREYFAXI, Ocean Park, WA, August 14 – 16

WINTER NIGHTS IN THE POCONOS, Camp Netimus, Milford, PA, October 16 – 18

We urge all members to come experience at least one major gathering this year. You'll find it's life-changing!

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