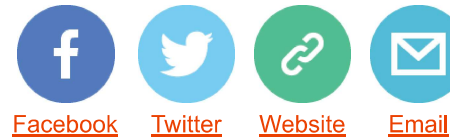


Asatru Folk Assembly's The Voice



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

The Asatru Folk Assembly stands in sharp contrast to other segments of what passes as "Heathenry" (a term, by the way, which I avoid). While it is always dangerous to define ourselves by what we are NOT rather than what we ARE, sometimes the contrast is useful.

For example - the AFA is not Universalist; the Universalists seek to take our spiritual inheritance, the very soul of our people, and parcel it out to all the world. In the end they

more than another minor curiosity, another eccentric little sideshow.

The AFA is not Reconstructionist; the Reconstructionists want to practice our religion exactly as it was done during the Viking Age or the Migration Age, except that they want to deny any innate link to the people who gave it birth. They live in a world with much scholarship but no heart. As for me, I would rather be with those who "get it" in their hearts and souls rather than pedants who can recite the ancient texts verse by verse. Reconstructionists live in the past, we of the AFA live in the present...and thus we, and not they, will shape the future ("that which should become").

The AFA is unabashedly Folkish, practicing the faith of our ancestors...not someone else's ancestors, and not a faith that belongs to all humankind. But while we are inspired and informed by the past, we are not stuck there! On the contrary, we find the relevance of our ancient beliefs to our lives today, with its own unique set of challenges.

Our Gods and our ancestors would expect nothing different from us. You, as a member of the AFA, are on the cutting edge of a revolution in thought that will - MUST! - transform the world!

Hail our Gods! Hail our ancestors! Hail our Holy Folk!

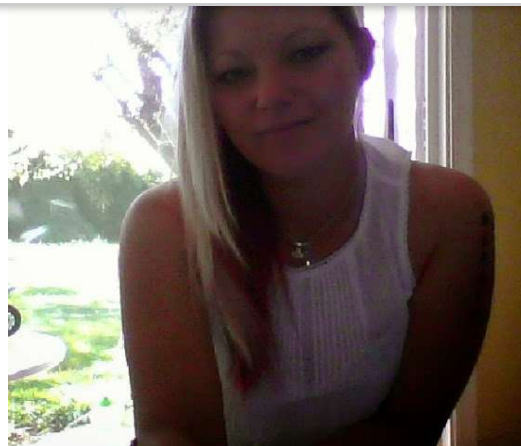
Stephen A. McNallen
Alsjerjargothi, AFA

Entrepreneur of the Month

My name is Annastasia Simmons, I live in Northern California, and I thank you very much for giving me the chance to speak for the unspoken. I hope with all my heart that my struggle through life and what

ending challenges.

The decision to start my own house cleaning business came when my options in life were to sink or swim.



I am a mother of a 3-year-old son who at the moment depends solely on me not only to care for him and love him, but to protect him and provide for his every need. I could go on and on about my reasons, but I can honestly say that I was just tired. Tired of not going anywhere fast. Tired of living day to day and not having. When any parent falls short of providing for their child through no one's fault but their own, well we all know that kind of pain. I think of always being better than I was - even if it was just yesterday.

The biggest problem I faced was the fear of failure. If we never try, then we will never know. The financial problems I faced in starting my business were: finding money for gas (to get to work) and for cleaning supplies, and obtaining clients. I had to budget any and all resources in order to get to a job. At first I obtained clients only through word of mouth and through a friend who passed my name along; this led me to three weekly clients. I literally used every payment I received to better my small self-built business. If I received a \$30 payment, I would use \$15 for gas for the following work week, then take care of my son's needs. If I had extra then it went to ink for my printer or was saved up for a new printer to make my own flyers and cards.

The best thing about being self-employed for me would have to be being able to tell my son that mommy GETS to work today. Even if my son is only 3, I see a reflection of myself in his eyes and know that every move I make, and every day I drop him off at daycare knowing I'm going to work, is teaching my son values, morals, and selflessness and

or reason not to provide for her family, and living up to my own standards are great aspects of having my own business.



The best advice I could give someone is: Lifeâ€™s a Garden, Dig it! I think most people are afraid to be strong. The sense of accomplishment after taking that leap, driven by but overcoming fear, is beyond rewarding for oneâ€™s soul. Life is what we make it.

Thank you AFA - My stronghold!

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.

The site is nestled in the pastoral hills of Sonoma County, renowned for its vineyards and redwood forests. The camp has spacious, modern cabins with bunks (bring your own

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.

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

Folk Services

AFA Folk Services addresses the needs of Asa-folk in crisis. A month ago, Barry Leatherman didn't have the money he needed for his mother's funeral. The call went out, and AFA members responded. In all, AFA members contributed about half of the total money raised to help Barry.

Soon after that, word came that little Thor von Reichmuth passed away from the ravages of cancer. AFA members and friends again came forward to contribute money to the cancer fund in his name.

Most recently, Shane Black's family relocated from Indiana to Florida, only to discover that the place they were going to stay was not available. He was in a strange city, homeless, with two young children and his pregnant wife. We were able to give Shane and his family a helping hand. Here's what he wrote us later: "Ves Heill.thank you all for your support.I have just got a house in Jacksonville. ...there's a start....I couldn't have gotten it without the support....I am so much relieved.....thank you all from myself and my family."

Twenty-six members clicked the DONATE button on our website in order to help kinsmen through some tough times. Yes, our resources are limited, but we do what we can to help out our members (and occasionally others) in need. Remember AFA Folk Services when

Family Safety Program: Defensible Space

Alert: Extreme Winter Drought Conditions have Increased Wildfire Danger Statewide.

Protect your property by creating and maintaining defensible space now.

Creating defensible space is essential to improve your home's chance of surviving a wildfire. It's the buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surround it.



This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire, and it protects your home from catching fire – either from direct flame contact or radiant heat.

Defensible space is also important for the protection of the firefighters defending your home.

The information below was taken from the Cal-Fire web site. Summer is closing in on us; we must be ready for the storm.

Jim and Sara
"Learn a new skill every week."

Defensible Space Zones

Two zones make up the required 100 feet of defensible space.



Zone 1

Zone 1 extends 30 feet** out from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

- Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds (vegetation).
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
- Remove branches that hang over your roof and keep dead branches 10 feet away from your chimney.
- Relocate wood piles into Zone 2.
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Create a separation between trees, shrubs and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing sets, etc.

** San Diego County requires 50 feet of clearance in zone 1. Check with your local fire department for any additional defensible space or weed abatement ordinances.

- Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees. (See diagram)
- Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs and trees. (See diagram)
- Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they may be permitted to a depth of 3 inches.

Plant and Tree Spacing

The spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees is crucial to reduce the spread of wildfires. The spacing needed is determined by the type and size of brush and trees, as well as the slope of the land. For example, a property on a steep slope with larger vegetation requires greater spacing between trees and shrubs than a level property that has small, sparse vegetation.

Vertical Spacing

Remove all tree branches at least 6 feet from the ground.

Allow extra vertical space between shrubs and trees. Lack of vertical space can allow a fire to move from the ground to the brush to the tree tops like a ladder.

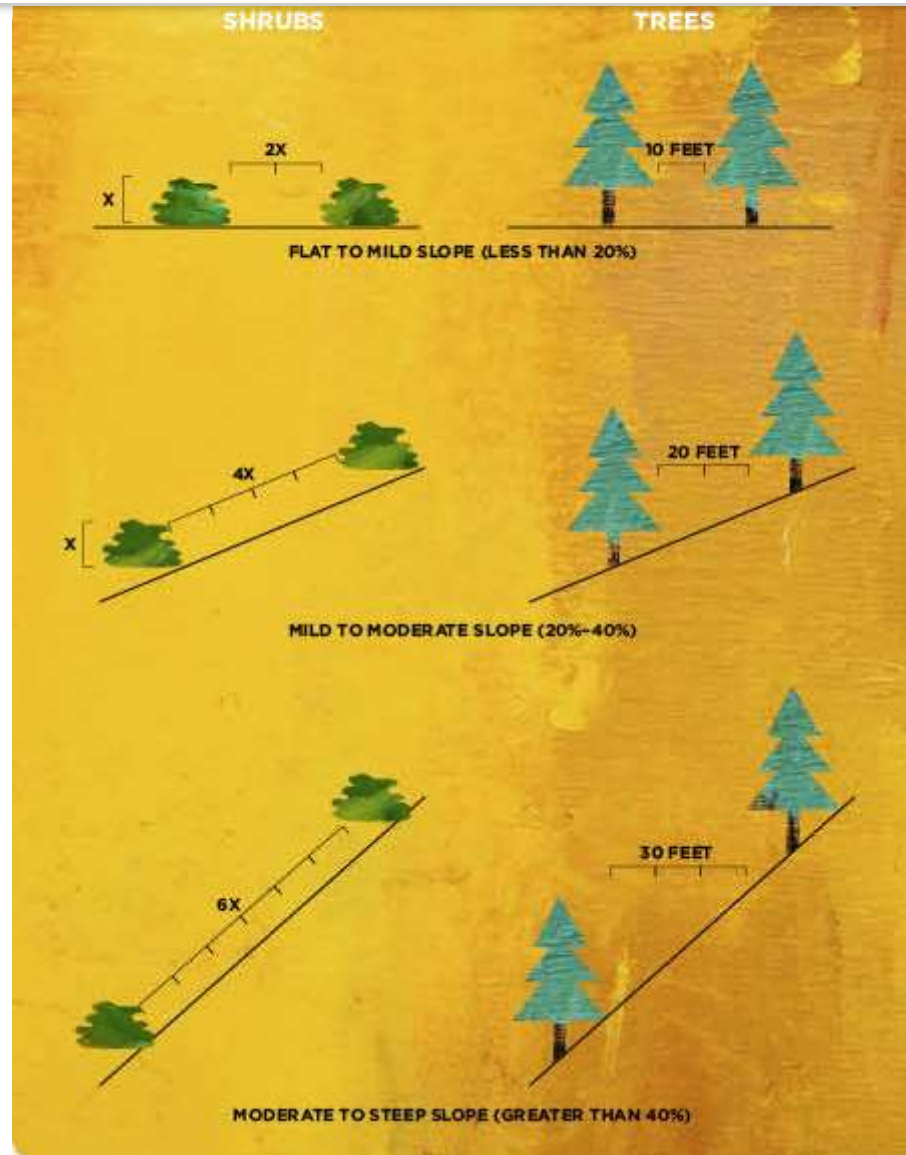
To determine the proper vertical spacing between shrubs and the lowest branches of trees, use the formula below.



Example: A five foot shrub is growing near a tree. $3 \times 5 = 15$ feet of clearance needed between the top of the shrub and the lowest tree branch.

Horizontal Spacing

Horizontal spacing depends on the slope of the land and the height of the shrubs or trees. Check the chart below to determine spacing distance



Fire-Safe Landscaping

Fire-safe landscaping isn't necessarily the same thing as a well-maintained yard.



resist the spread of fire to your home.

The good news is that you don't need to spend a lot of money to make your landscape fire-safe. And fire-safe landscaping can increase your property value and conserve water while beautifying your home.

- See more at: http://www.readyforwildfire.org/defensible_space#sthash.dMBzxML2.dpuf

Carrying a Knife for Personal Defence by Jeff Wolf

There is an old saying, "We do not rise to the level of our expectations; we fall to the level of our training." This is true in ALL areas of life. For our purposes today, this is going to apply to carrying a knife for personal defense. Just because you have grandpa's old Buck 110 stuck in the back pocket of your jeans doesn't give you an edge in defending yourself, and in fact it could work more against you than for you. Here are a few ideas to consider if you choose to carry a knife for personal defense.

KNIFE SELECTION

The first thing to consider is WHAT TYPE of knife you are going to carry. We don't want to buy a knife because it "looks cool" or because it "looks wicked." What we want is to carry a knife suited to its intended function. The design of a knife will always reflect its intended function, or at least it should. There are knives designed for thrusting - these are thinner, often double-edged blades; there are knives for slashing with wider, often somewhat curved blades. There are of course knives that fall somewhere in between. What I am getting at is get the knife suited to your STYLE of use. If you are not trained in using a knife for personal protection I would REALLY advise against carrying a knife

are buying and WHY you are buying it.

You also need to make a choice between a folding knife and a fixed blade knife. Both have advantages and disadvantages. A folding knife is just that, a folding knife: the blade folds into the handle for storage. A fixed blade knife will have a sheath of some sort to carry it in. Folding knives have the advantage of carrying MORE for LESS sometimes, meaning that you can carry a relatively large knife in its folded state. They can also be concealed easily if desired. A fixed blade knife is often carried on a belt, although there are other carry options that include neck carry, shoulder carry, ankle carry, inside the waistband carry, etc. Fixed blades offer improved strength over folders, although some companies make pretty tough folders. You will need to develop skill in deploying the knife, whether fixed blade or folding. More on that later.

CARRYING AND DEPLOYING YOUR KNIFE

We briefly looked at carrying above so let's look at it in more detail now. Some things to consider in carrying your knife are placement, access, ease of deployment, etc. I would suggest, if you carry one blade - whether fixed or folding - that you try to carry it centrally located: what I mean is that you carry it where it can be accessed by left or right hand. If it is a folding knife it needs to have an ambidextrous design so it can be opened with either hand. If you insist on right handed pocket carry, do yourself a favor and carry one in the left pocket also, or on a belt or wherever. This is one reason I love neck knives simply because they are easily accessed by either hand.

WHAT you carry and WHERE you carry it are factors in how fast you can DEPLOY your knife. If you cannot get to it or you cannot OPEN or DRAW it, then it will do you no good at all. Also, all the rage these days are Assisted Opening knives. Well here is a simple truth: those things CAN and DO fail. I love one as much as the next guy but I highly recommend that if you carry one you carry a fixed blade or a manual opening folder as a backup. I have had two assisted opening knives fail; it DOES happen. You DO NOT want it to happen when it may mean life or death.

LEVELS OF FORCE

should understand them. First and foremost we should do our best to avoid conflict. We should understand when a lock or throw might be needed, or a straight blast, or some head butts, knees and elbows, or an impact weapon like a collapsible baton, or a knife like we are talking about here, or even a firearm. If you want to be truly capable when we are talking about self-preservation, or personal defense, then you should cultivate multiple options based on varying degrees of force needed to resolve a conflict. You need to understand the laws in your area and you need to know that in the court system you can be charged with various crimes if you are deemed to have used excessive force. Don't pull a knife because someone butts in line at the movies; use your head! And I don't mean head-butt them, I mean THINK: the mind is a formidable weapon.

THE REALITY OF A FIGHT

Far too many people live in a fantasy world when it comes to what REALLY happens in a fight. In today's world, in my opinion, more than likely you'll find yourself in a situation facing multiple attackers, most likely at least one of whom will be armed. You will NOT be given advance notice but you'll probably realize you are in a fight ONCE IT IS UNDERWAY. You need to understand that in such a situation your heart beat is going to skyrocket, your vision will tunnel, most of what you have learned regarding self-protection will be gone, fine motor skills will be gone, and you will revert to what I call cave-man concepts. In this type of situation simplicity in training is your friend. More on that later. Do some research; there is lots of information out there about this. A warrior trains their MIND as well as their BODY.

TRAINING

It is vital that you seek out proper training in different areas. Firearm train. Edge and impact weapons train. Unarmed train. Seek out the best instruction you can afford and train. Then train some more. Train live in person. Video train. Read books and articles. Inform yourself and adopt those methods and tactics you feel are best suited you. A warrior evaluates their skills constantly; if you are not meeting goals, if you don't feel you are growing in skill, maybe you need a new approach. Do not get caught up training this or that, with this instructor or that because "everyone else is doing it." You need to

CONCLUSION

This is by no means a complete look at a knife for personal defense although it will provide you with some things to think about if you are considering carrying a knife or if you do carry one. I hope this short article helps you out. If I can be of further assistance do not hesitate to contact me: mwolf27019@gmail.com

Jeff Wolf

Germanton, NC

AFA Clergy

As the tides turn from season to season, many of us in the Northern Hemisphere begin to feel the warmth of the sun as we watch the bees awaken and the flowers blossom. For some of us, that means our paintbrushes will once again see the sunlight, and for others that means soil beneath our fingernails, trail-riding on our horses, and, of course, a dance around the Maypole! In six monthsâ€™ time during Winternights, we see an in-ward time of sharing and heart-warming toasts. At this time of year, the experiences are more outward sharing.... And though the name of our month, May, is not believed to be Germanic in origin, the word "may" is. It means "am able" and comes from Old English; its root ultimately stems from the PIE *magh, "to be able, to have power." In this month of May, bear that ancient word in deep in your mind, and open your heart to something new in your life... Or perhaps begin chasing after a goal you've put on hold for little good reason. Leave some wildflowers for your loved ones, stop to smell or take in the view of young blossoms. Think on the rune Jera, a rune of the seasons, of the natural processes of life happening in the right order and timing.... take some time from your busy life this month to find pure, unquestionable joy, no matter how small it may be, and hold onto it throughout this month. Happy May!

Contacting AFA Clergy

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.

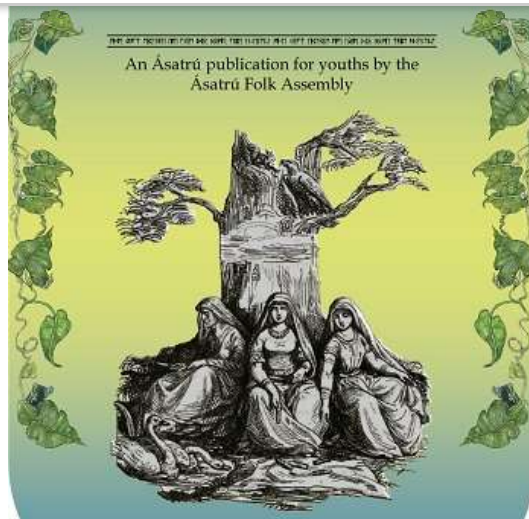
Circle of Eir - A Call to Healing

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. The next healing ritual, which is jointly done by AFA members from both the States and Europe, will be performed on Thursday, May 7, at midnight EDT/USA.

Runepobble

Runepobble: An AFA e-publication for Asatru families!

We hope you are enjoying the current issue of Runepobble on this gorgeous first day of May!



"What's in a Harvest?" is the theme for our next issue of Runepebble, and we are indeed on the look-out for contributors. If you or your children have any art, articles, poetry, crafts, puzzles, pictures, songs, recipes, or fun tidbits relating to the harvest, harvest season, gods related to the harvest, or anything pertinent to the Runepebble in general, we'd love to hear from you. Email Rebecca at Runepebble@Runestone.org. The harvest issue will be published on July 1st, and submissions will be accepted no later than Monday, June 29th. Thank you!

Ostara in Northern California
by Marc Macleod





weather was perfect and the site, located on the American River, was green and luscious.

We did our opening rite with introductions, the ladies took the kids on a hike to the nature center, we spent lots of time talking with new and old friends, and we enjoyed more food than we could finish. Mike Hunter discussed the significance of the egg and the traditions associated with it. Last but not least, Steve led us in an Ostara Blot.

It was an outstanding day! Thanks to everyone who came from near and far. We renewed old bonds and made some new. Hail The FOLK!

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

REGIONAL CONFERENCE CALL

Rebecca Radcliff, who heads up our AFA Clergy program, will hopefully be joining us for our next Northeast conference call at 8 p.m. EDT on Tuesday, May 5. 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, preceded by a hikemoot, at The Sumney in Lansdale, PA. The next one will be held on Saturday, May 30, from 2 to 5 p.m. The pre-pub hikemoot will be 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@runetone.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 patriciahall@runestone.org.

Skylands Asatru Fellowship, based in northern New Jersey, is pleased to announce the following events for the month of May. Everyone in and around the area is welcome to attend.

- Saturday May 2: Pubmoot at Houlihan's™ in Parsippany, NJ, 6:00 p.m.
- Thursday May 14: Lore Study at Mount Olive Public Library in Mt. Olive, NJ, 6:30 p.m. This month's topic is the God Thor.
- Monday May 17: Offering to the land wights at their Byram, NJ, ve, 7:00 p.m.

Full details can be found on their website, <http://www.skylandsasatru.org>, or at their Meetup group at <http://www.meetup.com/NJ-Asatru>

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 Southern Europe from David Wolfheart



meal, Stadhagaldr workshop, and a talk about the folkish vision. This was a big celebration and opportunity for many people to come to our community and meet our folk.
Hail the AFA!

News from the Northwest

LORE STUDY GROUP, PART 1!

On Saturday, April 11th, Northwest AFA members gathered at Fiddler's Coffee in Centralia, WA, for the first installment of our Lore Study Group series. Some who could not make it in person joined us digitally via Google Hangouts, which was quite successful. We had each identified some stanzas of the Havamal that we thought were odd, confusing, inspirational, pertinent to the times, or simply wished to discuss with the group. Part 1 was a definite success, and we're all looking forward to Part 2, to be held May 3rd in Seattle, details to follow!

HIKE AND PUBMOOT IN PORTLAND

On Saturday, April 18th, Northwest AFA members and friends met up at the Hoyt Arboretum in Portland, OR, for a lore-inspired hikemoot! We were favoured with excellent weather as Karl and Brian led us through the trails to collections of trees pertinent to the lore, including ash, elm, yew, oak, and birch, as well as some non-lore trees, such as redwoods and Norway spruce. Along the way, we ran into a fellow Asatruar we hadn't met before! I gave him my card, and he's already been in touch. After the hike, many of us continued to Kell's Brew Pub for a pubmoot, enjoying good company and good food. It was an excellent afternoon, a great opportunity to catch up with some Folk we hadn't seen in a while, and to meet our newest Northwest AFA member. Brian and Karl have hosted several of these events, and we look forward to more in the future!



UPCOMING EVENTS:

On Sunday, May 3rd, at 3pm, join us for a Lore Study Moot hosted by Rachael, at The Rhein Haus in Seattle, WA! This will be Part 2 of our Lore Study series; we will be studying and discussing the "Rune Poem" section of the Havamal (stanzas 138-165), and comparing the different translations. Those who cannot make it in person are welcome to join us via Google Hangouts, we will set up a link to the Hangout closer to the day of the event. After we've studied our brains out, we have the opportunity to play some indoor Bocce Ball, a fun European game like a cross between bowling and pool.

Regional Conference Calls

Attention Northwest members! Starting in May, we will be having monthly conference calls. The tentative time schedule is 7 p.m. PDT on the first Wednesday of every month; this month's will be Wednesday, May 6, at 7 p.m. PDT. Please let me know via email if a different day and time works for you. I will send out the call number and meeting ID in an email to Northwest members, and I look forward to hearing from you!

GREAT NORTHWEST FREYFAXI, YEAR 2!

We're only 4 months out from the second year of Great Northwest Freyfaxi, an inspiring invigorating weekend on the Washington coast, one of the four big AFA events of the year! This year's dates are August 14-16 at the Ocean Park Camp and Retreat Center in Ocean Park, WA. Last year's event was attended by over 40 AFA members from all over the West, and this year promises to be even bigger! Now is a good time to start making travel plans; event costs are reasonable, the two closest airports are PDX (Portland) and SEA (SeaTac), and the two closest Amtrak stations are CTL (Centralia) and KEL (Kelso/Longview). Stay tuned for registration forms and other updates!

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

-Elizabeth Salix, Northwest Folkbuilder

Upcoming Events

MAKING VACATIONS PLANS FOR 2015?

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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