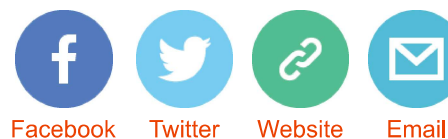


Asatru Folk Assembly's The Voice



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](mailto:thevoice@runestone.org).

Donate to the AFA



### Words from the Alsherjargothi

The AFA is not just an international organization â€” it is a community with commitment. When you join the AFA, I have a personal obligation to you. I may never have met you, but that's not the point â€” you're "one of us" now. We are bound in Troth. That doesn't mean I'll cosign your house loan or take a call from you at 2 a.m. to listen to your animal impersonations, but it means I have a duty to give you the best spiritual leadership I possibly can, and when possible, to ensure you get the help you need.

carefully nourished. It's hard to get much "face time" at long distance – which is why we have Folkbuilders. These are men and women in charge of tending the AFA-related needs of members in specific geographical regions. True, Folkbuilder regions are large and the number of Folkbuilders is small, but they do their best to put a local face on a large and dispersed organization. The Folkbuilders help you with membership issues. They hold conference calls for all AFA members in their assigned area, to strengthen the bonds that tie us together. They sponsor – and encourage you to sponsor – gatherings whether modest or grand. In case of natural disaster or any other widespread threat to safety and security, Folkbuilders are your active link with the AFA.

The role of the AFA Clergy in many ways parallels that of the Folkbuilders. Indeed, quite a few of our Clergy are also Folkbuilders, enabling them to support our members not just on membership and their general welfare, but in their spiritual needs as well. If you need a naming ceremony, a wedding, a funeral or just wise words of caring when things get tough, they are there to help.

Folkbuilders and Clergy exist to serve our members and the goals of the AFA as a whole. There are also special projects like AFA Folk Services and the AFA Family Safety Program (and of course publications like *The Voice!*) that continually seek to strengthen the ties that bind us. Our long-term goal is this: We want local clusters of AFA members to grow into communities – tiny at first, then larger and more comprehensive. These local communities will be based on our Declaration of Purpose, which will enable them to be woven harmoniously into the emerging network of similar AFA communities around the country and the world. The result will combine the best points of local autonomy with global reach.

That's the future, if we have the wit and will to build it. But all of it is based on, and begins with, that commitment I mentioned in the first sentence...my duty to you, as a member – and your duty to the AFA. Everything else is an elaboration of that bond.

Stephen A. McNallen  
Alsherjargothi, AFA

The perks are in the works! Unfortunately, the logistics have proven to be much more difficult than we thought. We are wrestling with the issue of the horns, and we're having to get more of certain sizes of the tee shirts. Progress IS being made, and we apologize for the fact this is taking so long. We have not forgotten you!

Almost everyone who donated \$50 and up was contacted by email back in December, asking whether or not they wanted their perks (a significant number did not), their name, shipping address, and their shirt size. If you are a donor of \$50 or more who did not find your email, check in your spam folder - or simply send us this information!

If any of you need receipts for your 2015 income taxes, please let us know and we will get those to you ASAP.

## Charming of the Plow at NewGrange Hof, Feb. 20

Join us at NewGrange Hof in Brownsville, California, on the 20th to celebrate our connection to the earth! Bring your favorite garden tools to be blessed, and a change of work clothes to put those tools to work.

We'll plan the general layout of the Hof property; put some plants, and possibly a new tree, in the ground; establish a compost pile; give Blot to the Holy Powers; and sit at Sumbel. We'll talk about "planting the seeds" in our lives to get what we want out of life and to be the people we want to be. And of course there will be big doses of that old fashioned AFA sense of belonging and community!

This event is open to AFA members and vouched-for guests.

<https://www.facebook.com/NewGrangeHall/?fref=ts>

*Note from the Alsherjargothi: The AFA Family Safety Project protects individual AFA members and families by (1) providing the information they need to survive emergencies and disasters of all kinds, and by (2) organizing material help in such events.*

*Safety/preparedness articles are provided by Jim Erickson.*



"Learn a new skill every week" – Jim and Sara the Corgi

If TSHTF\* right now and your entire "normal" way of life were to end today, how long do you think you and your family would last?

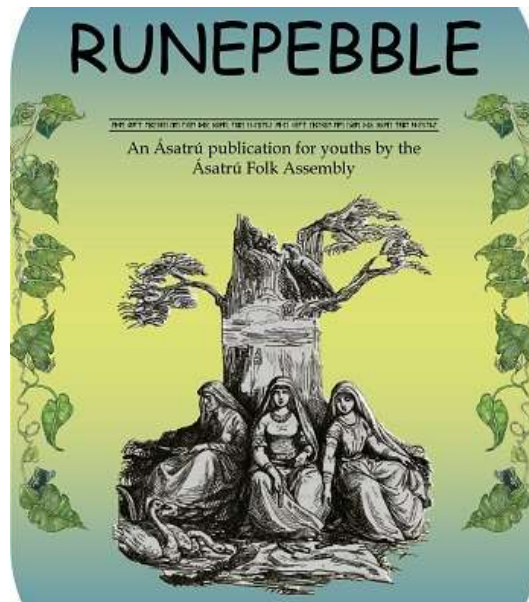
Three days? A week? A month?

Itâ€™s something to think long and hard about!!  
And be truthful to yourself.

\* Your acronym-challenged editor had to look this up: loosely, â€œthe grits hit the pan.â€

## Circle of Eir - A Call to Healing

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](mailto: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, February 11, at midnight EST/USA.



Runepebble: An AFA e-publication for Asatru families!

We'd like to give a shout out to AFA member Martin Beluses, who helped in a big way to contribute to the Runepebble in our last issue. His submissions were top notch, and without his help, the issue would not have been a success. Thank you, Martin!

The next issue of Runepebble will be available on March 1st. The next issue focuses on "Waterways & the Ocean"... Why were the oceans important to our ancestors? To us today? Enjoy a look at the waterways of the world, their magical and everyday aspects, species, folklore, and more. If you or a child you know is interested in contributing to the next issue, we are happy to accept submissions of all kinds, including artwork, stories, poetry, folktales, songs/sheet music, crafts, activities, recipes, educational articles, and more. If you would like to submit some work, or have questions about submissions, you can contact our primary editor, Rebecca, at [Runepebble@Runestone.org](mailto:Runepebble@Runestone.org).

## Clergy Report

students have their pencils to the desk and are working hard. And please don't forget that our ordained clergy are here to help you or your kindred if you are in need of guidance - be it religious or spiritual, or even mediation if problems arise. We are also available for those in need of an officiant for 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, need to get in touch with our clergy for any reason, please don't hesitate to contact us at [Clergy@Runestone.org](mailto:Clergy@Runestone.org).

## Folk Services

AFA Folk Services is intended to provide modest, one-time monetary grants to Asatru Folk Assembly (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, send a private message to the Folk Services page on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Asatru-Folk-Assembly-Folk-Services-737289939688176/?fref=ts>

## Penny Pointers: Debt by Karen Carlson

*Penny Pointers will be an occasional column on personal finance.*

We all know too much debt can get you in serious trouble. But what kind of debt is (maybe) OK, and how much is too much? Here are some conservative (but not extreme) thoughts.

Two things are probably worth going into debt for: a home, and an education. Paying cash for a house is simply unrealistic for almost anyone. And paying up front for a college education may not be an option if your family has limited means. As an aside, sometimes

during the school term. But if you are going for a degree in a difficult major — e.g., the sciences or engineering — it's unrealistic to think you can work 20, 30, 35 hours a week and succeed in school. A few students may be able to, but figure out how much time and energy you need to spend on school before you commit to a paying job on the side. I would advise a freshman to not try to work during the first year of college, or at least the first semester. There's a big difference between high school and university level classes.

So assuming you are thinking of buying a home with a mortgage, or taking on student debt — how much can you handle?

When you are considering a mortgage, look at the percentage of your income that will go for housing. Remember to include things besides the mortgage payment itself: homeowners' insurance, property tax, maintenance, mortgage insurance if required. Add it all up, and figure on more than you would think for maintenance, especially if you are a first-time home owner. The old rule of thumb was that housing should account for no more than 30% of your income. With the cost of housing these days, that may be unrealistic. But don't stretch too far; it's better to wait till you have accumulated a bigger down payment, or to look in a cheaper neighborhood or for a smaller, older house, than to burden yourself with a mortgage that leaves no wiggle room.

The rule of thumb for student debt is that the total of your student loans by the time you graduate should not exceed your realistic first year's salary. Before you start taking out loans, think ahead to what kind of job you will be able to get with your degree, given the expected job market. Don't get me wrong: I think a college education for its own sake (as opposed to a degree that will get you into a well-paying field) is valuable. My degree is in English. But don't rack up a six-figure debt to get a degree if you reasonably expect a starting salary of \$25,000. To do so really limits your options in your early adult life as to buying a home, or marrying and starting a family.

And those other kinds of debt? For a car? For home furnishings/remodels? Carrying a credit card balance? Avoid them. There may be situations, especially for a young person starting out, where something like a car loan will be the least of evils, but consider all your

financial/credit counseling to get some tailored advice for your situation; an expert might help you see where you can reduce expenses, and assess whatâ€™s realistic. Habits of thrift will serve you well for a lifetime.

Konservative Karen

## New North Carolina Kindred from Daniel MacLeod and Paul Hester



The Sandhills Kindred is centered in the south-central part of North Carolina. Many thanks to Patricia Hall who connected myself (Daniel MacLeod) and Paul Hester, both AFA members. Immediately Paul and I felt a camaraderie and kinship that was evident in our politics and attitudes about life. Both of us are military veterans and North Carolina natives with deep roots in the southeastern part of this state. We have a folkish emphasis and are looking for frith with others in the

region. In a world where there is an increasing push for mono-culture and conformity, many like myself and Paul have tapped into our deeper ancestral roots and spirituality. In essence, great sorrow is the elixir of change. This connection is beyond simple politics and religion but rather a spirituality that transcends. It binds us to others on the same path of Faith, Folk and Family. We invite you to drink from our horn! We are looking forward to working with Cody Mower, Folkbuilder for the Upper South. The support from everyone has been amazing. Thank You! Hail the AFA and the Sandhills Kindred! We can be reached at [SandhillsKindred@gmail.com](mailto:SandhillsKindred@gmail.com) or look either of us up on Facebook.





Just as Yule began with a gathering of Folk, so too did it close. On a cool Frigg™s Eve the Folk began to make their way across the frosty mountains toward a place called Clearlake. On everyone™s mind was their weekend destination: a lakeside home that we had all pitched in for in order to celebrate Twelfth Night.

One by one the Folk arrived. Soon the house was bustling with life. The sound of music filled the air, as did the children™s laughter. Yule decorations were being hung on our tree while clinking of dinnerware being set on the table hinted at the meal to come. The



gathered.

Once all were accounted for, we blessed the wonderful feast and thanked the High Ones for everyone's safe passage. As always. The food was excellent and the company was even better.

The following morn found Ryan, Jessica, James, and Heather whipping up a breakfast for royalty.

We were all gladdened when our very own All-

Mother, Sheila, arrived. After the morning meal everyone set about cleaning up and preparing for blot.

Michael led this merry band through an energetic Frigga's Blot. We were all reminded of what Twelfth Night was all about: namely, the reawakening of life as a new cycle began. We discussed letting go of the old and giving birth to the new, freeing ourselves from the fetters of the past so that we may wholeheartedly embrace the future.



The rest of the day was spent enjoying each other's company. There were many conversations about the possibilities that awaited us all. AFA business was discussed, people shared their successes as well as their trials and tribulations, and minds came together to find solutions. Just the sort of thing one would expect from a close knit family. That's what we are, despite the many miles that separate us on a daily basis.

We gathered that evening and exchanged gifts. Some very wonderful items were brought - too many to name. Heather and Michael made sure that everyone received a gift even if they could not bring one for the traditional exchange. We all knew that all the gifts were special. Everyone had put much thought, and some, true craftsmanship, into the gifts they



We all were given a special gift by Steve. Unable to attend, because of a nasty cold, Steve addressed the group via speaker phone. His words of inspiration caused a mighty stir within the Folk and gave rise to a mighty "HAIL" that shook the room! I can only hope that he could feel us as much as we felt him.

We concluded the night's activities with an emotion filled Bragiful. Tears of joy were shed along with the very powerful words spoken by all present. Intimate things were shared and shall be guarded by those that heard them. Kin Fylgja was truly strengthened that night.

Unfortunately the weekend had to come to a close. Once the meal was had and the house cleaned better than it was found, we formed our final circle. We thanked the Aesir, Vanir, Elves, Dwarves, and Wights for their presence in our lives. Michael asked Asathor to guide the Folk safely home. We sang Yule songs that were actually in tune! Totally awesome.

While we said our goodbyes, each person selected an ornament from our micro Yggdrasil so that the essence that we generated could be carried into each member's respective home. Just as the weekend began, so it ended. One by one we all headed out across Midgard to embrace our Future.

Hail the High Ones!

Hail the Folk!

Hail the AFA!

**Florida Thorrablot**  
from Matt Flavel, Folkbuilder Coordinator



On January 17th, AFA members in Florida gathered at the ancient Fairchild Oak to celebrate Thorrablót. The weather was cold and crisp (for Florida) and sunny despite forecasts warning otherwise. We did blot to Thor, followed by feasting and a sumbel conducted by Gothi Bodi Mayo. A good time was had by all, and we got to meet some new members and friends. As always the assistance of Longboat Kindred made this event shine.

**Alaska Thorrablót**  
from Eric Whisman, Folkbuilder





In the darkness of winter, a few weeks after our Yule celebration and with a couple months until Ostara, the Alaskan Asatruar gathered in Palmer to celebrate the might and glory of Thor as well as to honor the wights of the land. Our own Steven Morrell led a powerful Thor Blot, calling on the might of the Thunderer, and the blot concluded with everyone's personal hammers being blessed by mead from the horn. The Folk then journeyed inside to feast on pork ribs and to enjoy each other's company. The adults's™ table was alive with vibrant discussion on the nature and origins of

the wights, while from the children's table came the joyous sounds of laughter. After dinner, people began to depart, charged by the experience.

That night, while the Folk were at home in bed, Alaska was rocked by a 7.1 earthquake

minor damage, everyone came out of the earthquake unharmed.

*\*Military term: calling people up out of the blue to make sure they're OK.*

## News from the Northwest and Canada from Elizabeth Salix, Folkbuilder

### Feast of the Einherjar



On Saturday, November 28th, Northwest AFA members and friends gathered for Feast of the Einherjar in Centralia, Washington. As we processed down to the ritual area, an ethereal mist began to roll in across the fields. We gave blot in honour of the fallen, and then returned indoors for a feast and sunbel, and much merriment among the Folk.

### Yule



On Sunday, December 20th, Northwest AFA members and friends gathered for Mothersâ€™™ Night, the first night of Yule, in Centralia, Washington. We opened the Yule

baked, gifts were exchanged, the first Yule log was lit, many meaningful toasts were made at sumbel, and a good time was had by all. The good cheer of Yuletide extended over all 12 days, with small groups of Folk meeting up for merriment and fellowship in various parts of the region.

### Twelfth Night



On Friday, December 31st, Northwest AFA members and friends gathered for 12th Night, the last night of Yule, in Centralia, Washington. 12th Night also heralded the return of master tattooer Adam Lunoe to the Northwest, and we are very glad to have him with us! We closed the Yule season with a blot and sumbel, as we reflected on the deeds of

the previous year, and made new goals for ourselves for the New Year. As we looked onward to the coming year, we tried out a form of traditional German divination, "Molybdomancy" (BleigieÃŸen in the German), which involved melting lead pellets and dropping the molten metal into a bowl of water, and pondering the resulting shape and the significance therein. Some were more conclusive than others, but it was fun all the same. The next morning, the Folk greeted the New Year with a traditional Swedish Pancake breakfast at Fords Prairie Grange before journeying homeward.

### Thorrablot



On Saturday, January 23rd, Northwest AFA members and friends gathered for Thorrablot in Centralia, Washington. We processed to the ritual area for an inspiring blot to Thor, led by my own dear mum, Jane. We shared our might, main, and troth with the Thunderer, gave thanks for his friendship, and asked for his continuing protection of our Folk during these turbulent times. After the blot, we each spent time in quiet contemplation before returning inside for a feast, mulled mead, games, singing, and other merriment worthy of the Red Bearded One himself. We closed the evening with a sumbel, with many meaningful hails to the gods, ancestors, and the Folk, within and without, present and departed.

### Upcoming Northwest Events

Our first Portland area event of 2016 will be Raptor Road Trip, on Saturday, February 6th. Hosted by the Audubon Society, this event is an excellent opportunity to observe native and migratory raptors and other birds in the beautiful wetlands of Sauvie Island, Oregon. Several Northwest AFA members attended last year; it was an awe-inspiring afternoon spent in frith with the wonders of the natural world. After communing with the birds, we will likely venture to a nearby pub for a pubmoot and further merriment. For more details about this event, please contact Brian at [briandangerscott@gmail.com](mailto:briandangerscott@gmail.com).

Join us for Charming of the Plow on Sunday, February 14th, in Centralia, Washington, for a ritual seed planting and good times spent among good Folk. As always, this is a Folkish family event for members and friends of the Asatru Folk Assembly. For more information about this event, please contact your Folkbuilder Elizabeth at [esalix@runestone.org](mailto:esalix@runestone.org).



In April 2016, we will be hosting the "Canada Moot in Bellingham," an event for Northwest and Canada AFA members and friends, to be held in the Bellingham area of Whatcom County, Washington, near the BC border. Precise date and location has yet to be nailed down; if you're interested in attending, please contact me at [esalix@runestone.org](mailto:esalix@runestone.org).

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

Hail the AFA!

-Elizabeth Salix

Northwest & Canada Folkbuilder

### **News from the Midwest from Patricia Hall, Folkbuilder**

#### REGIONAL CONFERENCE CALL

We had a wonderful January conference call and were joined by Stephen and Sheila McNallen, who came with some great news for our more centrally located folks. The AFA is adding a fifth all-AFA gathering to its yearly schedule. Located in the Great Plains/Midwest region, it will be held at Camp Courage near Maple Lake, Minnesota, on this coming Labor Day weekend, September 3-4-5. Details and registration will be handled the same as the other major gatherings as the date gets closer, and we all hope to see you there! In the interim, feel free to ask me any questions you may have either on Facebook or email me at [patriciahall@runestone.org](mailto:patriciahall@runestone.org)

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

Other upcoming events to watch for out on Runestone.org are AFA Ostara in the South at the Fortson 4-H Camp just outside of Atlanta on April 1-2-3. And for those of you in the eastern part of the Midwest region, there is a one-day AFA Ostara on March 19 being

We are also still in discussion about a Midwest regional gathering in Michigan in the early summer. More to come on that.

Our next Midwest conference call will be at 8:30 p.m. EST/7:30 p.m. CST on Thursday, February 11. I look forward to hearing you there! Please note we have moved to a new conference call system. The call number is 641-715-3580; Participant Code is 128-737. Call is optional.

AFA Midwest has its own FaceBook group! The FaceBook link is

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/871639299583668/>

Please request an add! This is for AFA members only. It will be a place to post conference call info, gatherings, and other goings on in the AFA as well as for discussion. Also if you have not friended me on Facebook, please feel free to do so. My Facebook link is <https://www.facebook.com/patricia.l.hall.92>

### **News from the Upper South from Patricia Hall, Interim Folkbuilder**

JOINT NORTHEAST/UPPER SOUTH OSTARA in Columbia Maryland â€“ March 19

**Saturday, March 19, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., at Gladshiem Hof in Columbia, Maryland.**

Hosted by your AFA Folkbuilders for the Northeast (Clifford Erickson, Patricia Hall) and the Upper South (Cody Mower, Nick Ferreri). Join us for a family friendly Folkish ritual celebration of the coming of spring and new beginnings. Details will be up shortly as well as a Facebook event page! In the interim feel free to ask me any questions you may have either on Facebook or email Patricia at [patriciahall@runestone.org](mailto:patriciahall@runestone.org)

### **News from the Northeast from Clifford Erickson, Folkbuilder**

There were many Yule Blots last month and more continued well into January here in the Northeast. There are many strong, family oriented kindreds, tribes, theods, and other communities who put a great deal of effort into building their own Innegard, as well as maintaining friendly and ever strengthening bonds with their friends of our Folk nearby. There is a lot of energy in the Northeast and it keeps growing because our roots are strong and we water them wisely.

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We're greatly looking forward to meeting up with our AFA kin in Maryland for Ostara in March; we hope to get a sizable contingent down there.

Also, as you may have heard we got some snow.

## Skylands Asatru Fellowship Updates from Joseph Bloch





attendance were all our members as well as many distinguished guests, including AFA Northeast Folkbuilder Clifford Erickson. The blot was preceded by traditional New Year's animal guising, and ended with spirited dancing around the fire, to celebrate the offering made to the gods. A feast was followed by sumbel, wherein the members of Skylands formally took membership oaths on the tribal oath-ring. Many excellent gifts were exchanged and worthy words spoken over the horn, and in general a wonderful time was had.

Coming up in the month of February, Skylands is pleased to present the following events:

Sunday, February 7: Asatru 101: History for Heathens (Stanhope, NJ)

Sunday, February 7: Super Bowl Party (Stanhope, NJ, following class)

Monday, February 8: New Moon Offering (Stanhope, NJ)

Saturday, February 13: Pub Moot (Denville, NJ)

Sunday, February 21: Asatru 101: Cosmogony (Stanhope, NJ)

For details, and to RSVP, please visit our website at <http://www.skylandsasatru.org/>

**Irminfolk Odinist Community Updates**  
from Patricia Hall and Bill McNamara



The Irminfolk Odinst Community, which has many AFA members, held its Yule on January 2nd with many tribes, kindreds and groups represented. Following are the words of Bill McNamara of Hearthstone Theod who was in attendance:

"I had the pleasure of attending the Irminfolk Yule celebration today. The hospitality shown by Mike and Veronica was awesome! The ritual was a powerful one, complete with a



runes reading where each member of the Irminfolk and guest at the ritual pulled a rune, and these individual rune pulls were then analyzed by Patricia L Hall, AFA Clergy and Folkbuilder, and the interpretation was shared at symbel. This is something I have not seen a lot of in ritual, and I found it to be very moving and an awesome addition to the event. The camaraderie and the goodwill shared was incredible, and the kids who were the



allowed during symbol'. Once again the Irminfolk set the standard for Frith building gatherings and continue to foster goodwill among the tribes and kindreds here in the area..."

## Hearthstone Theod Updates from Bill McNamara



On January 16, 2016, the Hearthstone Theod gathered to celebrate the Yuletide. The gathering was held at Thunreshof, the Tribal Hof on the land of Clan McNamara in Orange County, New York. The folk gathered together and held a faining to the Allfather Odin, the Wild Hunt and the Einherjar. Gifts and maegns were exchanged with gods and ancestors, with sacrifices of mead, a straw Julbokk, and a wreath made from the evergreen tree on the tribal land burned in the ritual fire. We in Hearthstone Theod have a tradition of having the folk write their wishes and/or goals for the new year down and attaching them to the sacrificial wreath that they may be sent to the gods and ancestors symbolically as we ask their luck and speed in attaining them. Ritual was followed by feast and sumbel, and much camaraderie and passing of the horn into the night... Sunday morning we held thing and addressed matters of tribal business before the folk left to



## Upcoming Events for 2016

**Charming of the Plow at NewGrange**, Brownsville, CA, February 20 -

<https://www.facebook.com/NewGrangeHall/?fref=ts>

**Eostre at Newgrange**, Brownsville, CA, March 19-20

**Ostara Moot at Gladheim Hof** in Maryland, March 19 - details to come! Patricia Hall and Clifford Erickson are contact people.

**Ostara in the South**, Fortsen 4-H Center, Hampton, GA, April 1-3

**Midsummer at NewGrange**, Brownsville, CA, June 17-20

**Freyfaxi in the Northwest** - late summer - details to come!

**Harvest Festival at Camp Courage**, Maple Lake, MN, Labor Day weekend, September 3-5 - our first major gathering in the Midwest!

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