





Njörðshof Fourth Hof of the Asatru Folk Assembly

### http://www.njordshof.org/





# Words from the Alsherjargothi



2023 is off to an amazing start! We have been busy this month as this issue of the Runestone will show. We have progress on several exciting fronts and perhaps the most exciting for me, in January, was the event at Sigrheim. The picture is of us giving blot to lord Týr at the site of the hof we will build for him in the coming years.

If you are reading this and you have remained solitary, 2023 is your year to fix that and join in on all the amazing things we are accomplishing together. If you have non-member friends and family that should be sharing in the blessings and accomplishments of the AFA, what is holding them back from joining? Have you invited them? Let's make this the year that more folk come home than ever before. Let's make 2023 the best year yet for our AFA!



Alsherjargothi, Asatru Folk Assembly mattflavel@runestone.org

### Words from Our Witan

#### Charming of the Plow



Charming of the Plow is one of my favorite holidays and blots. Being a farm kid raised on a dairy farm in the middle of nowhere North Dakota, February was always a hard month. I remember wearing 5 layers of clothing just to do chores and still being cold! Everything seemed so much more difficult in February. I was tired of winter by then. The snow was no longer welcome. The NoDak plains no longer looked pure and untouched, covered with sparkling snow and icy creeks. It just looked like a frozen tundra with a never-ending winter. At that age, I couldn't see ahead, only behind me. I didn't see the preparations we were making for the spring, I could only see the misery of being out in the cold. I could only think of how long we had had to shovel snow, break ice, unbury equipment, and trek around the farm in 32 below temps. I didn't see the increasing in daylight, the beauty of the sunrise earlier every day, or the happiness

the bellies of the heavily pregnant cows put on the faces of my family. I just saw work. I didn't see the prosperity. I didn't see the preparation to make sure our family would succeed another year.

Age brings appreciation, I suppose. I no longer just see a cold and barren, snow covered plain. Instead I see earth starting to awaken beneath it. February is no longer a miserable month of cold weather and endless chores. It is time to be industrious. It is time to prepare our tools with intention and care, to celebrate the end of winter rather than focusing on how hard it has been. It's a time to look forward, to plan, to prepare. It's a time of excitement rather than angst.

My family holds a blot to Gefjon at Charming of the Plow. We take the month of February to work hard for the big goals, to make our plans and prepare ourselves for the work spring will bring us. We take our inspiration from her as her story from *Gylfaginning I*:

King Gylfi ruled the land that men now call Sweden. It is told of him that he gave to a wandering woman, in return for her merry-making, a plow-land in his realm, as much as four oxen might turn up in a day and a night. But this woman was of the kin of the Æsir; she was named Gefjun. She took from the north, out of Jötunheim, four oxen which were the soils of a certain giant and, herself, and set them before the plow. And the plow cut so wide and so deep that it loosened up the land; and the oxen drew the land out into the sea and to the westward, and stopped in a certain sound. There Gefjun set the land, and gave it a name, calling it Selund. And from that time on, the spot whence the land had been torn up is water: it is now called the Lögr in Sweden; and bays lie in that lake even as the headlands in Selund. Thus says Bragi, the ancient skald:

Gefjun drew from Gylfi | gladly the wave-trove's free-hold, Till from the running beasts | sweat reeked, to Denmark's increase; The oxen bore, moreover, | eight eyes, gleaming brow-lights, O'er the field's wide: booty, | and four heads in their plowing.

And again told in the Ynglinga Saga, Chapter 5:

There goes a great mountain barrier from north-east to southwest, which divides the Greater Swithiod from other kingdoms. South of this mountain ridge it is not far to Turkland, where Odin had great possessions. In those times the Roman chiefs went wide around in the world, subduing to themselves all people; and on this account many chiefs fled from their domains. But Odin having foreknowledge, and magic-sight, knew that his posterity would come to settle and dwell in the northern half of the world.

He therefore set his brothers Ve and Vilje over Asgaard; and he himself, with all the gods and a great many other people, wandered out, first westward to Gardarike, and then south to Saxland. He had many sons; and after having subdued an extensive kingdom in Saxland, he set his sons to rule the country. He himself went northwards to the sea, and took up his abode in an island which is called Odins in Fyen. Then he sent Gefion across the sound to the north to discover new countries; and she came to King Gylve, who gave her a ploughgate of land. Then she went to Jotunheim, and bore four sons to a giant, and transformed them into a yoke of oxen. She yoked them to a plough, and broke out the land into the ocean right opposite to Odins. This land was called Sealand, and there she afterwards settled and dwelt. Skjold, a son of Odin, married her, and they dwelt at Leidre. Where the ploughed land was is a lake or sea called Laage. In the Swedish land the fjords of Laage correspond to the nesses in Sealand. Brage the Old sings thus of it: --

"Gefion from Gylve drove away,
To add new land to Denmark's sway -Blythe Gefion ploughing in the smoke
That steamed up from her oxen-yoke:
Four heads, eight forehead stars had they,
Bright gleaming, as she ploughed away;
Dragging new lands from the deep main
To join them to the sweet isle's plain."

Below is a simple blot, similar to the one my family will celebrate to honor the Goddess Gefjon, one of our Ásynjur.

2 bowls
Sprig
Horn
Mead
Tools of Industriousness (Items that you use to support your family & folk)

Pour the mead into the horn and have the women bless the mead if present. Gather your folk, entering the space in a clockwise motion.

Welcome:

Items Needed:

"Holy Æsir, mighty Gods and Goddesses of our Folk! We invite you to join us and witness our devotion!

Honored Ancestors, mothers and fathers as far back as time remembers! We ask you to join your sons and daughters in celebration!

Friendly vættir, spirits of this land and this place! We invite you to witness what we do today and to see our deeds!"

Holding the horn high, call on the Goddess Gefjon:

"Hail Gefjon!

Beguiler of Gylfi with merriment

Land-churner,

Giver,

Generous One,

Strong and industrious –

Hear the voices of your folk,

Receive our devotion!"

Gather the gifts of the Folk for Gefjon:

"Folk, place your hands over your hearts. Feel the heart beat beneath your fingers. Feel it's strength, it's steady-beat. From that strong and noble heart, gather your gifts for Gefjon. From your heart to your hand, and from your hand to the horn, give the best and brightest of yourself to her today."

In a clockwise movement, gather the gifts of the folk into the horn of mead. Returning to the central altar, hold the horn above you head and offer them to Gefjon:

"Holy Gefjon!

This horn is heavy with the gifts of your folk,
The best and brightest of themselves that they have to give.
If you find these gifts worthy, accept them from us.
Hail Gefjon!"

Pour the contents of the horn into the bowl.

Fill the second bowl with the remaining mead and hold high above your head.

"Gefjon!

You have accepted our gifts, and we ask for your blessings in return.

Give us strength in the last holds of winter.

Inspire us to be industrious.

Remind of the victory ahead in times of struggle."

At this time you will be blessing the tools, the Folk, and their hands.

Using the sprig and the blessed mead, sprinkle the tools with the blessings of Gefjon:

"Gefjon, we ask that you bless these tools.

Inspire us with your strength and devotion to task.

Remind us to be joyful in our work.

Let us see that victory our industriousness brings."

Ask the folk to prepare themselves to receive the gifts of their goddess and if they choose, to hold their palms upward to have their hands blessed.

In a clockwise movement, bless the gathered folk with "The gifts of Gefjon", asperging them with mead.

If the folk have palms upward to receive the hand blessing, bless each hand with mead using the Gebo rune, "May the hands of the folk be strong and industrious".

#### Closing the Blot:

"Holy Gefjon,

We have given you our gifts,

Our devotion, and our worship.

We thank you for your gifts.

We thank the Aesir for their blessings,

The honored ancestors for their presence,

And vættir for their watchfulness.

This blot has ended.

May we depart as a family,

And with victorious intent.

Hail Gefjon!

Hail the Gods!

Hail the Folk!

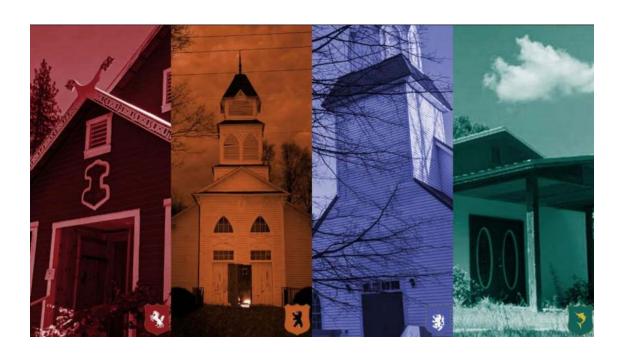
Hail the AFA!"

Witan Brandy Callahan <a href="bcallahan@runestone.org">bcallahan@runestone.org</a>



### **Words from Our Gothar**

On the AFA Being Asatru's Spiritual Authority

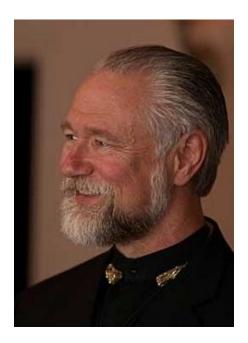


There has been a bit of online drama lately regarding spiritual authority among Asatruar and people claiming to follow Asatru. This issue comes up every so often, and it will likely continue to do so.

However. I hope to squash some of that discourse here by offering you a few facts through this short article.

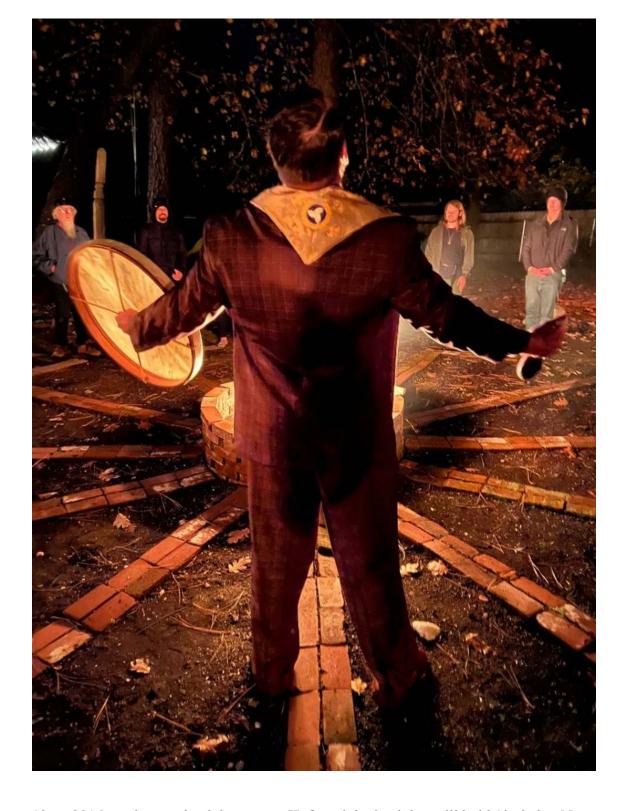
There is no spiritual authority in Asatru besides the Asatru Folk Assembly. Our founder, Stephen McNallen, was specifically inspired by the All-Father to revive Asatru and bring our Folk home. He was the first true Goði in many centuries, and served as the

spiritual authority during his tenure as Alsherjargothi of the Asatru Folk Assembly and its precursors before that.



In 2015, Alsherjargothi McNallen's efforts through the AFA were further blessed by the Gods themselves when we purchased Newgrange Hall, which was later named Óðinshof. This was the first temple to our Gods in a thousand years, and still serves as a symbol of the Gods' favor towards us.

At the very first Midsummer at Óðinshof, the torch of spiritual authority was passed from Founder Stephen McNallen to Goði Matthew Flavel, who became our second Alsherjargothi. When that position was passed on, the authority and blessing of the Gods passed with it. This may seem like shaky logic by itself, but bear with me.



Since 2016, we have gained three more Hofs and the land that will hold Sigrheim. Not only did blessings from the Gods continue... they multiplied. Just as our Founder was chosen by the All-Father to lead Asatru, Alsherjargothi Flavel was chosen to continue that mission. Spiritual authority now flows from him, and anyone that he has ordained as a Goði or Gythia.

This authority lies with the Asatru Folk Assembly alone. Not the Norroena Society. Not

the Odinic Rite. None of the universalist pretenders. The AFA alone carries the torch of Asatru into the future.



Gothi Trent East <a href="mailto:teast@runestone.org">teast@runestone.org</a>

Inner Conquest: Being the Stillness In the Eye of a Storm



Meditation is the tool of kings and conquerors. It is the foundation of a gentleman's "Sprezzatura" and a Lady's "Grace". In our modern times, we are bombarded with an overabundance of stimuli, information, and feedback that one can get lost & overwhelmed in the storm. Contempt for what does not serve us well, and scrutiny in accessing what does wins the day.

First, however you must be able to still yourself and be unmoved in the onslaught. Take

a deep breath and let it out. Take another, and let it out slowly. Take a third only through your nose, and out slowly through your mouth. Then repeat this last step for as long as your concentration or time allows. With time this will become a reflex or instinct. Till then work on clearing the images in your head when your eyes are closed until you can hold a blank slate. Learn to not just hear the rhythm of your breath as you relax, during your first few attempts, but work up to experiencing traveling across a room. Focus on becoming aware of the pulsing of your heart and learn to command it when it tries to run on you.

These are all exercises that build a foundation for steeled nerves, bridled & Tru strength, and decisive split-second decision-making. Your stress levels will drop, and your humility grow, or at least the perception of it will. You may also find yourself experiencing more time in a day, or realizing some fights aren't worth the effort, which can be put towards more prosperous endeavors. The clarity and precision with which you can foresee your friends and foes maneuvering in business or conflict can win you the day. Just a few fruits that may come to fruition when you began to master the skill of meditation and find strength in "Isa."

Standing on a foundation of steeled & tempered mind, you can begin the work of the Gods and create order from chaos, rather than being engulfed by it. When in a storm, possess it, and command it, by being the eye in the center of the storm. You have the divine spark to shape the world, use it.



Gothi Jason Plourde

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Cyclical Time and Our Lore: The Slaying of Ymir



In last month's edition of The Runestone, we discussed how we can view our Lore through the lens of Cyclical Time orientation. We saw the story of Ask and Embla, and how we can interpret the story with cyclical time in mind.

This month we'll discuss the slaying of Ymir, and how we can see that continue to unfold right before our eyes. It's important to understand that these are my views, UPG, as it were, and is subject to change as things play out in our time. It is my opinion that our Lore stories can have multiple meanings, some exoteric interpretation and some esoteric.

Out of Ymir's flesh was fashioned the earth, And the mountains were made from his bones; The sky from the frost-cold giant's skull, And the ocean out of his blood. - Vafþrúðnismál, Poetic Edda, Bellows Translation

"Then Gangleri said, 'I hear of great happenings. It was wondrous work and skillfully done, but how was the earth set in order?' Then High answered: 'It is circular around the edge and surrounding it lies the deep sea. On these ocean coasts, the sons of Bor gave land to the clans of the giants to live on. But further inland they built a fortress wall around the world to protect against the hostility of the giants. As material for the wall, they used the eyelashes of the giant Ymir and called this stronghold Midgard

[Middle Earth]. They took his brain, threw it up into the air, and from it they made the clouds." Gylfaginning, Prose Edda

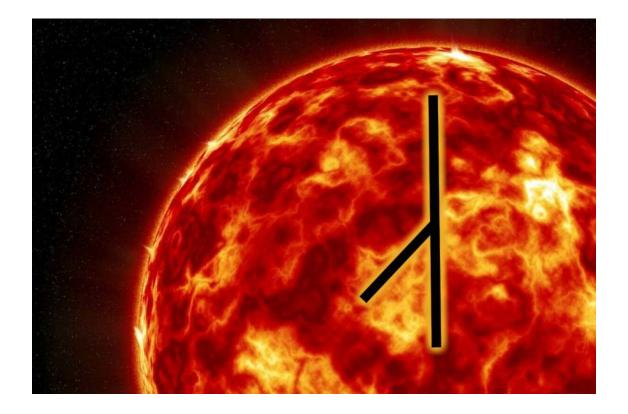
We can see that the earth was fashioned from the body of Ymir. Another way of viewing this passage exoterically, is that in our world, society began to take root. The establishment of order, both cosmically and here in Midgard. The creation story has parallels in our history as a people. As we discussed last month, the first generation of our Folk were given consciousness, sacrality, and goodly hue. Now the slaying of Ymir could represent our Folk putting things in order.

In Today's Asatru, we can also find parallel circumstances. From our Lore, we understand the Ymir was what existed before. It was refashioned by Odin in his tripartite form to make the dwelling of man. We, as a church and as a folk, have refashioned places of worship and dedicated them to our Gods. Parkers Grove Methodist Church existed in Linden NC for over 100 years. The Asatru Folk Assembly purchased that property and the buildings and refashioned them towards the spiritual needs of our people. What existed before was not beneficial to our current needs. What exists now is akin to the body of what was, but repurposed, beneficial, and provides a sanctuary for our Gods, and their worship.

This is not, of course, the only example. We have repurposed 4 temples in total for the needs of Modern Asatruar. They are, Óðinshof, Brownsville CA, Þórshof, Linden, NC, Baldrshof, Murdoch, MN and finally Njörðshof, White Springs, FL. These are all examples of using that which was, into that which is in line with Cosmic Order, that which is beneficial.

It is my hope that you find this beneficial. Our lore should rarely be taken literally. But, there is truth in it. We can see it happening in front of our very eyes. Asatru is what we do. It isn't just stories. The Asatru Folk Assembly has no peer in this regard. Our continued success is proof that we are on the right path with the blessings of our Gods.

How The Gods Interact with Us—My Experience

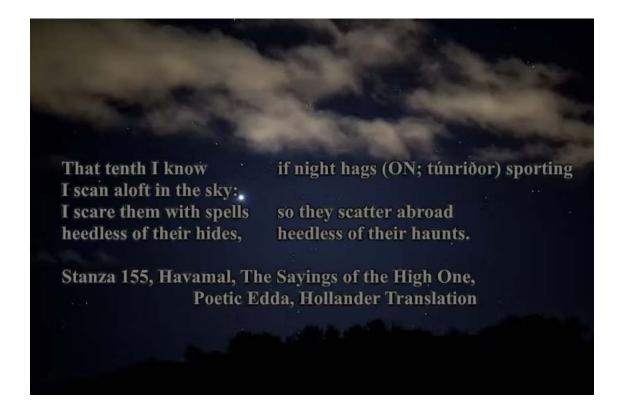


I found Asatru late in life, as many have. I found Asatru while I was in my 30's, around 2012. The road to my discovery of faith was a long one, and one that has been filled with learning experiences.

As a young man, I had fought with a phenomenon called night terrors. In South Carolina, it's commonly called *Riding the Hag*. Science calls it *sleep paralysis*. In Greek Lore, a succubus. My experience was not dissimilar to many others' experiences, it starts off with the feeling of a presence in the room. At some point, terror overcomes you, and you can't move. I can't scream, I can't do *anything*. It'll feel like someone is literally sitting on your chest, and breathing becomes a problem. It's something I dealt with all my life. I would often wake up screaming once the grip was loosened enough for me to shake myself awake.

At some point in 2013, I decided to give my devotion to the Gods of Europe. I remember where I was, I was standing beneath a tree on the property behind my house, a very large oak. I offered a drink to Odin himself, and promised to give my devotion and worship, and asked that he reveal himself in some way. And he did. I just didn't know it.

After I joined the Asatru Folk Assembly in 2018, I was having a conversation with a fellow AFA member about my experience with night terrors. And I had mentioned that they suddenly stopped in 2013. He got back with me a few days later after going through the *Havamal*. And he explained to me he had read through the Old Norse and found something unexpected.



This portion of the Havamal is commonly referred to as the *Runatal*, as the *Havamal* is a collection of 3 poems which were combined in *The Codex Regius*. You'll recognize where the Runatal begins, as it begins with the story of Odin hanging upon the World Tree, and the runes are revealed to him in that state. The Runatal goes on to decribe the 18 spells (correlating to the 18 runes revealed to him) that he knows, with the above tenth spell being among them. I shared my experience with our Alsherjargothi, and we discussed the Armanen rune that would relate to that passage from Havamal.

It is from the Runatal that Meister Von List drew inspiration for the Armanen Futhark, which were revealed to him while he suffered from temporary blindness. So, after having this discussion with Alsherjargothi, we started looking to *The Secret of the Runes, by Guido Von List*.

ar, sun, primal fire, ar-yans, nobles

I use the tenth, when through the air ghostly riding-women fly: when I began that magic, they will fare confused in form and effort.

The "ar' the "urfyr" (primal fire, God) the "sun" the "light" will destroy spiritual as well as physical darkness, doubt, and uncertainty.

The Secret of the Runes, Guido Von List, Translated by Dr. Stephen Flowers

The book goes on to describe that the Ar rune is a glyph that represents the Eagle,

perhaps the eagle atop Yggdrasil. The primal fire is that divine spark that resides in all Aryans. It is that fire that is bellowed by the cosmic breath of Odin himself. The concluding line of text in *The Secret of the Runes* goes on to say "Respect the primal fire!"

It is my sincere belief that Odin used Ar to scatter to the winds my night hag terror. I believe that in every way. I have not experienced a single episode of night terrors since that day beneath that big, beautiful oak. I gave my reverent devotion to Him, and in turn, He gave this gift to me (and to my wife, as my night terrors obviously kept her up, and terrified her).

This was all the proof I needed to understand that the divine do in fact reveal themselves to us, in a very personal way. Perhaps Odin himself. It does not mean that we pray to Odin, and he will allow you to win the lottery. But, in a very real and tangible way, they can and do insert themselves into our lives.

How have the Gods or ancestors intervened in your lives? If you truly begin to have faith, real life faith, you might just find an experience like mine.

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



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# The Quest for Freyshof

"Njördr in Nóatún begot afterward two children: the son was called Freyr, and the daughter Freyja; they were fair of face and mighty. Freyr is the most renowned of the Æsir; he rules over the rain and the shining of the sun, and therewithal the fruit of the earth; and it is good to call on him for fruitful seasons and peace. He governs also the



<u>Freyshof Fund – Asatru Folk Assembly (runestone.org)</u>

This sacred quest has had a great start so far! The generosity has been amazing, as always!

This is the list of things that need to happen before we can make Freyshof a reality:

- 1. We need to pay off Njörðshof. (We have paid off 41.41% so far) If every member donated \$147 we would be able to pay this off today!
- 2. We need to raise our monthly donation average by 10%. (This is membership dues/hoftollar plus other donations)
- 3. We need to locate a suitable property.
- 4. We need to find lenders and build a war chest.

This is not a "quick" process so stay the patient and resolute. As we progress, I will keep you all updated on our progress!

Hail Freyr!



Matthew D. Flavel Alsherjargothi, Asatru Folk Assembly mattflavel@runestone.org

# **Sigrheim: Home of Victory**



In January, we had the amazing experience of exploring the Home of Victory! This amazing land is more amazing than I had hoped or imagined. One thing we all noticed is just how expansive the property is. I have looked at this place for months on Google Earth and in pictures, but the feeling of space was so much different in person. The plan is to build the great hall on the flat land near the road and to build Týrshof up on the ridge top. We did an emotional blot to lord Týr on the site where his hof will be built.





I want to keep you all informed as progress occurs. Our first couple of steps are 1) We need to determine who the first pioneers moving to the Heim will be and to help those folks with their planning and developing. 2) We need to develop the roadway that cuts through the property and runs along our ridge line so that it can accommodate any necessary equipment and normal cars.



However far along we are or aren't, we will be hosting the first annual Sigrblot at Sigrheim this July, and we hope to see you all there!



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# **Victory Never Sleeps**





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# **AFA Homeschool Program**



For More Info: Welcome | Asatru Academy

Hello parents and students, and all AFA members.

Our students have been working hard and we are halfway through the traditional school year! Ostara will be here before we know it and all the warmth of spring.

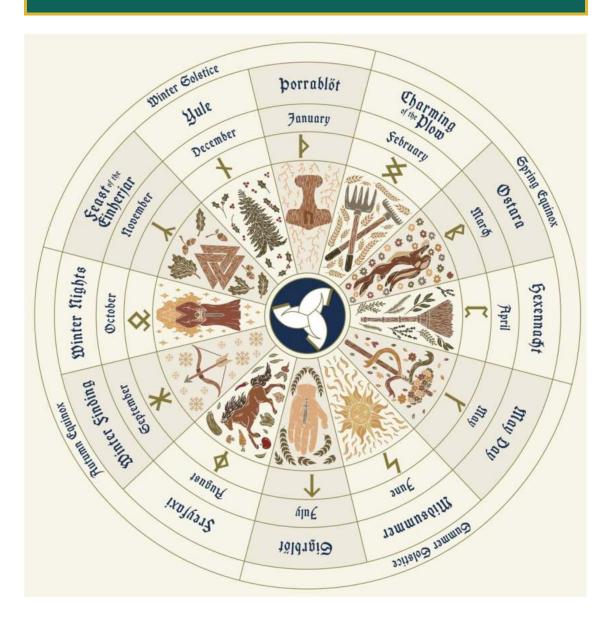
I want to remind our members that next school year, we will be enrolling kindergarten through second grade!

Look out next month, as we showcase some student projects right here in the Runestone!

Gothi Rob Stamm
Dean of AFA Academy
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# Remembrance & Holy Days



<u>Calendar – Asatru Folk Assembly (runestone.org)</u>

**Date** Observance

January 9 Day of Remembrance for Raud the Strong

January 21 Þorrablót

February 9 Day of Remembrance for Eyvind Kinnrifi

February 18 Charming of the Plow

March 9 Day of Remembrance for Olvir of Egg

March 21

(observed on 18th) Ostara

Day of Remembrance for Jarl Haakon

April 28

April 9

(observed on 15th) Hexennacht

May 9 Day of Remembrance for Else Christensen

May Day

Midsummer

May 1

(observed on 20th)

June 9 Day of Remembrance for King Athanaric of the Goths

June 21

(observed on 17th)

July 9 Day of Remembrance for Alexander Rud Mills

July 15 Sigrblót

August 9 Day of Remembrance for King Radbod of Frisia

August 19 Freyfaxi

September 9 Day of Remembrance for Prince Hermann of the Cherusci

September 22

(observed on 16th)

Winter Finding

October 9 Day of Remembrance for Meister Guido von List

October 15 Birthday of Founder Stephen McNallen

October 21 Winter Nights

November 9 Day of Remembrance for Queen Sigríð of Sweden

November 11

(observed on 18th)

Feast of the Einherjar

December 9 Day of Remembrance for Egill Skallagrímsson

December 20 Mother's Night

December 20-31

(observed on 16th)

Yuletide

# **Day of Remembrance**



Near to what could be considered the beginning of the Christian conversion of Norway, under King Olaf Tryggvason, there was a farmer of Noble stock who stood against the king and his attempts at conversion.

Eyvind (Pronounced Ivin) Kinnrifi was called to make plans against the upcoming invasion by his friend Harek of Thjotta, who had very recently returned home after himself refusing conversion to Christianity. Eyvind answered the call, and for the sake of haste, he traveled with only a small retinue of men. He was well welcomed by Harek, but shortly after his arrival Eyvind was ambushed.

Unbeknownst to Harek, he had been followed by some of Olaf Tryggvason's men. They forced Eyvind to Throndhjem, where Olaf attempted to convert Evyind, first with offers of land and gold, and then with threats of torture and death. Unwilling to turn him back on his faith, Eyvind was eventually killed.

So what can we learn from this story?

On the 9th of February, as we stop to remember Eyvind Kinrifi and his unwavering faith despite the consequences, take a moment to consider what in your own life is important to you. Have there ever been times in which you had to choose between keeping your faith and losing something else? A Job? A friend? Family?

Even in these times, when we are living with unparalleled freedom of choice, it can be difficult to choose faith over all else. It is sometimes easier to hide behind the idea of a pseudonym or to keep your faith hidden from those in our lives that should matter. Remember, when you think of Eyvind, what truly matters. Stand strong with and take pride in your Folk.



Gythia Catie Erickson cm.erickson@runestone.org

# Holiday

#### Charming of the Plow



Charming of the Plow is a ritual that takes place at the early beginning of the planting season. As the name implies the plow, or other tools used, are blessed and offerings are made to the Gods for a productive growing season. Traditionally, after blessing the plow, a ceremonial furrow was dug and then filled with cakes and other offerings. For our ancestors, this was a crucial time of year. Poor preparation often led to a poor harvest and a poor harvest led to starvation.

Asatru is the modern celebration of our ancestral heritage. Charming of the Plow symbolizes our willful penetration of the unyielding soil. It is with our own

industriousness, our own will, that we create, that we change, that we provide. In the Asatru Folk Assembly, we often celebrate the Charming of the Plow by planting a tree.

Inflict your will on your world. As Asatruar, this is a time to "charm" the implements of your own productivity. Entreating the divine to bless your tools and your plans for the year is essential to starting things off right. Inviting the divine into our plans and intentions is a great way of making us aware of the sacrality that should be a part of all you do. The AFA encourages all Asatruar to be industrious in all that we do. Dream grand dreams. Make solid plans. DO big things. And after hard work, reap a bountiful harvest.

And what can you do to celebrate Charming of the Plow? Though most of us do not rely on growing our own food to survive, now is a good time to consider starting a small garden, or even just growing some herbs on the patio. Make a plan. Choose a small patch of yard and map out your garden beds. Bless the shovels and spades. Dig up the soil and begin fertilizing it with eggshells and coffee grinds. Prepare. If you cannot plant a small garden begin planning some project. Sew a quilt, built a chair, take an idea and make a plan, and then put that plan into action.

Inflict your will on your world.



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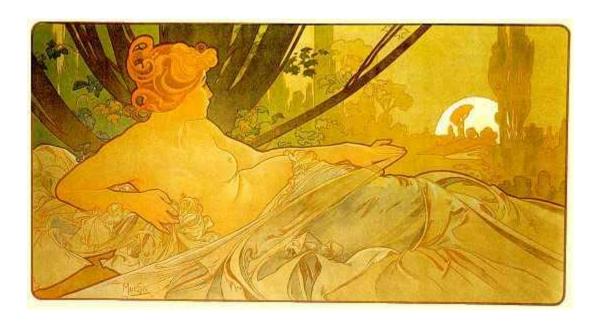
# **Upcoming National Events**



Order your tickets **HERE** 

Ostara at Þórshof, an Asatru Folk Assembly national event, is scheduled for March 10 – 12 at our very own Þórshof!

There will be fun and games for the children, classes for the adults, and good memories to be made. We have an assortment of different activities for people of all ages in attendance. Classes to be held will cover a wide range of topics.



As always we will be having an auction of unique and one-of-a-kind Asatru-related items. All auction proceeds go to help fund these amazing events. We ask anyone who would like to donate to this great cause to please donate an item to the auction, or bring

your cash to bid! Anyone wanting to set up a vendor table at this event please feel free, all we ask is a donation of a substantial item to the auction.

Tickets are available at

https://www.runestone.org/product/ostara/



Witan Clifford Erickson <u>cerickson@runestone.org</u>

### Be a Doer



#### We need you to volunteer for the AFA!

Yes, you. We have work to do and need folk who are artists, editors, writers, accountants, lawyers, publicists, reputation managers, professionals of all manner, technical support, web developers, system admins, tradesmen, craftswomen, and

more. See the list of amazing projects we have below. We will find a way for you to help our Folk.

Please email <u>volunteer@runestone.org</u> to help us make a difference in our world.

### **Baby Blanket Project**

The Women of the AFA are proud to be continuing this fine and noble work we call the Baby Blanket Project! We're committed to ensuring all new babies born within the AFA are gifted a handmade — knit, crocheted, or woven — baby blanket! It's just our little way of celebrating each new addition to our folk!

This project has been going strong for nearly a year now, and has been a rousing success! The Ladies of the AFA have knitted, crocheted, and sewn beautiful baby blankets for over 20 of our littlest folk, with more on the way. They've been delivered

everywhere from Alaska to Florida, California to Sweden!

If you are a member of the AFA who is expecting a baby, please let your Folkbuilder know so we can get a blanket to you. If you would like to contribute, either financially or by volunteering as a baby blanket crafter, let your Folkbuilder know about that as well, so he can get you in touch with the right people. It's so rewarding to see your handicraft being loved by our little heathens!



Would you like a blanket for your newborn, or to donate and help with yarn costs (yarn is expensive!)? Please email <a href="mailto:babyblanket@runestone.org">babyblanket@runestone.org</a> today!

### **Folk Services**



For some, it may be a natural disaster. For others an unexpected change in health, and for some just an unforeseen chain of events. Whatever the case may be sometimes we find ourselves in a sticky situation, and although we try and to work and do our best to pull ourselves out, sometimes we may need the help of our Folk community to give us a hand up...

That's when our folks Services Program comes in. We give one-time monetary grants to those members in need. These folks are so grateful and we know that once they get back on track they will contribute to this fund. For those that are able, we are in need of funds so we can be prepared for when these situations arise in our community. If you're able please place a donation today. Even a small donation adds up in the grand scheme of things and even \$5 or \$10 can help if enough people pitch in. If even a fraction of the folks who like the page did that each month, imagine the possibilities!

AFA Folk Services is intended to provide modest, one-time monetary grants to 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, please email <u>folkservices@runestone.org</u>.

Your contributions are earnestly solicited and of course, are tax-deductible! Please donate to Folk Services or one of our other AFA Fundraisers at <a href="http://www.runestone.org/donate/">http://www.runestone.org/donate/</a>.

Thanks in advance!

### **Photo Donations**

We have a real need for hi-res photographs of our members' gathering, being active in their kindreds, and showing what it means to live Asatru!



If you are willing to donate some hi-res photos for

use in promotions such as the AFA Calendar, the AFA website, our publications, and more please email them to the AFA at <a href="mailto:photos@runestone.org">photos@runestone.org</a>. The larger the resolution the better, so please email them from the device where the photo was taken.

# **Eir's Blessings**



Everybody needs a little extra help sometimes. Women, being the frithy creatures that we are, are uniquely suited to the task of manipulating energy for the purpose of healing. Magic, you could say.

Do you have a health concern and need a little extra energy? Are you battling with a mental illness like depression or PTSD? Is your baby having a hard time with teething? If you've answered yes at all, reach out

to us. Once a month women of the AFA will get together to perform healing rituals all across the globe. If you would like to be included, please send a message to let us know!

At the same time, Women of the AFA! If you are interested in helping to create a frithful, healing magic, let us know! It's easy, but it makes a huge difference to those in our community who need our help!

### **Last Will and Testament**

Recently, several members of our AFA family have passed beyond the veil. One was an old man in ill health, two were young men in the prime of life... all died with no legal will on record. Sadly, in two of these cases, our dead AFA members did not have their wishes respected regarding their funerals nor the final resting places of their remains.



We never know when tragedy will strike. We have a responsibility to our loved ones, we have a responsibility to our own legacies, to plan for our passing, and to make our wishes known. Planning for and contemplating our death is uncomfortable. Hopefully, we all have plenty of time for that down the road, but we can't count on that. Maybe we worry about expenses or hiring a lawyer. We all have excuses to put things off until later, unfortunately, sometimes the clock runs out before "later" happens.

We have found an amazing resource for our U.S. members to make legally binding wills in minutes online for **free**. This site also has resources to make Advanced Medical Directives and Powers of Attorney. It takes only **minutes** at <a href="https://www.doyourownwill.com/">https://www.doyourownwill.com/</a>.

Please make your will **today**.

The AFA would like to collect signed original copies of wills for all our members and store them. We want to ensure that when members of our AFA family die, their wishes are honored. Please send these to:

Allen Turnage PO Box 16027 Tallahassee FL, 32317



Witan Allen Turnage <a href="mailto:aturnage@runestone.org">aturnage@runestone.org</a>

# The Artisans of the AFA Support Our Folk



The Celtic Craftsman is a general craftsman by trade. He and his wife are growing a young family in the Midwest (USA). Together they raise chickens, garden, hike, and sing and dance at the local Irish pub. In puzzling out the True history of our people, studying their languages, and practicing their arts (culinary, musical, visual, etc.), our family hopes to keep the Fire of our Volk ablaze forever.

Handmade art to honor the ancestors and inspire the Volk. Our work examines Truth—perhaps the most fundamental of which: 1. We are a distinct People marked with a history of heroism, courage, exploration, and conquering. And 2. We have the duty and privilege to carry this torch into the future.

Blood and Honor! Hail the Volk!

Work can be found at: https://t.me/celticcraftsman

For serious inquiries, comment on our channel. We'll reach out via Private Message.



Folkbuilder Timothy Dumas <a href="mailto:tdumas@runestone.org">tdumas@runestone.org</a>

# **Cooking for our Folk**



Cooking from the Heart. One of the first chefs I worked for told me that there are two main rules to cooking.

- 1. ALWAYS cook from the heart!
- 2. You must know the why of the rule before you can think about breaking it.

To this day, I still believe that number one is the most important; but two is the most valuable lesson. So, for example: why would you add flour to the mix when you are making Fried Potato balls? It doesn't add anything to the dish overall and in fact, it takes away flavor and disrupts texture. The reason is that what flour takes away: is moisture. It adds to the binder and liquid consumption.

So, what does this mean for the folk? Plan and simple, don't take shortcuts. Whenever I pick up the knife and began cooking for the folk, I think of it as channeling the ancestors. Cooking reminds me of that age-old musing "I don't measure seasoning; I wait for the tap on the shoulder from the ancestors to tell me that's enough."

When you cook from the heart, people can tell. Don't cook out of spite or obligation. Cook for the folk because you want to! Find new recipes. Test them. Make them better. And when your heart tells you it is right...time to serve. If you have never made cookies from scratch...make them. Why not? Use the best ingredients you can afford

(don't take out a second mortgage for this) but be proud to feed the folk.

When the recipe is right and you feed the folk, please send the recipe to <a href="mailto:cookbook@runestone.org">cookbook@runestone.org</a> with details of when and where it was served (Hof/moot).



Folkbuilder Mike Joyner mjoyner@runestone.org

# **Ladies' Mysteries Podcast**





Folkbuilder Christine Dumas <a href="mailto:cdumas@runestone.org">cdumas@runestone.org</a>

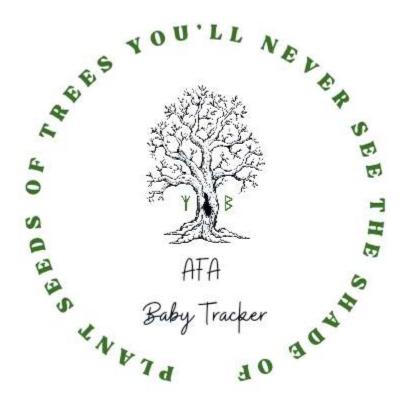
### **AFA Sisters Chat**



Alison Clausen
Apprentice Folkbuilder
aclausen@runestone.org



# **Baby Tracker**



To show the growth of our folk we present to you an ongoing baby tracker. We will be keeping track of how many children have been and are born within the AFA from 2022 and forward. The ongoing tracking is proof that we are building something sustainable for the future of our folk, which is a place for these children to grow up within and a place where they can feel proud of who they are!



Jessica Keller Apprentice Folkbuilder <u>jkeller@runestone.org</u>

# **AFA Prison Ministry**



Greetings kinsfolk,

The importance of this AFA Prison Ministry is so much more than just for those who are actually incarcerated, it benefits not only them as followers of Asatru but their families and loved ones on the outside as they will see the noticeable change in their demeanor and demand that our faith commands for them to lead a noble life. We all are future ancestors and will help them be examples of our faith and not be a burden or a product of recidivism.

We are compiling letters from prisoners that are Educational, Empowering, and Encouraging along with special spiritual writings from our Gothar to create a quarterly newsletter to be distributed to inmates, institutions, and jails. Our mission is not about providing free books or literature to bored prisoners who simply want free stuff. We intend on making real-world change for the better of our folk.

If you have a loved one who is incarcerated or know of someone who is Folkish and will benefit from this ministry, please contact me at jault@runestone.org. Or if you'd like to donate to this ministry, you can donate to the AFA general fund on the Runestone website with an earmark "AFA Prison Ministry" in the comments section.



Folkbuilder James Ault <a href="mailto:jault@runestone.org">jault@runestone.org</a>

# Saga's Literature Project



Saga needs your stories!

Do you have thoughts throughout your day or your studies that you ponder about our Gods, Goddesses, Heroes, or our Faith?

Do you and your family or Kindred have ways you like to venerate the Gods that are special to your own traditions?

How do you celebrate our Holidays or Days of Remembrance?

Do you have advice for those who have finally come home and wish you could have it handy to give to them?

Are you enrolled in Asatru Academy or partake in Lore Study or the Virtue Recovery Group?

The Asatru Folk Assembly wishes to create booklets, brochures, and pamphlets to have on hand in our Hofs and with membership Assembly-wide to give out to anyone with curiosity, whether they are a member or not.

This will be key in our studies as experienced practitioners and should serve as a more efficient way than directing those with questions to our websites alone.

Saga needs your help! Submit any ideas or write-ups you have on the topics listed above to me, Apprentice Folkbuilder Shane Duffy at <a href="mailto:sduffy@runestone.org">sduffy@runestone.org</a>!

Note: All submissions are subject to review from myself and up the chain of command to the Alsherjargothi himself.



Folkbuilder Shane Duffy <a href="mailto:sduffy@runestone.org">sduffy@runestone.org</a>

## Njörðshof

Food Pantry at Njörðshof



Njordshof food pantry has gotten off to a fantastic start. In January, we proudly served 36 families in the cold rain. A special shout out to Pam McCloskey for acquiring a very generous donation from Dollar General in White Springs! They donated 1000 bags to Njordshof!!



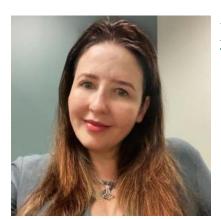
Tracy Adler
Apprentice Folkbuilder
tadler@runestone.org



Njordshof celebrated Thorrablot, a feast to help up get through the last winter months. This Midwinter banquet, feast, and Blot were celebrated with fantastic delicacies, including a German pork dish and a yummy potato. Members brought some delicious desserts as well. Gothi Jason Plourde officiated Blot.

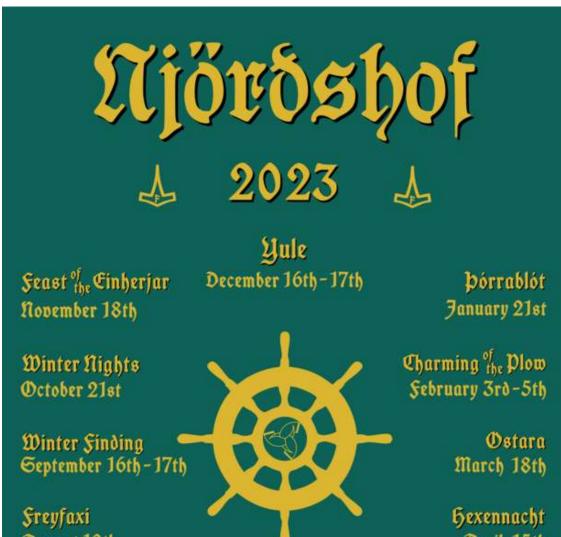


Following the event, many of the members wanted to celebrate at a local brewery. We took our time because we hated to leave our family. Hail the Folk!



Apprentice Folkbuilder <a href="mailto:tadler@runestone.org">tadler@runestone.org</a>

### Upcoming Events at Njörðshof



August 19th

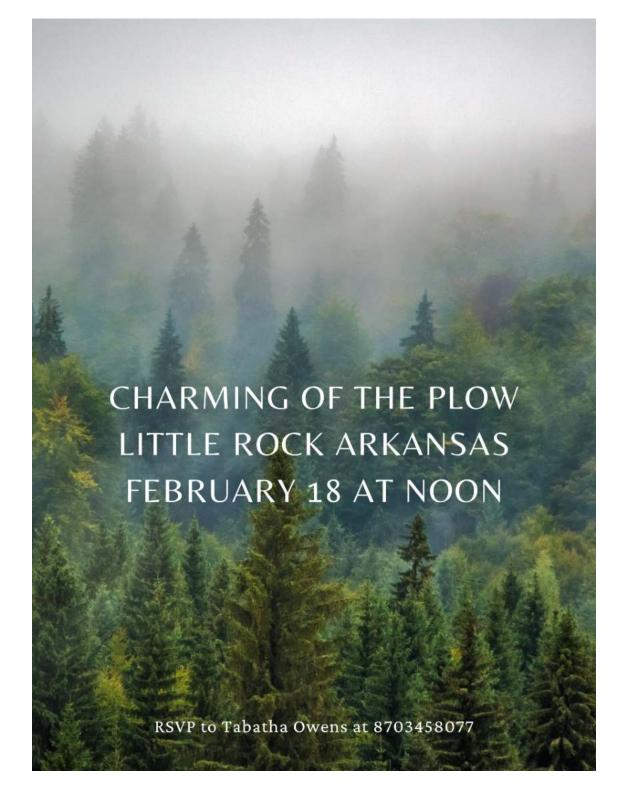
Sigurblot July 15th

Midsummer June 17th-18th April 15th

May Day May 20th

The Harshest Winds Make the Strongest Wood

#### Arkansas



Join us in Arkansas for Charming of the Plow. We will be having a potluck lunch, Freyr blot, dinner, and then Sumbel.



Apprentice Folkbuilder <a href="mailto:towens@runestone.org">towens@runestone.org</a>

#### Florida

#### Welcoming a New Apprentice Folkbuilder

Please welcome Katie Joyner of Florida as our newest apprentice Folkbuilder for the Njörðshof District! We are excited to see the success Katie will achieve in the coming months and years.

Hail Katie Joyner! Hail the AFA! Hail Njörðr!



Katie Joyner
Apprentice Folkbuilder
kjoyner@runestone.org

"You worship the devil, right?"



This was a question that I was asked by the messianic Jewish chapel volunteer as I waited to enter Lawtey, Correctional Institution. I wished I had a photo of my face. I am usually very stoic in a public setting, but this one caught me off guard. My verbal response was, "You can't worship something that you don't believe in."

His next question was, "Well, you are all witches right?" "You are talking about Wiccans, and we are 180 degrees different from them." I went on to explain that Wiccans were eclectic and had various pantheons. That sometimes they mixed their pantheons and they only had two rules. Do what you want as long as it does no harm and the law of three. What karma you send out will return three times as much. We have noble virtues that caused us to be courageous, disciplined, faithful, honorable, hospitable, industrious, self-reliant, truthful and to never give up. Two of our virtues, honor and fidelity, would encompass all of the ten commandants.

During this conversation I realized two points. First, that most people group Asatru with all pagan religions. Second, how different Asatru is from other mainstream religions, especially other pagan religions.

I have attended several pagan festivals with a hundred or more attendees. I have come into contact with probably every dominant pagan religion that exists and conversed with these pagans about their belief system. The general sense that I have gotten, was that most pagans have a "hippy" (showing my age a little) mentality. It is a live and let live type of life style. A anything goes without any remorse type of mind set. If you wanted to step outside your marriage or relationship and have sexual relationships, or if you wanted to step into someone else's marriage or relationship, it was okay. You could even have relationships in which you and multiple partners of varying sex, and have sexual/romantic relationships with each other (polyamory). This is not acceptable

in the AFA.

The AFA is not only different from other mainstream religions, especially other pagan religions. The AFA not only supports a folkish way, but it supports a "traditional family". That means one man and one woman with children if possible. We support each other like an extended family. We trust the safety of our children at AFA events because like a family we care about our brothers' and sisters' children like our own. We know that our wife/husband or girlfriend/boyfriend are safe and that none of our brothers or sisters would do something inappropriate to create strife or destroy Frith. We know that we are a phone call away from someone that will provide us moral and mental guidance and comfort when we struggle with what life will throw at us. We also know that we have a cheering team that wants us to succeed and gets as much, if not more enjoyment when we do succeed. We know that we have been given a purpose to help those European brothers and sisters who are wandering or lost find their way home to their ancestral faith.

There has been much accomplished, but there is much more for us to do. We need to help carry the torch that leads our folk home. We need to show that we are different and better. We need to show in every aspect of our life that...

We are Asatru!



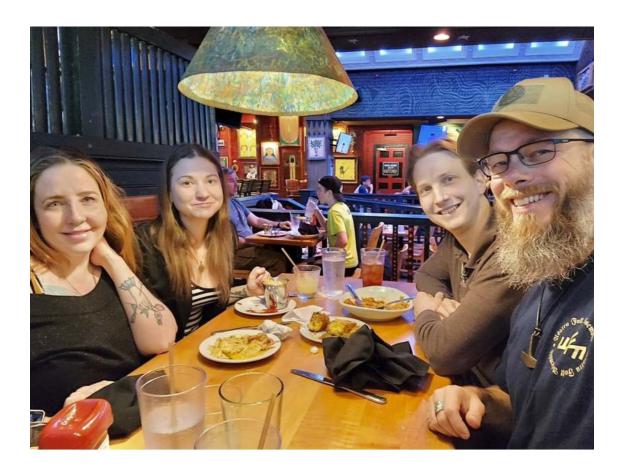
Otto Rafuse
Apprentice Folkbuilder
orafuse@runestone.org

Saga Moot Continues





When we go to moots or meetup together, it's a wonderful opportunity to see each other outside the Hof, celebrate, and build our friendship.





We can communicate on a more personal level and build those bonds and experience joy with all the Folk gathered. When it comes to moots this month, Otto and I had quite a few, and I really would have wished to see the Folk even more often.





For those who could not make it to the event or any moots last month, you were missed, and I really hope to see more of you in the future.



Tracy Adler
Apprentice Folkbuilder
tadler@runestone.org

#### Stone Mountain GA Moot



Whenever I travel for work, I try to have a moot. Lucking out, I had the opportunity to go to Atlanta for the weekend. On my way home Sunday I was able to meet up with three members of Njordshof district at The Village Corner German Restaurant & Bakery. A boot was drunk, Schnitzel was eaten, and good times were had by all. If you ever pass through that area, the place is worth the stop.

Monthly Kubb at a Craft House



T'was dusk on a Wednesday. The air was crisp. As a weary traveler made his way back from a day of traveling for work, he meet three others on the ancient battleground of Tallahassee Craft House's sideyard for an epic two games of KUBBBBBBBB!!!!!!!!!!!

I personally love Kubb and try to introduce as many people to it as I can. This was the second month of Kubb at Craft House. We were able to teach two more folks how to play Kubb. Please join us in on February 15th for Kubb at Craft House in Tallahassee.

#### **Meditation Moot**



We were a little late getting started but we were able to learn some Kundalini meditation as well as some tai chi. We were able do one teaching run through of the full form. Then discussion on meditation followed by a vegetarian Indian lunch to keep the energy flowing. After lunch we were able to do full hour worth of Kundalini complete with rune chanting.



Folkbuilder Mike Joyner <u>mjoyner@runestone.org</u>

#### **South Africa**

#### Not-so-hidden Messages



There are few glasses as rose-colored as the ones we wear when we are nostalgic for the entertainment we enjoyed when we were young.

Our minds have a way of remembering old games with much better graphics than they ever had, to the point where firing an old favorite up again years later can make us wonder how we ever enjoyed it in the first place.

Movies that were simply the best and infinitely rewatchable when we were young become impossible to sit through when we are adults.

This kind of nostalgia is harmless, especially if we resist the urge to watch our favorites now that we're older and a bit more discerning.

But if we are going to recommend one of our old favorites to children, it is probably a good idea to risk the destruction of those rose-colored glasses by first rewatching it ourselves.

There may be something far worse and more insidious than poor animation hiding in that old cartoon.

I am of course speaking of the subversive messaging in entertainment that has played such a big role in enabling some of the worst cultural and political changes in the West in recent years. It's a campaign that has been going on for decades, but it has intensified of late, managing to shift public opinion on issues such as transgenderism and gay marriage in only a few years.

The most successful subversion begins at home, and with the young. No wonder, then, that rewatching what you thought was an innocent cartoon when you were 8 turns out to always have been filled with sophisticated propaganda against our Folk and our ways. It's all the more dangerous because back then, it was often executed so much more subtly and proficiently than in current-day children's shows, which can't help but hit you over the head with "the message".

This topic came up during a recent video chat with South African and European members, and almost everyone had an example of entertainment they enjoyed as children but that they can now see was intended not so much to entertain or educate, but to subvert and destroy.

Fortunately, there are still a lot of excellent older books, films, shows, and games out there, as well as new ones by our Folk. I hope more and more of them will be inspired to create works of art and entertainment, so that we will never have to think twice before recommending something to watch, read or play to our children.

#### **DnD** with Friends



Guest article by Apprentice Folkbuilder Erik Lugnet of Sweden.

Previously on D&D with friends...

In the morning after the cultist attack, Idolf and his mercenaries suddenly hurried away eastwards.

It turned out that what caused Idolf and his mercenary gang to flee were the royal standards and trumpets. King Sigmund Haakon II was traveling through his land, accompanied by scores of soldiers, his personal advisor Bryce, one of his generals, and High Cardinal Bennet of the Church of the Creator.



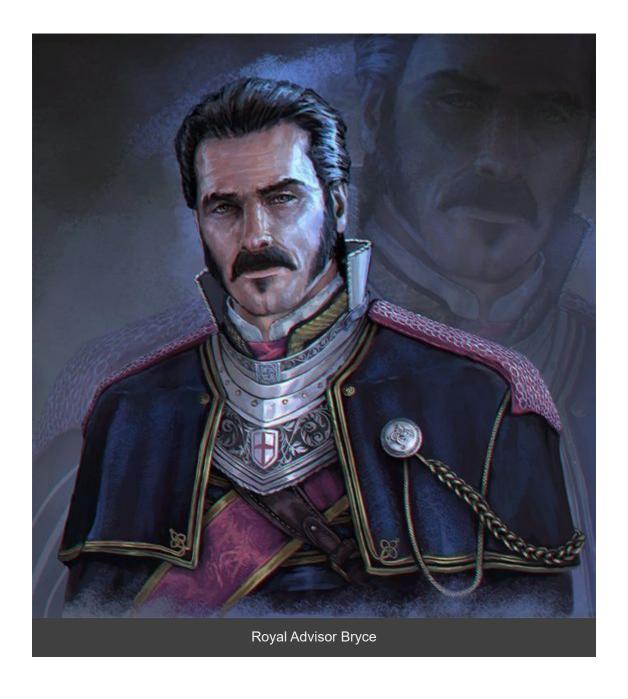
The king took pity on the distraught farmer and promised both men and gold to restore the farmstead to its former glory.

With the king's party traveled another agent of the crown - a young woman named Erin (a druid played by Caitlin). Erin was informed that she was now to travel with our

already-established party of incredible people.

Our adventurers were invited to the royal camp that was established by the farmstead while the soldiers and horses rested. As our heroes explored the camp and interacted with both known and previously unknown people, twilight fell. With the last few rays of sunlight gracing the open landscape, High Cardinal Bennet declared to the camp that the two surviving cultists from the farmstead arson attack were to be burnt at the pyre. Almost all at the camp were shocked at this proclamation. The high cardinal himself set the two heretics aflame with his powerful command of fire magic.

The next day, our protagonists were puzzled over why the cultists had been killed outright instead of being sent to be interrogated and imprisoned in the dungeons of the capital.



Eventually, our team of heroes was summoned to speak in private with the king's advisor, Bryce Haskett. Bryce shared his worry with the party about a potential war with the nation's eastern neighbor, Camborra. Bryce hinted that there are powerful factions in the kingdom that want to declare war on the Camborrians.

Bryce, in his attempt to keep the peace, has established communication with one of the many chiefs of Camborra. As part of his effort to gain the trust of this chief, Bryce wants the party to return the chief's runaway daughter, who supposedly has made her way to the shores of Dawnland. The mission is one of discretion and utmost importance.

While the adventurers are wary of continuing their forced servitude to the crown, they reluctantly accept, as Bryce gives them their word that if all goes well, in the end, he will personally elevate them to the nobility.

The party leaves for Kathos Rock, the harbor city, where the chief's daughter was supposedly heading. The journey is a long one, and after a few days of travel, they are ambushed by lowly bandits, who the party easily disposes of.

As clouds fill the sky and heavy rain falls down on our heroes, they find a dark cave they decide to check out. Soon, Sexred's wolf is seemingly caught in a web, and Grug hears skittering in the darkness...

Will our party survive their exploration of this cave smelling of rot? Will they find the chief's daughter before other factions do?

Find out next time, on DnD with friends...

South Africa Update

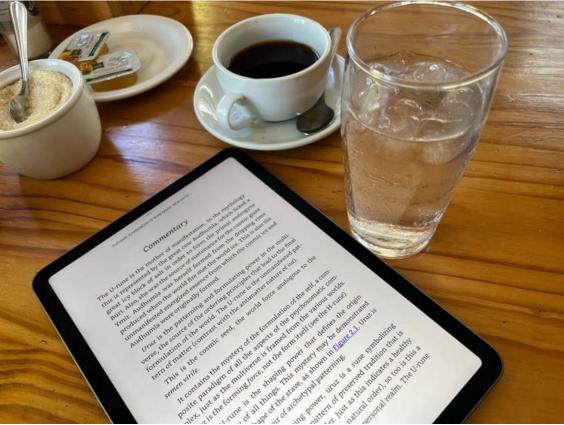




It was yet another dark month in South Africa - literally. It has now been three months since we last had a day without scheduled power cuts.

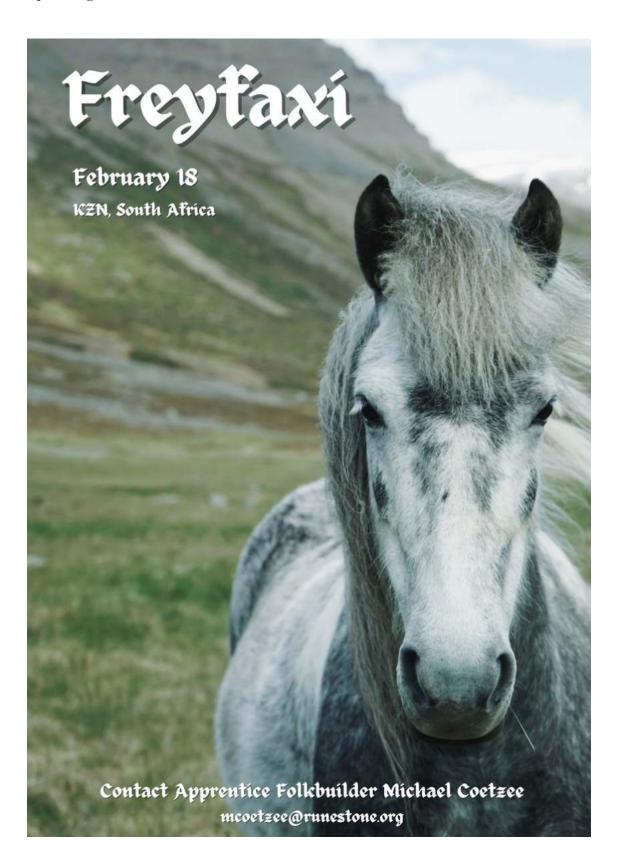
We refuse, however, to let these challenges stand in our way. On January 16, we celebrated Sígrblöt, offering sacrifice to Tyr and asking for justice for our Folk.





On January 8, we added an educational element to the now-regular Coffee Farm Moot, turning it into the first Coffee Farm Rune Study Moot. Many are sure to follow.

#### **Upcoming Events**

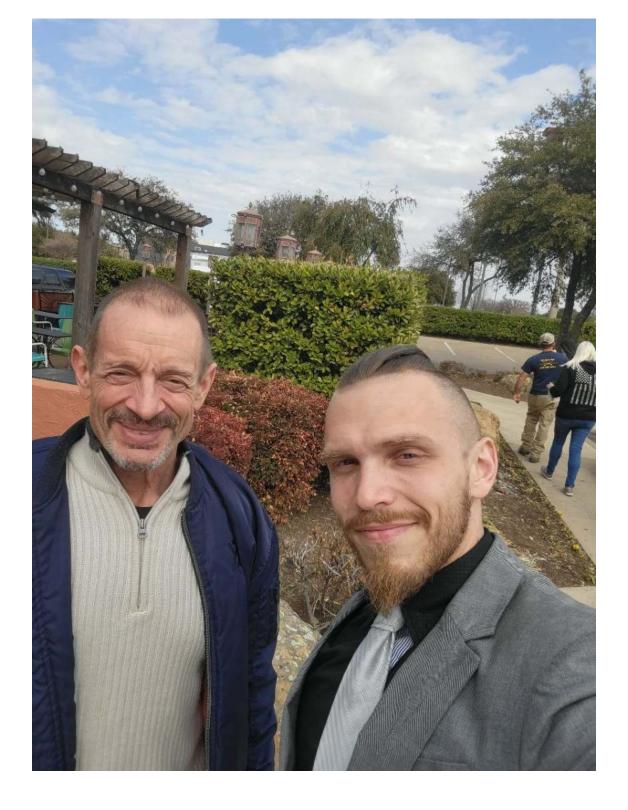




Michael Coetzee Apprentice Folkbuilder mcoetzee@runestone.org

### Texas

Lunch Moot in Allen, Texas



On January 21st members of Fríðr Folk Kindred Texas met for lunch at On the Border in Allen, Texas. We enjoyed great food and Frith, and are looking forward to many more gatherings.



On January 8th members of Fríðr Folk Kindred Texas made a pilgrimage to Witchita Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma to meet with several Oklahoma Folk. Together we climbed Elk Mountain and held a Blot to Oðin at the summit. Hail the one eyed god!

#### Thorrablot in Dallas



We were pleased to be able to gather under the majesty of the night sky to give blot to the mighty Thor.

Hail the Folk!



Folkbuilder Justin Day jday@runestone.org



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