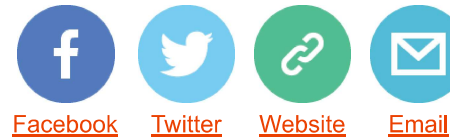


Asatru Folk Assembly's The Voice



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 Steve

There are a lot of things that make the AFA special, but one of the most important is the Law of the Hall. If you haven't read it lately, you'll find this important document on our web site under "About the AFA." It is one of our guideposts, and one the keys to our success. The "Law of the Hall" describes the behavior expected of AFA supporters in regard to each other.

that to what you see in the AFA, whether on line or at our gatherings. You'll notice a world of difference.

We can think of the AFA as a vast chieftain's hall from the heroic age, and our fellow AFA members as our benchmates within that hall. To preserve peace in the hall and to protect the reputation of those who inhabit it, we have certain rules. These rules constitute the "Law of the Hall." Here are the high points - but I urge you to go to the web site and see the complete document!

1. Honor the Aesir and Vanir, wights and ancestors, by blot and deed.
2. Abide no strife in the hall or between kin.
3. Build bright fame, not dark disdain, for those who dwell in the hall.
4. Give first love to family and Folk, but deal honorably with all whose hands are open and whose hearts are true.
5. Strive that our Folk shall live forever, though all the forces of Muspel march against us.
6. Deal with candor and forthrightness with all in the hall, and scorn the poison of gossip and intrigue.
7. Envy not those who earn gifts, fame, and favor within the hall, but seek instead your own by might and main.
8. Be open-handed and open-hearted, generous to aid kin and forward the folk.
9. Honor your oaths to kin and to Gods, though your life be the price.

The Law of the Hall is all about respect and good manners. The AFA is a community of men and women who are connected to each other in special ways, "a national organization that feels like a kindred." To the best of our ability, across the land and around the world,

Asatru/Heathen world.

The Asatru Folk Assembly IS different - and we are glad to celebrate that difference with you, our AFA-kin!

Stephen A. McNallen
Alsherjargothi

Thumbs Up on Membership Changes

Due to the AFA's growth over the past couple of years, we knew we needed to streamline our membership processes, both for new and renewing members. Stewart Williams tackled the problem and was able to set up a system where members' applications feed directly into our database, Paypal payments are integrated, and our members have access to their own entry and can update contact information on their own. We're still transitioning, so if you receive a request for a payment and you're sure it was sent, we want to know about that. Even if you don't have your own access yet, we update the database regularly and can change your information if we need to. Membership cards and donation receipts will continue to be sent via snail mail.

If you're one of those folks who make a single payment each year, as you renew your membership this year, please set up a subscription. It makes it much easier for us and you. Remember, if \$30 is too much, there is a \$2.50/month option. If you can support the AFA even more, the money goes towards our bigger, and long-term, projects, for which we're known. To renew your membership, go to <http://www.runestone.org> and click on the RENEW button. Stewart has outlined the steps to get on board with this new system. You will have the option to set up a monthly or annual subscription. For help with this, write to Stewart at stew@runestone.org.

We wish to extend huge thanks to Alan Sawyer who set up and maintained the previous

Winter Nights in the Poconos October 17 - 19

Winter Nights in the Poconos will be held October 17 - 19 at Camp Netimus near Milford, PA. Year three of this East Coast gathering will continue the tradition of outstanding rituals, workshops, and music. Words can hardly describe the experience. If you haven't attended an AFA gathering, videos from all of our large events are on Youtube.com.

The AFA Family Safety Program

A One-Year Preparedness Program

by Steve McNallen

Preparedness Tip for August

The goal of the AFA Family Safety Program is to help you be ready for disasters of all sorts - fire, flood, earthquake, hurricanes, civil unrest, power outages, Ragnarok, and anything else that affects the safety of your family.

Here's how the program works: In case of events like those listed above, contact your Folkbuilder and report your status! If you're fine, let him or her know so they can focus on helping another member. If on the other hand you're homeless, injured, or in danger, report that. Your Folkbuilder will contact AFA leadership and we will try to help.

This is all about communication. Does every member of your family know your Folkbuilder's telephone numbers by heart? Probably not! Post those numbers next to your landline, and put them on your mobile. Likewise, does your Folkbuilder have YOUR

You, as an AFA member, are special to us! As I write these words, fires are raging in our part of northern California and a lot of people are in exactly the kind of situation we're talking about here. It can happen to you and your family. The old Scout motto says it all: Be prepared!

AFA Clergy Applications

Reminder: As announced previously, following Freyfaxi, the AFA Clergy board will release and begin accepting applications for the 2015 Clergy program. Applications will be accepted until just after Winter Nights. At that time, the Clergy board will review the applicants for potential acceptance into the program. For those who are accepted, the program begins on January 1st, 2015.

What is the AFA Clergy program?

The AFA Clergy program is designed to prepare qualified Æsir members of the AFA who desire to advance their service to the folk in partnership with the AFA in the capacity of priesthood, embracing and honoring the responsibilities and expectations which accompany the position of Goði or Gyðia.

What are the requirements for applying to the AFA Clergy program?

First and foremost, all applicants must be members of the AFA for no less than 2 years. Applicants must be sure that they are dedicated to the AFA enough in heart and mind.

Second, all applicants must have actively followed the Æsir path for no less than 5 years. This means a student must be experienced and well-read in Æsir lore, history, and contemporary practice and philosophies. See a general list of pre-requisite readings on the AFA website's Clergy page.

Thirdly, the applicant must be in good standing in the Æsir community, which means

damages any community (AFA or otherwise).

If you have any queries, you may contact the Clergy coordinator, Rebecca Radcliff, at Clergy@Runestone.org.

AFA Circle of Eir Returns!



Once again we will call upon Eir, whose name means mercy, in the healing of our own. Once again we will climb her mountain to receive that healing. And for those who cannot make the climb alone, your AFA brothers and sister will carry them. And we will do it using a mix of technology and ritual.

Patricia Hall is the leader of this Circle of Eir, which will meet as needed on a private AFA Facebook page. Admission is by invitation only, so if you want to take part in sending healing wishes or asking for such, message Pat or Sheila and you will be invited to join.

Runepebble

Runepebble: An AFA e-publication for Asatru families!

The last issue of Runepebble, with the theme "Horses," was released on July 1st. The next issue will be published on September 1st, 2014, and the theme is "Finding Winter." Please forward all queries, submissions, and comments to Rebecca at Runepebble@Runestone.org. Runepebble submissions for the next issue will be accepted until Wednesday, August 30th, 2014.

Trip to ECER Congress in Vilnius, Lithuania

The following report comes from Lars Irenesson, folkbuilder for Denmark (and Scandinavia). He is bringing his family to Winter Nights in October, and will prepare a small show'n'tell with more pictures from the trip if people are interested.

In the second week of July 2014 Soren Fisker and I travelled to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, to participate in the 2014 congress of ECER, the European Congress of Ethnic Religions. We went as official representatives for our national Asatru organisation, Forn Siðr.

The congress was scheduled to last for four days, with presentations, talks, a press conference, and tours to sacred sites in Lithuania. The congress was arranged by Romuva. Romuva is both the chosen name of the faith itself and the name of the faith community for the adherents to the ancient Baltic faith.

with the loss of his company and wise words.

The first day was held at an abandoned but rentable palace in the northern outskirts of Vilnius named Verkiai. It's situated on top of a high and steep embankment overlooking the river Neris, which flows through Vilnius. In the meeting hall, each of the participating organisations had one representative situated in an inner circle of chairs, while the rest of the participants formed additional circles. A long oak staff decorated with oak leaves went around in this inner circle, and functioned as a speaker's wand. This was a nice change from the more modern slideshow presentations, to which we've become accustomed. The room was, however, also equipped with more modern gear to show a couple of videos afterwards.



A declaration was made on this first day. First a draft was made by the new president, Andras Corban-Arthen, a Galician now living in Massachusetts, USA, and the available board members. Then it was presented to the larger assembly, and some of its wording was discussed and altered.

After the proceedings of the day, a ritual was held at an old and rebuilt stone altar on the brink of the embankment. Every participant was asked to say some words and present an offering, and Søren and I offered grain stalks from Denmark and homemade mead.



In the evening we all visited the grave of Jonas Trinkunas, which was situated at the pinnacle of a small mound inside a huge cemetery in the outskirts of Vilnius. Romuva keeps an eternal flame alive on his grave. Some songs were sung in his honour, and we non-Lithuanians tried to sing along as best we could.

The second day was spent inside the Lithuanian parliament. First a press conference was held, in which the declaration made the previous day was read out. It had been translated into Lithuanian overnight. The stay in the parliament was sponsored by a member of parliament, who was a Catholic. Iâ€™m not entirely sure what his motivations were for



After the press conference we were relocated to the parliament chamber itself, for lectures and talks, and assigned a team of simultaneous interpreters translating between English and Lithuanian. This way we could understand all the lectures and talks in Lithuanian, too



After the lectures ended, we walked to the central cathedral square. From there we were guided to a visit to some historic sites on the Gediminas tower mound and in the center of the old town. The last place was an old offering stone, which had been standing secretly on an elevated "traffic island" under a large tree and covered in shrubbery. After this was cleared, the stone with an offering recess was revealed, and now Romuva keeps an eternal flame here as well. We performed a small ritual, and sang one of the many beautiful Lithuanian songs.



countryside north-east of Vilnius, first visiting the “Romuva village,” a group of old-style homesteads lying close to each other in a small village. Here Romuva hosts summer gatherings, and here they’ve built a small temple in one of the structures, and filled it with several wooden pillars of deities and a fire altar. Again a small ceremony was held before a group photo was taken. It was very interesting to see the village we had heard so much about.





After visiting the village we travelled to another sacred spot, on which Romuva had erected not only a ceremonial site surrounded with wooden pillars (â€œhengeâ€ style) and â€œcalendar stones,â€ but also an offering enclosure in honour of Perkunas, the Romuvan thunder God. We were introduced to the ancient Romuvan calendar by a scholar, who unfortunately spoke at length in Lithuanian with limited translation. But we did get a good explanation on the symbolic meaning of the six-armed star, which is prevalent in ancient Lithuanian ornamentation.





The last day we were driven first to Trakai and then to Kernavė. Both are previous capital city sites from heathen times, both situated at the Neris river, and legend has it that the capital was moved first from Kernavė to Trakai, and later from here to Vilnius, after king Gediminas had a dream about an iron wolf.

Kernavė consists of seven or more steep mounds in front of a high plateau overlooking a bend in the river. This place has recently been named as a Unesco heritage site, and is quite frankly a fantastic place. Fortunately wooden staircases had been erected, so it wasn't too hard to climb the mounds.



The congress ended with a small feast in the basement of an old town beer tavern in Vilnius. Here, after people had eaten and gotten ample beer, one of the Lithuanians brought forth an accordion, and started instructing the participants in traditional folk



This congress yielded good progress on top of the previous ones in Bologna (2010) and Odense (2012). With the new president in charge we hope to get more real work done in the two years ahead before the next congress in either Prague or Rome in 2016. Some work is already planned with regard to more interaction among the organisations and representatives.

Doings in West Virginia



Jeremy "Wulf" Bryant reports: We have an event coming up, at Valley Park in Hurricane, WV, on Sept. 14, 2014, to discuss growing our community, to network, and to talk about goals for the coming year.

Also, we have formed Ulv Hamre Kindred. Our members are Jeremy "Wulf" Bryant, James Townsend, Terra Strain, and Frank Dillon.



Las Vegas Meets?

AFA and potential AFA members in southwestern Arizona, southeastern California, and southern Nevada: Would you like to have regular meet-ups in Las Vegas? We are organizing a local group that will meet on a regular basis. Please send your suggestions to:

Southern Europe



The AFA in southern Europe sends greetings and pictures of the Alfrothul Midsummer.





Doings in Northern California



Northern California folk at the Midsummer in the Redwoods.

Steve Kuerbitz reports on doings in Redding, CA:

On the solstice, we did a man-making ceremony for Erik Roesner, Jessica Roesner's 12-year-old son -- pictures below. AFA members present included the Roesners (Jessica, Erik, and Madilyn) and Zack Cox. We had 13 heathens here to celebrate Erik's rite of passage and the solstice Sumbel.

On August 9th Jessica and I will be fasting our hands before the Gods and Folk. Steve McNallen will be leading the ceremony and we are expecting a lot of our kith and kin from the AFA downstate to come celebrate with us.





Doings in Southern California

Heathor Clinkenbeard reports: I am very excited to announce that our group is finally getting to the point where we are forming a kindred. We have already had several meetings, and over the weekend we had our third bonfire. The bonfires have really helped us build some strong ties. Only a few of us have known each other for any length of time, and many have not known each other outside of Facebook, yet we already feel like family. We have that feeling you get when you walk into an AFA event for the first time and you don't know anyone but feel like you belong: Home, you feel like you are home. That is what we have found here in San Diego: a Folkish home. We are now going to meet twice a month, once for a bonfire/blot and the other for a pub or park moot to continue to grow. If you are in the Southern California area and would like to join us, please find us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/SDAsatru?ref_type=bookmark



Birth Announcements



From Keigan Troutt: Isabel Aila Troutt was born Tuesday, July 1, 2014, at 4:54 a.m. EST at 1 pound, 4.8 ounces. Now she weighs 1 pound, 11.8 ounces, as of July 27th. She was due October 22nd.



From Lauren Rogers: We are announcing the birth of Saga Skye Rogers, born to Byron and Lauren on June 18, 2014, at 3:50 am. Baby girl was born healthy and strong and is growing fast. Nine days after her birth, on Friday, June 27th, we performed a private naming ceremony and presented her formally before the Gods. We could not be happier to complete our family and welcome her to the folk!



Well Done!

Bryan Wilton reports: Kyle Tolle just graduated with his masters in clinical social

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