

The Runestone: Voice of the Asatru Folk Assembly
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Óðinshof

First Hof of the Asatru Folk Assembly

www.odinshof.org

July 2024

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Words from the Alsherjargothi



Sól is high in the summer sky and AFA activity is in full swing!

Midsummer at Óðinshof was amazing as usual. This year we had the pleasure of having our dear friends and esteemed colleagues, Witan Cliff and Gyðja Catie Erickson attend, along with their two children. The Ericksons are one of the many couples and families that have been built from within the AFA and it continues to be a special pleasure to watch them grow and prosper. It was great to have the Ericksons get to spend a few days with us after the event as well.

Also, in attendance at Midsummer, for his very first time at Óðinshof, was Folkbuilder Nick Rice. Nick spent the entire weekend helping out, as he spends most of his days. I can't express just how much we appreciate all his hard work for us and for our Æsir.

For over a decade, I have heard folks talk about getting a bus to drive scattered members to a Hof for events This year it happened! Many talk about it, but Folkbuilder Tyler Heinlein IS about it. Tyler drove himself, his family, 2 apprentice Folkbuilders, and others from the Pacific Northwest down to Midsummer and it was great to have them all in attendance.

Huge thanks to the stellar crew at Óðinshof for making this event such a great success.

Events like this are such a huge part of what we do, and we want you all to be a part of things! That said, come on out to Sigrblót at Sigrheim!

We are building the dream in Jackson County, Tennessee, and we want to see you all there July 19-21. Sigrheim is an amazing property and will become the home to many of us (the Flavels included), as well as Týrshof and the AFA capital in the years to come. I am looking forward to sharing a special time with amazing people and we would love to count you among them!

Together, we manifest Victory!



Matthew D. Flavel
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Words From Our Witan

Asatru is Your Family's Birthright, Too!



“Asatru is the religion with homework”

“You have to earn your hammer”

“The Gods call who they will”

These three statements can all be misleading.

It is of course good to study history, to study our lore in the Eddas and Sagas and Folklore, to study the runes, language, and all the other things that help to inform our

faith.

It is of course good to act in a way that is noble, brave, kind, and righteous.

It is of course up to the Gods to do as they will, and we can't presume to understand all of their motives, or even any of them.

However, none of these are the defining characteristics of our faith and religion...

Ásatrú means "Belief in the Gods" or more literally "Troth to the Æsir". It is a holy faith in the Æsir. This is faith not only in the sense of "belief" but also in the sense of "trust" or "loyalty". When you say to someone "I have faith in you" it means more than "I believe you exist", it means "I believe you will do right" or "I believe you will succeed".

We know our Ancestors are alive today inside us, our family lines are a river of blood and sweat, of failure and success. Our Ancestors are our direct, physical link to the Aesir. The Æsir are the most ancient blood Ancestors of our Folk. We are, or will be, that same link for our descendants and all their progeny. As you go through life, remember that your reputation belongs to all of us, and especially to your descendants.

The Æsir created the world and gave us life, wit, and vigor. Every Blót we make to the Aesir is a return on this first gift, made from the world created for us by the Æsir. An imperative of our faith is to continue this Gift Cycle perpetually. We should always be mindful that the Æsir started the Gift Cycle and our Ancestors -Ásatrú and otherwise-maintained this Gift Cycle through the successful lives they led. Our existence is proof of this success. Our children's prosperity and faith are proof of our success.

The job of the Goðar of the Asatru Folk Assembly is to represent our Folk to the Æsir when we make Blót. We speak on behalf of the Folk to the Gods. Our Gods are real, they are alive, they exert their will in our world, and they can see us. When a Goði or Gyðia gives a gift, an offering, to the Gods that gift is always in reciprocation for gifts the Gods already have given us. It is made of the gifts they have given us, and it is made by the gifts they have given us. It is a thank-you, and we hope that in giving it that the Gods choose to continue the Gift Cycle with the Folk that the Gods started at the beginning of our world. The Goði or Gyðia is there to receive the gift on behalf of the Folk and to distribute those blessings. This Gift Cycle is the basis of our faith and our Gods and Goddesses are divine, and so piety is not optional even if we cannot be perfectly pious.

In these mixed-up times it is important to remember not only that it is okay to be white, but also that we owe to our descendants the same sturdy roots from which we ourselves have grown. We Ásatrúar are on the side of nature, we are on the side of family, we are on the side of order, we are on the side of light, and we are on the side of life. Live Ásatrú openly every moment. Practice Ásatrú in the light of day. Be a Folkbuilder every day and in every interaction that you have.

How do we do this? Most importantly, build up the Gift Cycle.

Regularly attend Blót offered by our Goðar, and make gifts to the Gods, to the Ancestors, and to the Vættir at home. When you make a gift to the Gods, don't show up as a beggar. Instead, show them what you have done with the world and how you have improved it. Show them your worth, but let them determine if you are worthy.

Remember your place, and remember that these are Gods.

When you make a gift to your Ancestors that you knew in life, speak to them as you did in life. Give them a gift that is personal and relevant to your relationship to them. I have given my Grandfather Hawaiian pizza because I know he liked this in life. Pick a favorite food or beverage, or make something that you use to do together, or any number of other things than maintain that same relationship that existed in life. Let them know how you are doing and what you might need help with.

When you make a gift to more ancient Ancestors whom you didn't know in life, demonstrate a knowledge of them. Documenting your family tree through genealogy is a great way to do this, and when you reach a branch that you cannot trace any further learn the history and way of life of the nation and ethnicity that the branch folds back into. Build a common frame of reference and again let them know your struggles and victories and where some help would be appreciated.

Landvættir (or Land wights) and Húsvættir (or house wights) can be a little bit trickier to interact with since the kinship relationship is not present like it is with the Gods and Ancestors, but there is a shared interest in maintaining Miðgarð in a healthy and orderly way. Make it clear that is who you are to them, a man or woman whose presence in a place will be for good, and for the order that the Æsir established. This will go a long way with Vættir of varying temperaments and varying experiences with people. Don't ask for anything beyond goodwill from the Vættir.

The second most important thing is to build your fame, your reputation.

Building our fame with our Living Folk makes us an example that others want to

emulate, that because of you they want to be Ásatrú. We should be known as “the good neighbor” or the “the good man” as much as we are known as “The Ásatrú Man” or “my Ásatrú neighbor”.

It is okay to be angry at Christianity, but remember that Christian Folk are still our Folk, and they need our help! We need to remind them who they really are.

The collapse of European religious institutions over the past century has led to disintegration of the family unit, to rampant homosexuality, to addiction of all variety, to laziness and unaccountability. But it is also an opportunity. Our Folk would likely not have been ready to return to faith in our Gods had Christianity not faltered as the dominant European religion. Our Christian Folk are not wrong, they have been wronged. They are not the first to wake up, so we need to rouse them. The same is true for those who are halfway there by leaving Christianity but are stuck in some atheistic or secular worldview. We may be in a Wolf Age, but we're also in an age of opportunity which needs spiritual heroes! Some of those heroes are undiscovered in this room right now.

Þórr's reputation among the Jötuns matters. Your reputation among non-Folk matters too! Our faith can be misunderstood easily enough by peoples who do not have informed experience with it. We need to make sure that our reputations are impeccable and that as Aryans, we are the race that all others look up to. We are noble, strong, and just. We are also generous and kind. We respect all living things.

Aryan means noble and we must hold ourselves to a very high standard.

What else can we do?

Volunteer. Be willing to do the work that is necessary rather than the work that is glorious. Know that none of us is the ideal we aspire to but do your best anyway. Perfect and permanent are imaginary but try for them anyway. But don't wait for perfect to be ready to begin. Be willing to make mistakes and to start now.

“Ásatrú is the religion with homework”

Yes, do your homework.

“You have to earn your hammer”

Yes, prove you are honorable.

“The Gods call who they will”

Yes, listen to the call of our Gods.

But always remember that Ásatrú is the birthright of every single one of our Folk, even if they need to be reminded about that birthright. Appreciate the magic and beauty of our Folk and of the Æsir. Don't settle for less, offer the same to your kin. Ásatrú is their birthright, too.

Bring them home!



Witan Clifford Erickson
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Words From Our Gothar

Folk Futhark - Part Five



Eihwaz -

This rune's stave, although familiar, is not the one used in the Elder Futhark. It is borrowed from the Younger Futhark, but retains its meaning. This is the rune of transition, of closing a book, of death. All of these meanings can be gleaned from viewing this rune as a man, or as Odin, hanging upside down. That hanged man could be a corpse, or it could be the All-Father sacrificing his lower to his Higher Self to take

up the runes. In divination, this rune is often viewed as the end of something. It is not always a negative rune, but it's certainly one that carries a bit of weight.



Perthro -

This rune's stave is unchanged from its Elder Futhark counterpart. Many people view this as the rune of the "lot cup", or of luck. However, this is an oversimplification. Perthro is placed between the death rune and the life rune for a reason: it is the womb. Where Eihwaz is an end of a chapter, Perthro is the beginnings of the next chapter. Where Eihwaz is the hanged man, Perthro is the fertile womb ready to bring new life into Midgard. It is potential energy, much like Fehu, but more "alive", for lack of a better word.



Algiz -

One of the most recognizable of our Folk's symbols, this stave is unchanged throughout all of the rune rows. This is the rune of light and life, of connection to the Æsir here on Midgard, of being centered and grounded in both the sacred and the profane. The symbol most closely resembles a man or woman with their arms outstretched towards the heavens, as if they are hailing our Æsir in ritual. This is not a coincidence! The symbol can also be viewed as the gifts of Odin, Vili, & Vé being poured into this new

life. Its placement after Perthro is also not a coincidence! Algiz is life and connection and actualization, energy manifest in right action. In divination, this rune is only ever seen as positive. It could mean a new chapter of one's life has begun, or that something or someone will be born into your world, or that you should continue to connect with the Æsir.



Goði Trent East

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The Folk Remember



Farrin LaSan

Y 11/18/1980 - 6/19/2024 †

Farrin LaSan

Y 11/18/1980 - 6/19/2024 †

Farrin was a sweet girl. She wore her heart on her sleeve and would do what she could to help anyone she could, even if they wronged her in the past. She loved her son very much and was a great mother. She was a good wife, very loving and faithful and got her feelings hurt easily. She smiled, laughed a lot sometimes even when she was sad, most people that met her loved her because she was so kind considerate and sweet. Was 43 years old and her loss is tragic. She will be dearly missed. She wanted to be with her

husband and death in hopes to have a lot of what we shared in life. She is survived by her husband, her son, 13, her sister, her brother and one aunt. She truly was a lovely young lady, and we miss her dearly. Her nickname was mischief because she was always up to it. And we will miss her.

Hail Farrin!

The Folk Remember!

Ásatrú Trúlögmál



Ásatrú Trúlögmál: The fundamental beliefs of the Asatru Folk Assembly.

You can find it on our website at <https://www.runestone.org/asatru-trulogmal>.

We have known for a long time that a clear expression of the fundamental beliefs of the AFA was needed and recently, we took the first steps in presenting that in a clear and straight forward way. Please know this is the first step and is by no means all-encompassing. The intention here is to express the very fundamentals of our religion in one place, in a way that is easy for our AFA family to reference as well as a document to explain our religion to those who ask: "What is it that you guys believe?"

Hail the Heroes of Ásatrú that paved the way!

Hail the Asatru Folk Assembly!

Hail the Æsir!



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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 prosperity of men.”

– Gylfaginning



[Freyshof Fund – Asatru Folk Assembly \(runestone.org\)](https://runestone.org/freyshof-fund)

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.
 - The first of 2 loans have been paid off!
 - We now owe \$84,063 on our remaining loan.
2. We need to raise our monthly donation average by 15.51%.
 - 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 patient and resolute. As we progress, I will keep you all updated on our progress!

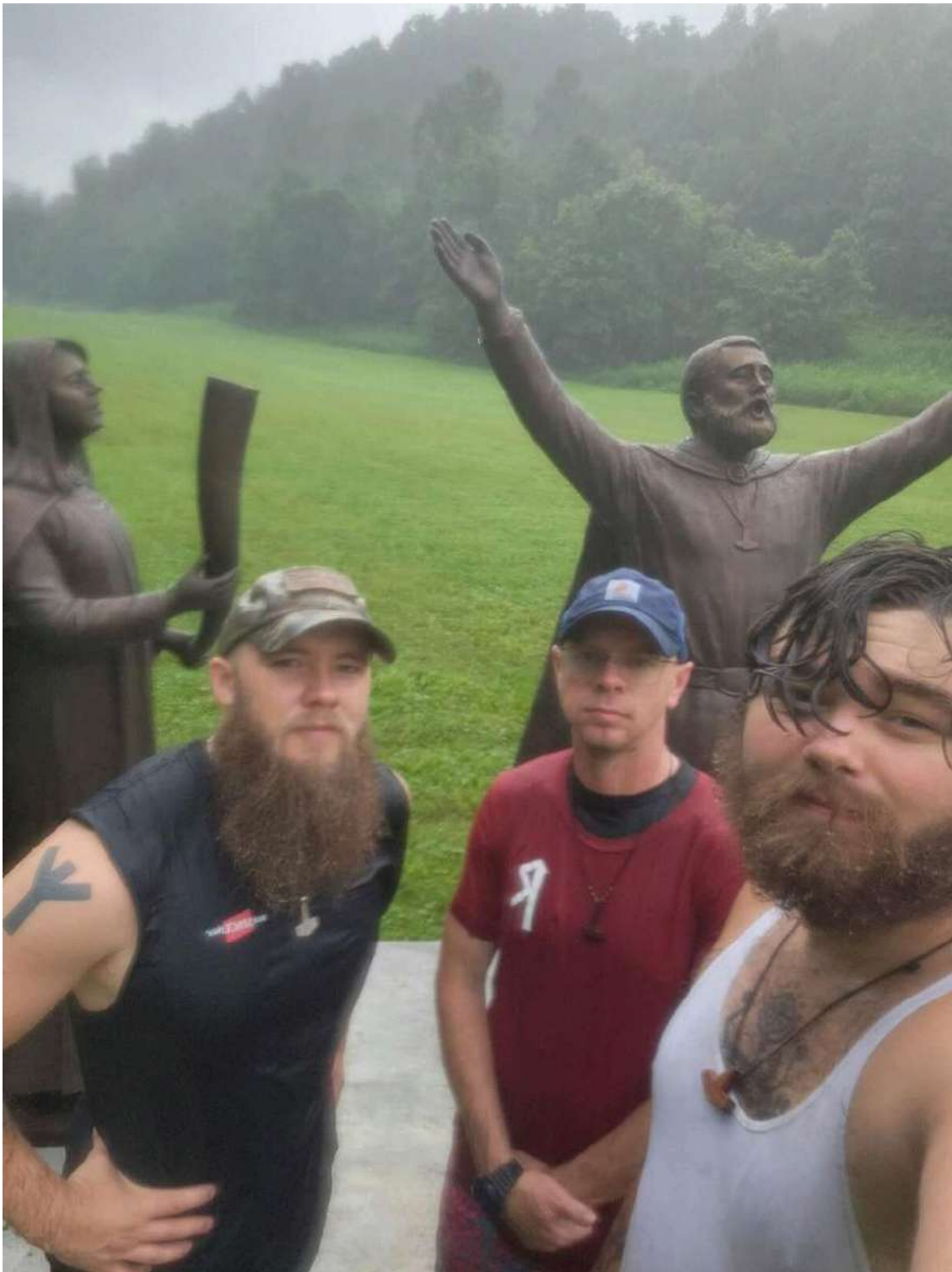
Hail Freyr!



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Sigrheim: Home of Victory

The Hard Work to Prep for Sigrblót



A huge shout out goes to Witan Dan Young, Folkbuilder Tyler Bethea, and members, Steven and Riley, for joining me out at Sigrheim last weekend for a sweltering weekend of solid work. Fences are continuing to come down, grass is getting mowed, brush keeps getting cleared, and the gravestones are beginning to be restored.



We've a bit more to do in preparations for Sigrblót (tickets at <https://store.runestone.org/product/sigrblot-at-sigrheim/>) coming up in just two short weeks, but we'll be ready to welcome our Folk back to Sigheim once again. Hope to see you there!

Support the Home of Victory



Help Sigrheim get stocked
and ready for our Folk!

Donate Supplies
from our
wishlist ✨ ✨ ✨
amazon

Thank You!

click here

Upcoming Events





Folkbuilder Nicholas Rice
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Victory Never Sleeps



Victory Never Sleeps, a weekly podcast produced by the Asatru Folk Assembly, hosted by Alsherjargothi Matthew Flavel alongside weekly guests. The show doesn't stop until the questions stop rolling in. Come listen and learn about a variety of topics and truths relevant to our modern Asatru Folk.

Aesir. Virtues. Heroes. Doctrine. Beliefs. Cosmology. Runes. Holidays. Literature. Lore.

Help [support](#) the stream and keep the cameras rolling!

Catch us LIVE with new episodes on Wednesdays at 8pm Central / 6pm Pacific on YouTube, Twitter, Entropy, Odyssee, VK, Rumble, and Twitch. Audio versions drop on Spotify, Apple Podcast, iHeartRadio, and Amazon Podcasts on the Friday after the new episodes air.

Check out the full playlist with 100's of hours of previous recordings on our [YouTube](#).



TEES, TANKS, SWEATERS!

MUGS! HATS! STICKERS!

We've got merch month over at the [Runestone Store!](#) Go check it out!



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AFA Asatru Academy

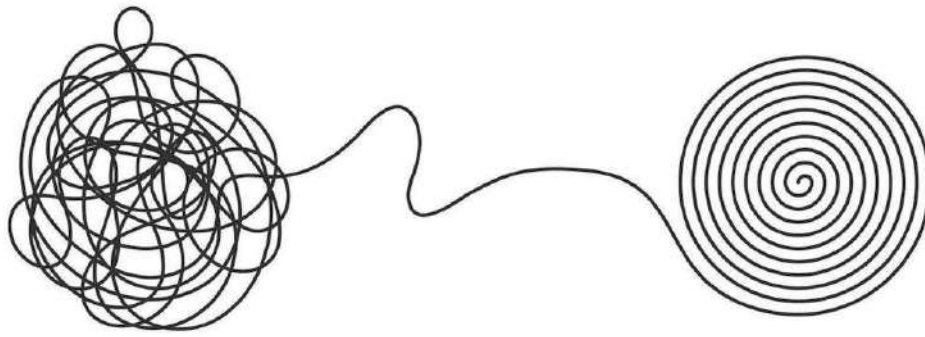


Check out the Asatru Academy at AsatruAcademy.org



We've got merch month over at the [Runestone Store!](https://RunestoneStore.com) Go check it out!

Order vs. Chaos



Greetings parents and students. If the heading of this article didn't tip you off, I want to talk about order vs chaos.

We have decided that the upcoming school year 2024/2025, our theme will be order vs chaos. What does this mean for our younger students? Well, while our older students can certainly dive into the metaphysical and cosmic aspects of this concept, our younger students can and will learn to discern the obvious benefits of an ordered life and surroundings, vs a chaotic and unordered life. For example: most of the cartoons and children's programs that our kids watch have a clear theme of the hero fighting a villain. Often this takes form of the villain representing chaos, a rebellion against rules and society. The hero puts things in order. Children thrive on routine and tend to not do as well in a disordered lifestyle, and this is a perfect opportunity to teach them, in terms they can understand, about the very large Aryan principle of order vs chaos. Even seemingly small things, like waiting in line, rather than a disordered push to the front with no clear line. This can be used as a teaching moment.

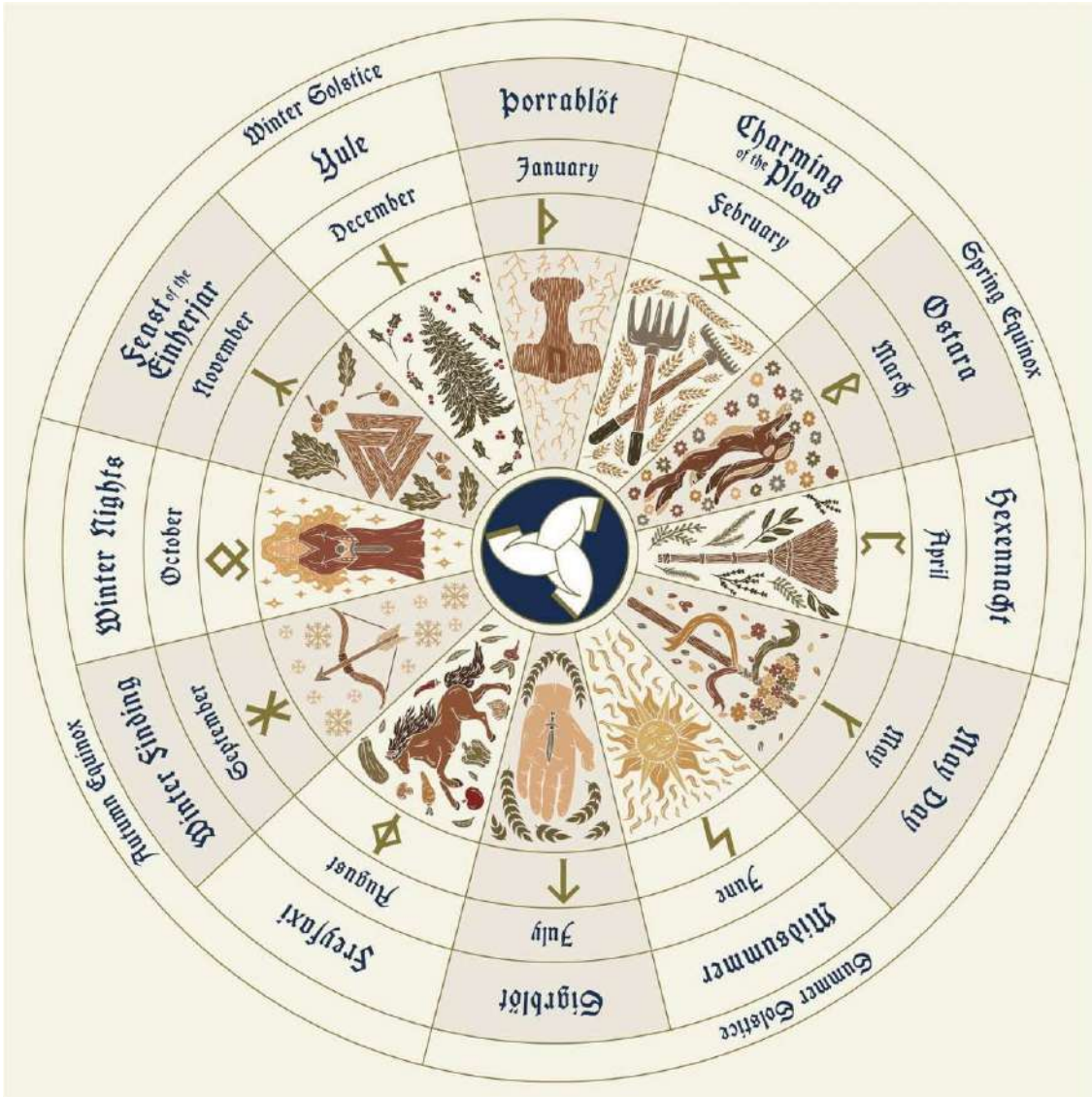
So, our theme for the upcoming academic year will be *order vs chaos*. How will you recognize this is in everyday life? How can we as students and responsible young Aryan boys and girls showcase order and put it to work in our lives? All this will be explored this upcoming year!

We look forward to seeing you all this fall. As a reminder, we will be enrolling K-6th over the course of this summer, to start the school year in September.

Goði Rob Stamm
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Remembrance & Holy Days



[Calendar – Asatru Folk Assembly \(runestone.org\)](https://runestone.org)

Date	Observance
January 9	Day of Remembrance for Raud the Strong
January 20	Porrablót
February 9	Day of Remembrance for Eyvind Kinnrifi
February 17	Charming of the Plow
March 9	Day of Remembrance for Olvir of Egg
March 19 (observed on 16th)	Ostara
April 9	Day of Remembrance for Jarl Haakon
April 10	Day of Remembrance for John Yeowell "Stubba"
April 30 (observed on 20th)	Hexennacht
May 9	Day of Remembrance for Else Christensen
May 1 (observed on 18th)	May Day
June 9	Day of Remembrance for King Athanaric of the Goths
June 20 (observed on 15th)	Midsummer
July 4	Day of Remembrance for Sveinbjorn Beinteinsson
July 9	Day of Remembrance for Alexander Rud Mills
July 20	Sigrblót
August 9	Day of Remembrance for King Radbod of Frisia
August 17	Freyfaxi
September 9	Day of Remembrance for Prince Hermann of the Cherusci
September 22 (observed on 21st)	Winter Finding
October 1	Day of Remembrance for John Gibbs-Bailey "Hoskuld"
October 9	Day of Remembrance for Meister Guido von List
October 15	Birthday of Founder Stephen McNallen
October 19	Winter Nights
November 9	Day of Remembrance for Queen Sigríð of Sweden
November 11 (observed on 16th)	Feast of the Einherjar
December 9	Day of Remembrance for Egill Skallagrímsson
December 20	Mother's Night
December 20-31 (observed on 21st)	Yuletide

July



Asatru Holidays - July 2024 - Beinteinsson | Rud Mills | Sigrblót

Days of Remembrance

Sveinbjörn Beinteinsson | July 4th



Y July 4, 1924 - December 23, 1993 A

Sveinbjörn Beinteinsson was born July 4, 1924, and lived as a sheep farmer in Borgarfjörður, a fjord in the west of Iceland. Sveinbjörn was an early practitioner and leader of modern Ásatrú. Sveinbjörn and fellow Ásatrúar founded the Ásatrúarfélagið (Ásatrú Fellowship) on the First Day of Summer 1972 (April 18) and Sveinbjörn was named Allsherjargoði.

Allsherjargoði Sveinbjörn then led the push for the Ásatrúarfélagið to be recognized by the Icelandic government. When Allsherjargoði Sveinbjörn collected the appropriate paperwork from the Minister of the Icelandic Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, he received vague answers from the minister who did not take him seriously. When Allsherjargoði Sveinbjörn was exiting the ministry building, a thunderbolt caused a major power outage in Reykjavík which left the ministry building and the minister in the dark. Hail Þórr!

After submitting the required paperwork, Allsherjargoði Sveinbjörn still faced opposition. The strongest opposition came from the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland, the head of the state church of Iceland. The bishop took the position that “polytheistic religious organizations founded [in Iceland] would therefore not be protected by the [Icelandic] constitution”. The bishop also criticized Allsherjargoði

Sveinbjörn and the Ásatrúarfélagið for not naming a head of their religion, for not having a set written doctrine, and for not having a house of worship. There were also critics in Iceland who agreed with the bishop that polytheism was illegal in Iceland and that “Christ is enough”. However, Allsherjargoði Sveinbjörn’s arguments prevailed and in May of 1973 the Ásatrú Fellowship was recognized as a church by the government and with this was given legal standing to perform weddings, was given a share in church taxes.

In August of the same year, Allsherjargoði Sveinbjörn led the first legal public Ásatrú Blót since the year 1000 when the Allthing had forbidden Blót and declared Iceland a Christian nation. Allsherjargoði Sveinbjörn went on to lead the Ásatrúarfélagið for twenty more years until he returned to his ancestors during Yuletide of 1993.

Sveinbjörn was also a published poet of several books of Rímur, Icelandic rhymes. He recorded verses of his own and of the Poetic Edda Hávamál, Völuspá, and Sigrdrífumál.

In its early days, the Ásatrúarfélagið was notably Folkish and took ethical positions consistent with Ásatrú. For example in 1975 the Ásatrúarfélagið opposed abortion on the basis that the movement to legalize abortion is “traced to international movements opposed to the Nordic nations and in particular to the Nordic race”. The Ásatrúarfélagið has unfortunately failed to maintain the ideals of Ásatrú that the Asatru Folk Assembly continues to promote today, but Allsherjargoði Sveinbjörn Beinteinsson of the Ásatrúarfélagið remains a hero of our Folk who heard the call of the Æsir at a time when very few did.

Hail Sveinbjörn Beinteinsson!

Alexander Rud Mills | July 9th



† July 15, 1885 - April 8, 1964 †

Alexander Rud Mills was born in Forth, Tasmania, and lived from 1885-1964. He was the guiding light for the foundations of Ásatrú in Australia.

In 1933 Rud Mills began writing books about our faith and in 1936 he founded the Anglecyn Church of Odin. Mills was able to build a solid Ásatrú community, but during the turbulent times of the Second World war, Rud Mills was bitterly persecuted by his government, and the community that he built suppressed. With no evidence

against him of illegal activity, Alexander Rud Mills was imprisoned. It was nearly a decade before Mills was released and despite all of his efforts, he was unable to revive his church to its former glory.

All was not lost, however. Alexander Rud Mills's many publications and his passion lived on and inspired a new generation. In the 1970s a group of Ásatrú students at the University of Melbourne campaigned to have Ásatrú recognized as a formal religion in Australia, hoping to be able to protect the faith from the same persecution that Mills suffered. It took almost two decades, but by the early '90s, Ásatrú was granted religious status in Australia. Alexander Rud Mills's vision also, notably, inspired Else Christensen, who was a leading voice of Ásatrú in North America.

So, what can we learn from this story?

Alexander Rud Mills didn't live to see the culmination of all of his hard work. When he died Ásatrú was still a repressed faith in his homeland. Even without reward and recognition, he worked until his death, to try and revive the ancient folkway. And he did succeed. Could he have ever imagined how far-reaching his influence would be while he lived? Despite being imprisoned and persecuted for his beliefs, Alexander continued. Even without knowing that his hard work would bear fruit, he continued. He didn't give up in the face of a thankless, and dauntless task. He didn't let his ego, or his own self-importance, stop him from doing what he believed he needed to do. There were no rewards. There were no praises. There was nothing in it for him except the knowledge and the belief that he was doing the right thing for his folk.

Take from this story the need to remember that the bigger picture, even when we can't see it, is so much more important than just ourselves. We do what we are doing for our children and for their children so that when we are gone, they have a foundation strong enough to hold them up and help them build better and stronger.

Alexander Rud Mills is the dedicated hero of Þórshof. For more information and a deeper dive into the life and acts of this Australian hero, check out [Thorshof.com](https://thorshof.com).

Holiday

Sigrblót | July 20th



Sigrblót literally means ‘Victory Blót’ and was celebrated by our ancestors in the early summer months. On the one hand, our ancestors were celebrating their victory over the harsh winter. Life had won. On the other hand, our ancestors performed blot to ask for victory. With the warm weather and the completion of the planting time the men often turned their minds to the duty of man. War. Practically speaking, summer was the better time to organize new campaigns and to set sail.

In our modern times, the vast majority of us are not familiar with war in a personal way. We do, however, all have our struggles. Sigrblót is a time to refocus. It is the time we can use to reorganize our priorities, to figure out the steps we need to take in order to reach our ultimate goals, and to break free from those that we struggle with.

One great way to celebrate Sigrblót is to offer a meal or some other item that you spent time making in thanks for the victory of life. Another option is to sacrifice a bladed weapon to the fire. A nice knife, for example, the blade dulled in battle so that it cannot be used against you (this is symbolic, of course), offered to the fire is a great way to ask our Gods for victory during the coming winter.

A gift for a gift.

Upcoming National Events

Sigrblót at Sigrheim | July 19th-21st



The second Sigrblót at the Home of Victory!

And no other place is it more righteous to celebrate the Victory Sacrifice!

This is time we come together to honor both the summer and to make offering to the Æsir in hopes of their blessing for that which we are striving forth to conquer or acquire for us and our Folk! In times now passed, our Folk would be asking for the Æsir's blessings in battles and raids! And we ask now at this time for them to accept what we have to offer that he may lend his strength to see us victorious in our current endeavors!

Blóts! Feasting! Sumbel! An auction with one-of-a-kind items!

Camping is available on-site (bring your own tents and gear), and there are hotels within 20-30 mins of Sigrheim as well. Some AirB&B's in the area too. You are welcome to come early, stay late, and spend as much time on the land as you'd like. It's open to any of our member Folk!

Notice: this is undeveloped land. We will have Port-a-potties and will make sure drinking water is readily available. However, it is imperative that you plan accordingly.

There will be a couple large event tents to gather in. But no other public structures.

Please wear appropriate footwear and be prepared for a hike through the woods and up the ridge if you plan on participating in Blót. If you have any physical restrictions, this particular part of the weekend may cause a challenge or an inability to participate on that particular event. If you have off-road vehicles such as 4-runners, ATV's, etc., they would be a most welcome addition to the weekend and could mean the ability to get those who are otherwise restricted, up the ridge and safely back down again.

Bug spray, sunscreen, coolers, water, snacks, tents, blankets, appropriate clothing and footwear is advised.

If you have any questions about the land, area, or event, please reach out to Folkbuilder Nick Rice at nrice@runestone.org.

Get your tickets [HERE!](#)



Folkbuilder Nicholas Rice
nrice@runestone.org

Freyfaxi at Baldrshof | August 16th-18th



Join the gathered Folk for Freyfaxi at Baldrshof 2024!

This weekend will include:

- * 9 total meals
- * Daily Fika
- * 5 Blots
- * High Sumbl
- * Daily Dedications and Devotions
- * Ceremonies of the Folk
- * Discussions, Workshops, and Classes
- * Men's and Women's Spiritual Groups
- * Tournaments and Games!
- * Crafter's Tables
- * Auction
- * Children's Activities

Freyfaxi is Baldrshof's yearly showcase event and serves as the primary fundraiser for operation and support of the Hof.

Contact any member of Baldrshof Leadership for accommodation recommendations or questions about travel arrangements.

Children's Tickets are FREE, however please include a ticket for each child in order to

properly prepare for meals and children's activities!

All non-member guests must be pre-approved with proper background checks to ensure the safety of our folk and children. Please contact leadership for more details.

Get your tickets [HERE!](#)



Witan Brandy Fassett
bfassett@runestone.org

Winter Nights XIII | October 11th-13th



Started in 2012, the Asatru Folk Assembly's Winter Nights festival was hosted at a beloved camp in Pennsylvania for its first decade. Winter Nights has since been hosted

in Ohio and in Tennessee and this year Winter Nights XIII will be held from October 11th – 13th, in Cheshire County, New Hampshire!

This long-running AFA festival is dedicated to our ancestral mothers, the Disir. When the harvest is in, the summer plants have died off, and the winter is quickly approaching the veil between the living and dead is said to be at its thinnest. Again, we will gather to worship our Gods, Goddesses, and Ancestral Mothers. We build upon the success of the Asatru Folk Assembly by making new friends and renewing old friendships. We look forward to seeing members and friends!

Your registration fee includes all workshops, lectures, meals, tent sites, and of course our holy rites. Only AFA members and vouched-for guests will be admitted to this event. If you are not an AFA Member you should confirm with the member who is vouching for you that they will do so when asked about your registration.

Things to know:

- Children 17 and under attend for free!
- Meals are included with all passes.
- You will need to bring your own bedding and it can get COLD at night, so plan accordingly.
- Accommodations are on-site tent camping. Bring your tent!
- Please contact Witan Clifford Erickson if you will attend.
- Guests, please include the name of the AFA member who is vouching for you.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email cerickson@runestone.org

Get your tickets [HERE!](#)



Witan Clifford Erickson
cerickson@runestone.org

A Thanks to Folk Services



I wanted to personally thank all who've helped by giving me a hand up with recent life issues I've faced. A special thanks is owed to Apprentice Folkbuilder Ron Boardman, and Mandy Flavel. Ron convinced me to let Folk Services come through for me in a very difficult time. My faith in the Aesir and Tru Folk has not wavered. Humbling as it

may be, we can let go of excessive pride, asking for help sometimes, not try just to stand alone, like I usually do. The Frith shown to me was unprecedented and gave me a lot of hope. I've donated to Folk Services before and will soon be able to begin paying forward even greater than I received. Thanks once again to the Folk and their generosity.

Hail the Gods!

Hail the AFA!

— Don Ricardo Jr, member

If you'd like to help our Folk in need, please consider donating to [Folk Services](#).

AFA Prison Ministry



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.

""No packed rooms in the prisons; in each institution I have only a few people; occasionally about a dozen, but 5-6 is more common. I certainly do not want the Fellowship to be a club for cons, or ex-cons; the advantage is that when in prison the inmates have time to discuss and digest what they read, a point that often is lost to people on the outside in the hubbub of daily concerns" - Else Christensen

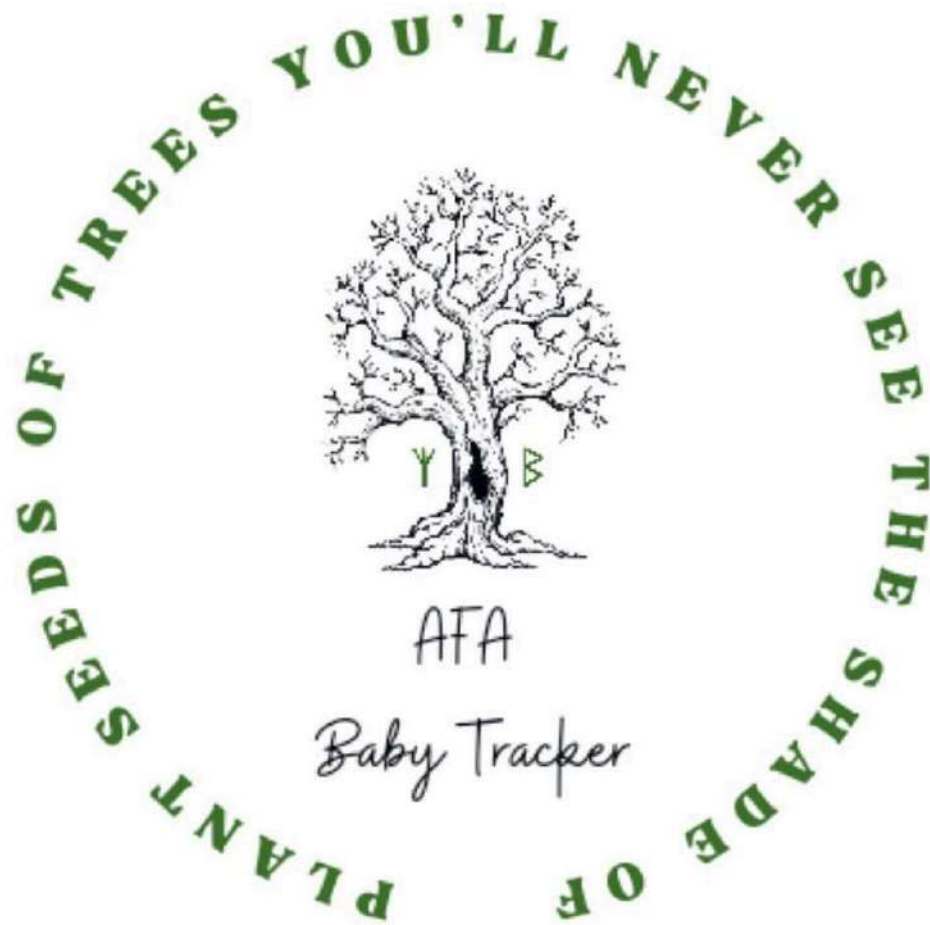
By the example of our Folkmother, Else Christensen, we will also be going into prisons as we are able to. Some of our Gothar and other leadership, will be going into the prisons to hold study groups, lead blot, and encourage continued growth in the folk inside.

If you have a loved one who is incarcerated or know of someone who is Folkish and will benefit from this ministry, please contact us at prisonministry@runestone.org.



Or if you'd like to donate to this ministry, there's a donation earmark set up on our site [here](#). The donations will be used to get small ritual items and books into the prisons and the hands of our Folk inside.

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!

Total babies born in 2024: 16

Online Gatherings



Being our most virtuous selves is not always the easiest task. As a community, we are home to many that have or are currently, struggling with addiction. Many traditional 12 step meeting, though so very respected, do not fall in line with what we as a people believe. Specifically, any step pertaining to the divine will or requesting the removal of any shortcomings. So, we run what we are calling the Virtue Recovery Meeting. Since we are an international organization, the best way for us to do this is via online. We hold our meetings every Thursday at 7pm Central. Join us!! Feel free to reach out to Folkbuilder Ashley McStocker with any and all questions!

AMcStocker@Runestone.org




The graphic is set against a dark brown background. At the top, the words "SISTERS SUNDAY CHATS" are written in a light pink, rounded, sans-serif font, arching over the central illustration. The illustration features a white cat with orange and yellow stripes curled up on the left. To its right is a bouquet of flowers, including white daisies and red strawberries on green stems, tied with a red ribbon. Below the illustration, the text "Second and fourth Sunday of the month" is centered in a light pink serif font. Underneath that, "10 am central" is also centered in the same font. The final two lines of text, "Contact Folkbuilder Ali Clausen" and "and Apprentice Hope White for details", are centered in the same light pink serif font.

SISTERS SUNDAY CHATS

Second and fourth Sunday of the month
10 am central
Contact Folkbuilder Ali Clausen
and
Apprentice Hope White for details



AFA Reading Challenge Meetings



1/9/24	Link will be posted on MeWe the weekend before the meeting	7/9/24
2/13/24		8/13/24
3/12/24		9/10/24
4/9/24		10/8/24
5/14/24		11/12/24
6/11/24		12/10/24

CONTACT FOLKBUILDER ALI CLAUSEN FOR DETAILS
 ACLAUSEN@RUNESTONE.ORG OR ON MEWE

These meetings are family friendly so please, no politics or overly mature topics

Ladies Book Study

Revolt Against the Modern World

by Julius Evola

Starting

July 11th

7 pm CST

**We will meet
every Thursday.**

**Unless there
is a national
event that
week.**

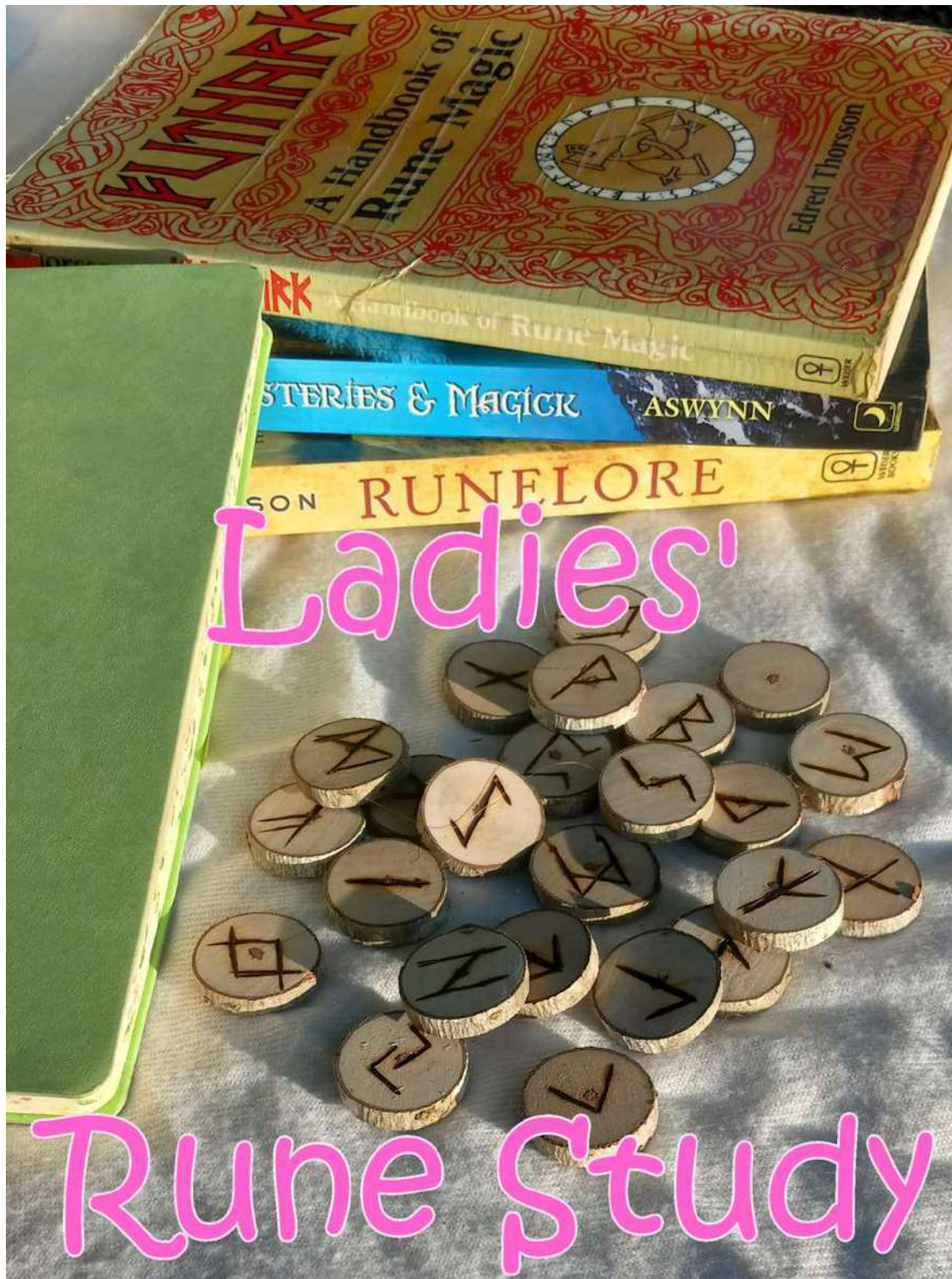


**Free PDF
and meeting link
in Mewe Ladies Group**

For more information contact

Witan Brandy Fassett

Folkbuilder Sara Ault



Our Ladies' Rune Study is just getting started! We meet on Teams every other Saturday.

Contact me with any questions you might have — aplourde@runestone.org

I hope to see you there!

**Lore Study with
Gothi Jason Plourde**
Join us every Monday night

at

8:00 pm EST

7:00 pm CST

6:00 pm MST

5:00 pm PST

4:00 pm AKST

**Each study begins with trivia questions
from VNS and the previous week's
reading. A winner is announced monthly.**

**The link can be found in the AFA
Spiritual Excellence Group on Mewe.**

**For more information
reach out to Gothi Plourde
jplourde@runestone.org**



Eldri Teams Meetings
for folks over fifty

July 2024

Tuesdays 7/9 & 7/23
5:00 PT, 6:00 MT, 7:00 CT, 8:00 ET

Fridays 7/12 & 7/26
2:00 PT, 3:00 MT, 4:00 CT, 5:00 ET

Enjoying the peace of summer, with a good book in hand.
Contact Gythia Sheila McNallen, sheila@runestone.org

Just For Fun



Again, Folkbuilder Chris McDowell, Apprentice Folkbuilder Hope White, and Apprentice Folkbuilder Brodie Sutherland took the lead! Hail Word Search Victory!

Victory Word Search

Have fun finding all the words and send proof to press@runestone.org!

```

M F U N F T           V M D B T K
I T U X G S           L O V E D D
  Q V B E Z A         I X L H P B
    F R C A L U       H P A N E J
      P T S T D H     U D P U S A
        L C F L T O   O M K S Z C
          F F Y F L W E P D I V A
            I F I P J E W J G N C A
              K Q K Z C S L S R L H G
                E C T E A L G B D I W J
                  C X P E G W I L L E A I
                    F N J P G P O K V Z B R
                      H A W V I L T H E B X M
                        Z G R D R A Z M U S V L
                          Q W E D W G K E L O L B
                            P F R V O X N Q B T A K
                              P G C E S C T U I P X O
                                Z V S H S G A C B A K G
                                  H I O A R I E Y H Z M H
                                    D A C W M E Z W X S N O
                                      X I T I P P A B Z K
                                        Z E L O L I C Z W C
                                          D M Z R O O O Q
                                            S Y F F Y W N L
                                              G O A T S I
                                                Z P X L A W
                                                  C E B L
                                                    Y E S Z

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SIGRBLOT

BATTLES

SOWILO

PEACE

VICTORY

GOALS

ACHIEVEMENT

CHAMPION

HAIL

PERSEVERANCE

Hope you enjoy the July Word Search. As always, the first members to complete the search and submit proof to press@runestone.org will get a shout-out in next month's Runestone! Þórshof and Njörðshof, come on and join the fun!



In June, our youth started their summer reading logs. Congratulations Russell on reading the most books!

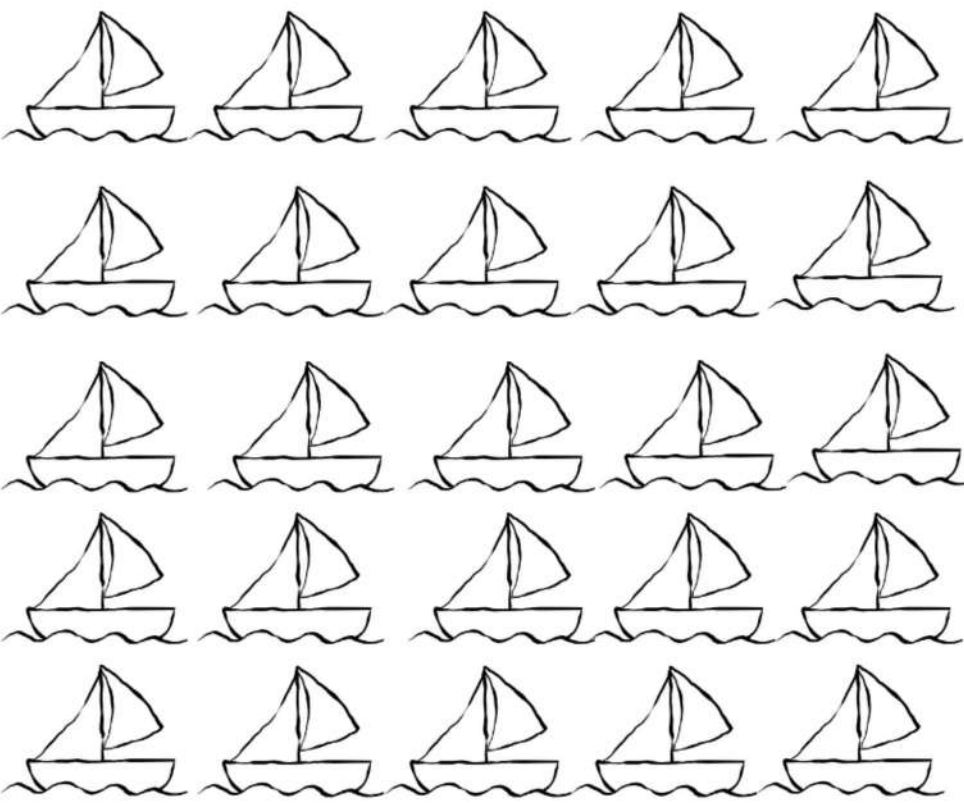


And a huge shoutout to Folkbuilder Nick Rice for helping Russell achieve his goal by reading *Thor Is My Friend* to him during the weekend of Midsummer. Thank you!

Name _____ Age _____

JULY READING LOG

Color 1 sailboat for every 10 minutes you read this month (or 1 for each book someone reads to you if you're a pre-reader). Send to press@runestone.org!



My favorite book was: _____

How many minutes/books I read: _____

Here's a reading log to help track that reading in July! Who will read the most? Remember to send it in to press@runestone.org no later than August 3rd.

Folkbuilder Olivia Sutherland
osutherland@runestone.org



Genealogy and Kinship Charts

Join the AFA Genealogy group on MeWe!



Send yours to sheila@runestone.org to get included in our next **AFA KINSHIP CHART**

Deadline: 7/31/24

See how closely you're related to other AFA members. 75 people so far, and counting!



Gyöja Sheila McNallen
sheila@runestone.org

Calling All Folk Photographers



Folkbuilder Nicholas Rice

nrice@runestone.org

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 since 2020 and has been a resounding success! The Ladies of the AFA have knitted, crocheted, and sewn beautiful baby blankets for over 120 of our littlest folk, with more on the way. They've been delivered everywhere from Alaska to Florida to California to Sweden!



If you are a member of the AFA who is expecting a baby, please let your Folkbuilder know so that 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, and we will get you in touch with the right people. It's so rewarding

to see your handicraft being loved by our precious wee-Folk!

Would you like a blanket for your newborn, or to donate and help with yarn costs (yarn is expensive!)? Please email babyblanket@runestone.org today! Thank you!

Store Spotlight



One of the values espoused by the AFA is Physical Excellence. Well, not only are you gonna be able to feel good, but we're gonna make sure you look good too. Check out our new throwback gym merch!



[Runestone.org/Store](https://runestone.org/Store)

Hop on over and get some fast, as we're only stocking through the summer.

Folkbuilder Nicholas Rice

nrice@runestone.org



Óðinshof

Food Pantry at Óðinshof



These are the moments that matter. On Sunday, June 16th, the Óðinshof Food Pantry early-birds were in line at 9:00am, many of them milling around to greet neighbors and get caught-up on news. It's a very friendly atmosphere when we begin our distribution. Many names and faces are familiar to us now, yet we also had eleven families come for the first time.



Much later that day, two ladies in an old pickup were clearly desperate for food. This was another homeless family who knew of our reputation for helping anyone in need. We gave what we could, including two dozen eggs. Officially, we gave food to 53 families, representing 127 individuals. It was actually more than that.

As each of us develop a plan for self-improvement, one value I embrace is “generosity.” The final words of our morning prayer end with the phrase, “Wisdom and lore as long as we live, grant us -- and helping hands.” For me, I choose a spiritual path where generosity and hospitality are embedded in my life. That would be the way of Mother Frigg.



Gyöja Sheila McNallen
sheila@runestone.org

Midsummer at Óðinshof



This Midsummer was amazing--one I will always remember. Our first guest, Folkbuilder Nick Rice of Tennessee, arrived very late on Wednesday night, and, in the morning, he was joined by a few more members. Midsummer is officially Friday to Sunday, but can we really blame people for wanting to get to the festivities early? Longtime members Diane and Jim handled food Thursday night, grilling up hot dogs and burgers.

On Friday morning, the event kicked off in full effect, beginning with our Greeting Sunna ritual held by Steve Ingall from Arkansas, and he followed that by hosting a genealogy workshop. Lunch was a breeze with all of the PNW Folkbuilders helping out. Sloppy joes, fruit salad, coleslaw, and chips made for a nice cozy lunch to kick off the weekend. After lunch, we hung out for awhile, had a Hexology workshop ran by Gyðja McNallen, and then had Greeting to the Gods where the Folk introduced themselves to each other and to the Gods. After the ritual, we processed inside and hailed Óðinn at his mural.



This led us into our welcome and preview of the weekend to come. Dinner was served with bratwurst, green salad, baked beans, and some delicious pies. The night ended with a slideshow of the stepping stones to procuring the Hof by Founder Steve McNallen and an ever-powerful Óðinn Blót led by Alsherjargoði Flavel.



As everyone wound down coming off the power surge high from Blót, we all split off to do our own things including a "Magic the Gathering" pod game ran by Hof Historian and Folkbuilder Sierra Chapman. As everyone trickled off to bed, Folkbuilders stayed up late into the night ensuring the Hof was clean and food was prepped for breakfast in the morning.



Saturday morning began with the Greeting to the Day ran by Founder and Gyðja McNallen, and then we gathered inside for breakfast to fuel our day. We enjoyed a delicious french toast casserole, sausage, eggs, bacon, and coffee! As Folk trickled in, we spent time building Frith before moving into the Ladies' Tea and Men's Moot. The ladies worked on a beautiful amber necklace and hair wreath to adorn the Freyja Pole while sharing stories with each other, and the men got to hear wisdom imparted by Founder McNallen, Witan Erickson, Alsherjargoði Flavel, and Folkbuilders.



We had a "Meet the Leaders" Q&A where membership got to be formally introduced to leadership and to ask any questions they may have. Lunch was served with a delicious tortellini vinaigrette salad, chicken spinach pasta salad, bread, green salad, and fresh fruit. This led us into a beautiful Baldr Blót by Witan Clifford Erickson.



The sun wheel burned the brightest I have seen, truly showing Baldr's shining power. Immediately following this Midsummer Blót, we had a special Baby Naming ceremony for a member, and then all gathered out front to take our group photo. Following, leadership gathered to discuss the event while general membership built Frith. After the meeting, we went into presentations.



While presentations were running, we had Apprentice Folkbuilder Kyle Reader running Children's Sumbel, while Folkbuilder Sierra Chapman walked the female children through how to be a Hornbearer and its importance.



As we gathered all the Folk in for dinner, Alsherjargoði Flavel had called up Apprentice Folkbuilders Ryan Skinner and Kyle Reader to take their Folkbuilder Oaths before the Gods and their Folk in a beautiful ceremony. It was much deserved for both men who have dedicated a good portion of their lives to ensuring the building of Frith and Folk within the Asatru Folk Assembly. Dinner was served with ham, German potato salad, spaghetti, garlic bread, and green salad. After clean up, we went outside and hosted the Midsummer auction. After, we gathered for High Sumbel. Sumbel took us well into midnight, and Folk began to retire as the night owls stayed awake.



Sunday began with a Greeting to the Day and a workshop on the three cauldrons followed by a beautiful breakfast, prepared by our newly-oathed Folkbuilder Ryan Skinner. Sunday was much more laid-back, as most of the Folk had trickled home. We all listened attentively to some closing words by Founder and Gyðja McNallen.



This led us into our Wayfarer's Blót by Founder and Gyðja McNallen. In the inspirational style of Witan Fassett, we all went around giving each other a hug at the end of Blót and said our goodbyes.



Folkbuilder Sierra Chapman
schapman@runestone.org

Upcoming Events at Odinshof

The graphic features a light pink background. In the top left corner, there are three red roses with green leaves and a black vine. The text 'UPCOMING EVENTS' is written in large, bold, dark green capital letters. Below this, there is a calendar illustration with a green header and a white body. The header contains the text 'Do Right and Fear No One' in a red, gothic-style font. The calendar body has a red spiral binding at the top and a grid of days. A red shield with a white dragon is placed on the grid. To the left of the calendar, the text 'AT Odinshof' is written in a black, handwritten-style font. Below the calendar, a horizontal line is followed by the text 'Please RSVP to a Folkbuilder!' in a black, handwritten-style font.

2024 Events at Oðinshof

January 20	<i>Thorrablót</i>
February 17	<i>Charming of the Plow</i>
March 16	<i>Ostara</i>
April 20	<i>Hexennacht</i>
May 18	<i>May Day</i>
June 22	<i>Midsummer</i>
July 20	<i>Sigrblót</i>
August 17	<i>Freyfaxi</i>
September 21	<i>Winter Finding</i>
October 19	<i>Winter Nights</i>
November 16	<i>Feast of the Einherjar</i>
December 21	<i>Yuletide</i>

RSVPs are required. All guests must be preapproved.

On event weekends, Oðinshof is usually open from Friday through Sunday. Those events include a **Sunday** morning food pantry distribution and community outreach on Sundays. We invite you to stay for the whole weekend.

All proposed events are on the third weekend, except for MIDSUMMER which is the premier event for the Oðinshof district. It's been moved to the fourth weekend to allow the food pantry to proceed as normal.

For Óðinshof members in the far-north, but not closed to others!

Friday, July 12th
5:00 AkT; 6:00 PT; 7:00 MT

NORTHERN FOLK
 Virtual Moot

Contact:
Sheila@runestone.org





ODINSHOF MEMBERS
MEETING

630 HANG OUT **700 MEMBERS CALL**

JULY 26TH **SPEAKERS: GOTHI ROB STAMM, FB SARA AULT, FB ALI CLAUSEN**
FREYFAXI EXTRAVAGANZA

Óðinshof Family Camp

August 2 - 4, 2024 Family Camp at Oðinshof

OUR FOCUS:

Parents as teachers; traditional values

3 days of learning and fun for all ages

A spiritual adventure for all

Camping & meals together



For more information contact Sheila or Olivia:
sheila@runestone.org; osutherland@runestone.org

Join us for our second annual weekend devoted to the fun and education of our AFA kids. This is a fantastic combination of summer camp high-adventure and science camp interwoven with an Asatru experience. The children will learn about our Gods and Goddesses, our Lore, and will participate in rituals designed for children. We'll also be taking the first steps in establishing Coming-of-Age ceremonies with input from parents.

All meals are provided. Camping on-site is encouraged, and the Brownsville Motel is right down the road. Children under age 18 are free. We're requesting a \$25 donation from the adults to cover the event costs, to include food purchases.

All of our California Folkbuilders and their families will be with us. The Hof will be open at noon on Friday, August 3rd. Family Camp ends at noon on August 5th.

If you have no children but would like to teach a class or lead an activity, our children need "aunties and uncles" in their lives, too. This event is not meant to be social time for adults. The focus is on our children.

What can you teach? Art, music, storytelling, cooking, history, camp-craft, nature studies, woodworking, metalworking, astronomy, literature, gardening...

RSVP by August 1, 2024. For more information: Sheila McNallen:
sheila@runestone.org or Olivia Sutherland: osutherland@runestone.org



Gyðja Sheila McNallen
sheila@runestone.org

Óðinshof Wish List



Óðinshof Member Ritual Requests

Member Ritual Requests

Dear Folk,

Are you considering an Ásatrú wedding? A vow renewal? A baby naming? *Please let us know!*

Members may request specific religious rites to honor a member and/or couple at any time. These sacred rituals are regularly conducted during our monthly events by ordained Gothar at Óðinshof, with our Holy Æsir and our Folk bearing witness.

What Rituals May be Requested?

Baby Namings (Ausa Vatni), Coming of Age Rites, Wedding Ceremonies, Vow Renewals, and Óðinshof Cemetery Funerals are all examples of special rituals that our members may request to have conducted at Óðinshof!

How to Submit a Request?

Please email all relevant information (your name(s), ritual type, requested Gothar, proposed date for ritual, etc.) to Folkbuilder Olivia Sutherland osutherland@runestone.org. Each request will be evaluated, and we will follow up with you about accommodating your request.

Thank You,

Olivia

Olivia Sutherland
osutherland@runestone.org



Óðinshof Leadership

Óðinshof Leaders

Goðar

Alsherjargothi Matt Flavel
 Witan Brandy Fassett
 Gythia Sheila McNallen
 Gothi Nathan Erlandson

mattflavel@runestone.org
bfassett@runestone.org
sheila@runestone.org
nerlandson@runestone.org

Folkbuilders

Lou Nickerson (AZ)
 Olivia Sutherland (CA)
 Sierra Chapman (CA)
 Ryan Skinner (CA)
 Kyler Reader (ID)
 Ryan Harlan (MT)
 Tyler Heinlein (MT)

lnickerson@runestone.org
osutherland@runestone.org
schapman@runestone.org
rskinner@runestone.org
kreader@runestone.org
rharlan@runestone.org
theinlein@runestone.org

Apprentice Folkbuilders

Brodie Sutherland (CA)
 Daniel Odom (CA)
 Aaron Simbeck (WA)
 Nick Gunn (WA)

bsutherland@runestone.org
dodom@runestone.org
asimbeck@runestone.org
ngunn@runestone.org

Arizona

Upcoming Events

GERMAN LUNCH MOOT



**1st Sundays
at 12pm**

PHOENIX, AZ

CONTACT: OSUTHERLAND@RUNESTONE.ORG

California

The Virtue of Courage -- Our Heroes Land on the Moon!

Ásatrú Principles and Space Exploration, Episode 3



(Photo Credit: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA); from left to right: Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, Mike Collins.)

Lord Týr set an example for us with his great courage in risking, and then sacrificing, his sword hand to bind the wolf, Fenris. Also, our Folk have produced many courageous heroes for us to honor and admire. Among them, Neil Armstrong was the first man to set foot on the Moon, during the Apollo 11 mission on July 20, 1969. Buzz Aldrin was the second man to walk on the Moon just a few minutes later. Mike Collins was the third Apollo 11 astronaut, orbiting the Moon above them. This July is the 55th anniversary of the historic Moon landing.

If you've watched TV footage of the descent of the Apollo 11 Lunar Module down to the Moon, it probably looked easy. It wasn't. Few people understand the true dangers that the courageous crew of Apollo 11 faced -- that Our Folk's heroes faced. This is the real story of the first Moon landing sequence. It took 13 minutes and tremendous courage.

The Space Race during the 1950's through mid-1970 was about who would dominate the "high ground" of space. In response to Soviet achievements, President John F. Kennedy set an audacious goal for the U.S.A. at Rice University in Texas, on Sept. 12, 1962 (and previously, to Congress). Kennedy said he believed the U.S. should commit itself to the goal of landing a man on the Moon in that decade and returning him safely to Earth. He said that some would ask, "Why climb the highest mountain? Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic?", and his response was, "We choose to go to the Moon in this decade, and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

To understand this story, one must understand the basics of the manned Moon missions of the late 1960's and early 1970's. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Saturn V rocket was the most complex machine ever built at that point in history. The Saturn V was as tall as a 35-story building. It had three stages, on top of which sat two spacecrafts.

A brilliant idea to minimize overall weight and the necessary rocket fuel was to use two separate spacecrafts: (1) the Command Module, named Columbia (with the attached Service Module), which was to be the astronauts' home on the 3-day voyages to and from the Moon; and (2) the Lunar Module (LM) (aka Lunar Excursion Module or LEM) named Eagle, consisting of: (a) a lower descent stage with a rocket engine, and (b) an upper ascent stage with a rocket engine. Two of the three astronauts would fly the LM down to the Moon. After the landing, Moon walk, and a night's rest, the

astronauts would blast off in the ascent stage to return to the Command Module. They would leave the descent stage on the Moon. The third astronaut would take photographs and do experiments in the orbiting Command Module, until the LM ascent stage rejoined it. They would leave the LM ascent stage in lunar orbit to orbit or later crash. The crew would return to Earth orbit in the Command Module. Before reentry, they would jettison the Service Module. Only the Command Module, three astronauts, and dozens of pounds of Moon rocks and soil samples would return to Earth and splash down into the ocean.

Not only was there a race to land a man on the Moon, there was a race to get Moon rocks for scientific study. For example, Moon rocks might hold valuable resources needed to create a Moon base for the Soviets. Unbeknownst to NASA, the U.S.S.R. had secretly sent an unmanned spacecraft to the Moon, called Luna 15, just before Apollo 11. Its mission was to land on the Moon, grab some soil and rock samples, and come back to Earth before Apollo 11 could return. The Soviets wanted to beat the U.S., at least in the race for Moon rocks and in worldwide publicity! Instead of landing, something bad happened to Luna 15. The Soviets lost contact with it. Scientists think it crashed about 500 miles from where Apollo 11 landed.

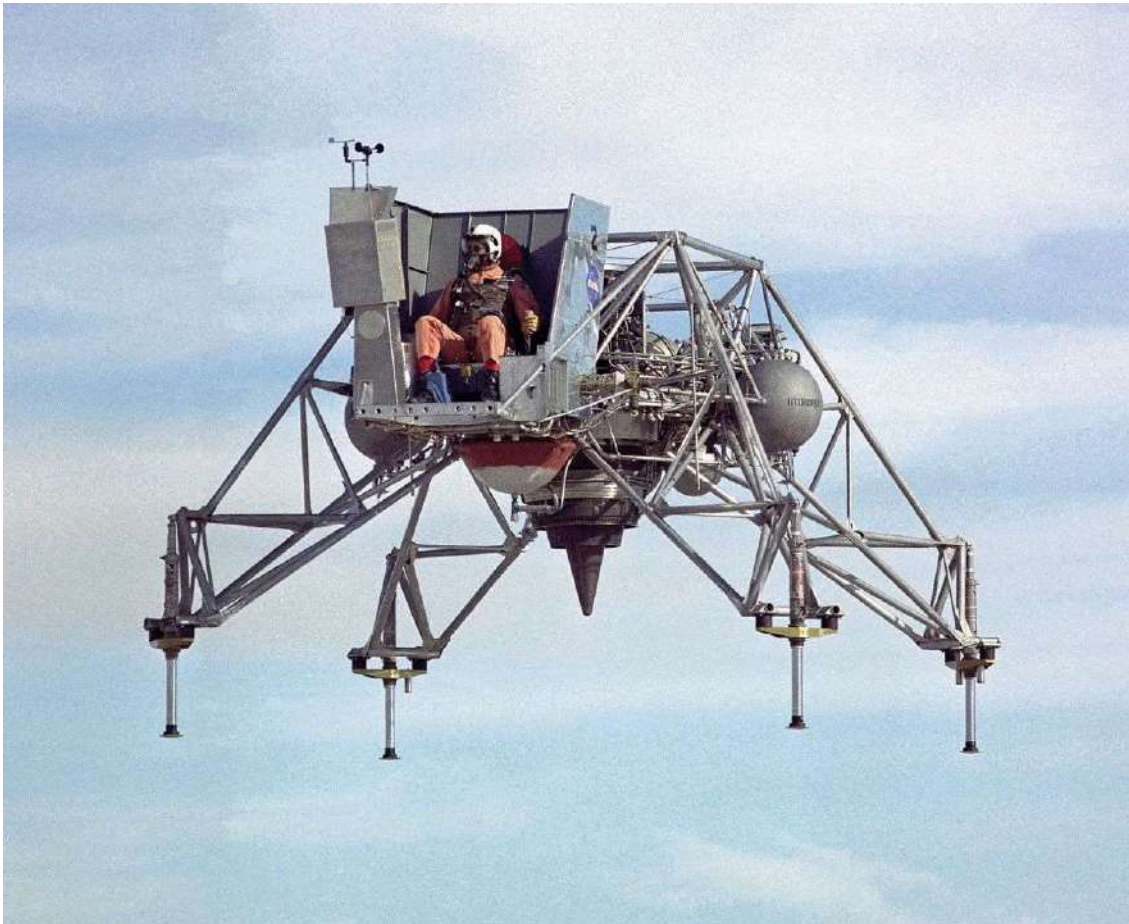
The Apollo 11 crew were extremely accomplished fighter pilots, test pilots, and space veterans. Commander Neil Alden Armstrong had flown into space in the X-15 rocket plane. As Command Pilot of the Gemini VIII mission, he and his crewmate, David Scott, had saved themselves from disaster. (See The Runestone, June 2024 issue, Óðinshof District version, California section.) Armstrong fought in the Korean Conflict as a Naval Aviator (final rank Lieutenant Junior Grade). He flew 78 combat missions during 1951 and 1952.

Lunar Module Pilot Edwin E. (“Buzz”) Aldrin, Jr. graduated third in his class at West Point, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, later rising in rank in the U.S. Air Force. Aldrin had a brilliant scientific mind and was an expert in navigation. Also, he had refined the techniques for “space walking” on Earth. On Gemini XII, he was the pioneer who finally demonstrated how to more easily perform Extra Vehicular Activity in zero gravity. Before that, he flew F-86 Sabres fighter jets in 66 combat missions in Korea and shot down two MiG-15 aircraft. Aldrin’s Ph.D. dissertation at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology invented a method for orbital rendezvous of two spacecraft! (The Lunar Module Pilot role was actually as a navigation and systems engineer on this flight. Armstrong, the Commander, would fly the LM as needed.)

Command Module Pilot Michael E. Collins (U.S. Air Force Lt. Colonel, later Colonel and higher) served as an exceptional fighter pilot and test pilot in the U.S. Air Force.

(Due to timing, he missed the Korean Conflict.) He was a master of rendezvous and docking, having practiced on the Gemini X mission. Collins also did a magnificent spacewalk on a 50-foot long tether, retrieving a package from the docked Agena spacecraft during Gemini X.

The crew practiced hundreds of dangerous situations in simulations, both computer-generated and in real life. The Moon landing was by far the most difficult part of the mission. They might crash or have to abort. If the LM landed at a steep angle, or broke one of its legs, they probably would not be able to leave the Moon in the ascent module. Armstrong and Aldrin would be stranded and would die.



"An astronaut trains for a prospective moon landing in a Lunar Landing Research Vehicle (LLRV) at the NASA Flight Research Center in 1967." (Not Neil Armstrong in photo.) (Photo Credit: HistoryNet.com/NASA)

For landing practice, NASA and its contractors created a spindly thing called the Lunar Landing Research Vehicle (LLRV). On May 6, 1968, Neil Armstrong demonstrated his skill and fast decision-making ability during an LLRV practice run. After five minutes, The LLRV's attitude-control thrusters were not working, and the craft went out of control. The LLRV started pitching down. Armstrong bailed out, and within three

seconds (by my count), the LLRV crashed on the ground and exploded. Had he not bailed out at that time, he would have been killed. As was typical of his strength and his controlled outward emotional display, later that day, Armstrong went back to work in his office. An office-mate excitedly asked Armstrong about nearly dying, and barely saving himself from the LLRV crash. Armstrong said, “Yeah.”



“Future moonwalker Neil Armstrong ejects [shown at top of image] from a Lunar Landing Research Vehicle (LLRV) after its control thrusters fail.” (Photo Credit: HistoryNet.com/NASA)

Turning to the Apollo 11 flight, the Saturn V lifted the crew into orbit on July 16, 1969. They traveled 75 hours to the Moon and got into orbit. In lunar orbit on July 20th, Armstrong and Aldrin undocked the LM, called Eagle, from the Command Module. Then, they fired the LM’s descent engine to slow down and to reduce orbital altitude in order to land.

The first sign of trouble was intermittent loss of audio and/or telemetry communications between Houston Mission Control and the LM. At some points, Houston had to ask Mike Collins in the Command Module to convey requests to the LM crew and vice-versa. Data loss meant that sometimes Houston did not know the spacecraft’s condition and position, in order to help Armstrong and Aldrin.



Apollo 11's Saturn V rocket liftoff. The Command Module, Service Module, and emergency escape tower are at the top. (The tower would carry the Command Module away during the launch and first few minutes of the flight, if the Saturn V exploded. The tower was jettisoned after only a few minutes into flight, if not used.) The Lunar Module is below the Service Module, protected by an outer, four-piece cover with conic, slanted sides. The LM sits on top of the third stage rocket of the

Saturn V. Below is the second stage. The first stage, at the bottom, is only barely visible in this image. (Photo Credit: Light Metal Age [web-based magazine about aluminum and light metals].)

Second, the LM was not quite in the right trajectory, overshooting a particular landmark they were supposed to see at the three-minute burn mark. This meant Eagle would overshoot the planned landing site within the waterless Sea of Tranquility (Mare Tranquillitatis). This “Sea” is a 500-mile-wide (800-kilometer) basalt lava plain.

At about 33,000 feet elevation, as they descended rapidly, a computer program alarm, code 1202, flashed yellow. Did this mean the computer was breaking? Was the computer giving erroneous information that would cause a crash? Despite the hundreds of simulation runs, these two astronauts had not been tested by this particular alarm in their training. They did not know what the responding procedure was for that alarm. Neil Armstrong’s voice was even-toned as he told Houston, “Program alarm.” “It’s a 1202.” “Give us a reading on the 1202 program alarm.”

At Mission Control, Steve Bales, a 26-year old specialist in LM navigation and computer software, knew what code 1202 was, and he told the Flight Director, it was “Go” on that alarm, if it was intermittent. It meant the computer was overloaded. It could not handle all the radar data coming in. The computer was giving up on some less-important tasks that its tiny capacity could not complete in tight time slots.

As a boy, I was one of more than 600 million of people around the world watching the Moon landing news coverage or listening to the back-and-forth radio talk between Houston Mission Control and the astronauts. We heard “program alarm” and “1202,” and later, “1201.” We had no idea what the program alarm codes 1202 or 1201 meant, nor that they indicated the on-board computer was overloaded. Nor did we understand that in the next few minutes, they would nearly run out of descent fuel. There were several possibilities for the LM: land successfully; abort; land and sink into the lunar surface to die; or crash and die. On the ground, we did not know what danger the program alarms and fuel level call-outs presented.

In a few hours, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin would make further history for Our Folk and humanity, by walking on an alien world for the first time in human history. After making his first step onto the fine-grained surface, Armstrong said, “That’s one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind.” In the end, they, along with Mike Collins, would safely return to Earth, just as President Kennedy had asked.

Soon after that alarm came on three times, at about 3,000 feet, program alarm code 1201 rang out. Mr. Bales at Mission Control told the Flight Director, “same type,” and we are “Go” on that alarm. Astronaut Charles (“Charlie”) Duke (U.S. Air Force Second

Lieutenant and higher ranks later) served as the Capsule Communicator (CapCom). He relayed the continued “Go” on powered descent to the astronauts. Armstrong regarded these alarms mostly as a distraction, taking his attention away from looking at the potential landing spots. Both Armstrong and Aldrin were very focused on their respective tasks.

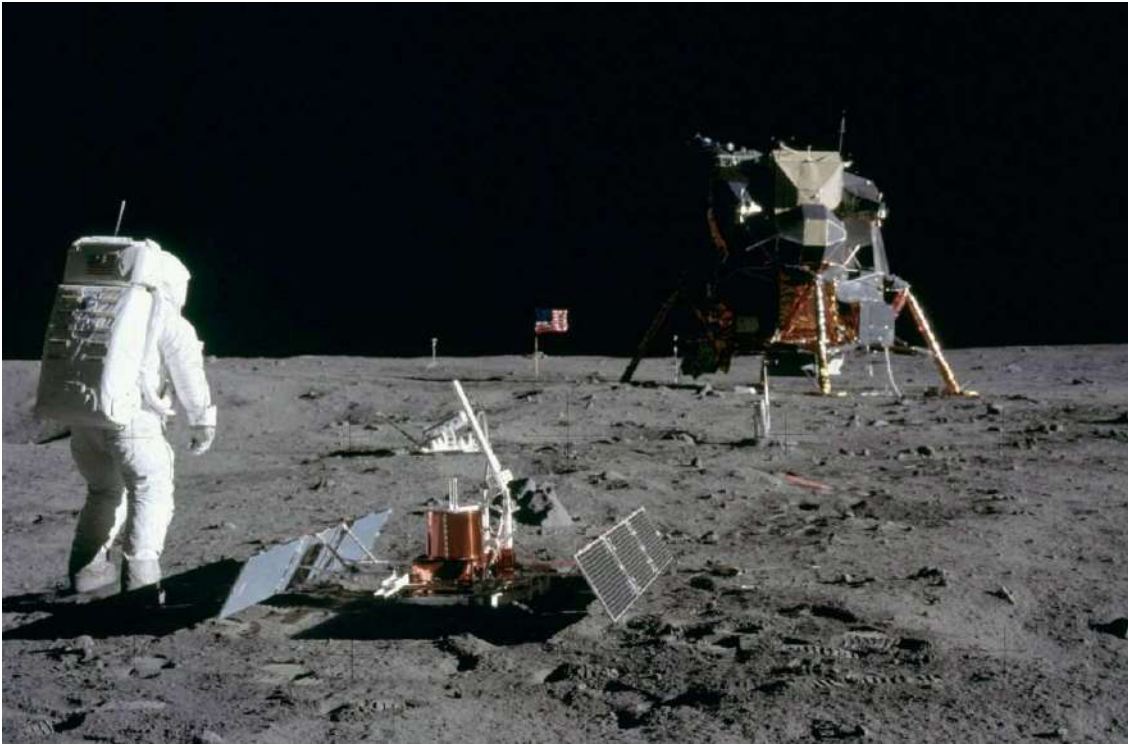
Meanwhile, Armstrong and Aldrin were passing over rough terrain, where they could not land. The on-board computer was not helping! Mission Control folks could not see the danger out the windows! The guidance system was steering them towards a football-stadium-sized crater with steep slopes and car-sized boulders.

Neil Armstrong took over manual control of the descent. Propellant was running out. Mission Control became silent. Fuel-remaining read-outs were the most important thing. The Flight Director and CapCom announced, “Sixty seconds!” of fuel left. In the LM, Buzz Aldrin calmly and clearly read out the speed and altitude statistics on descent to Armstrong. Armstrong guided the ship horizontally for a long while (which was not planned), to find somewhere to land. The CapCom called out, “Thirty seconds!” Mission Control knew they might have to abort, or run out of fuel and crash. However, if you read the authorized biography of Neil Armstrong, he says he had practiced landing the LLTM with low fuel, and he was not that worried. He was more worried about where to land.

More of a problem to Armstrong were the huge amounts of lunar dust being kicked up by the rocket exhaust. This fine dust cloud grew around their path, obscuring what was below. They had to avoid landing on a boulder, for example.

With great skill, courage, and a heart rate of 156 beats per minute, Neil Armstrong landed the Eagle in a safe, flat place with only 17 seconds of fuel left. Aldrin had played a crucial role as navigator and systems engineer. Armstrong and Aldrin had avoided aborting the mission and going back to the Command Module Columbia. They had avoided crashing and dying. They had not landed at too steep an angle, nor damaged the LM, so that they could not leave in the ascent module. The LM had not sunk down into the Moon, as some scientists feared. Both men had risked their lives, and with great honor, had succeeded!

The descent took 13 minutes, but the last several minutes determined success or failure. Charlie Duke, CapCom, said, “We show you down, Eagle.” Armstrong reported, “Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed.” Duke replied, “Roger, Tranq . . . Tranquility. We copy you on the ground. You got a bunch of guys about to turn blue. We’re breathing again. Thanks a lot!” Aldrin replied, “Thank you.”



Astronaut Buzz Aldrin, standing next to the deployed Early Apollo Scientific Experimentation Package, looking back at the Eagle. (Photo Credit Source: Light Metal Age.)

In a few hours, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin would make further history for our Folk and humanity, by walking on an alien world for the first time in human history. After making his first step onto the fine-grained surface, Armstrong said, “That’s one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind.” In the end, they, along with Mike Collins, would safely return to Earth, just as President Kennedy had asked.

Hail All-Father Óðinn; Lord Tyr; the Apollo 11 astronauts; the wives and children of the astronauts; NASA; and the over 400,000 scientists, engineers, technicians, and others, who made the Apollo missions possible.

— Bill, member

Introduction



Howdy Y'all. You may already know who I am from either the Hof events, Sons of the High One, or from reading my previous Runestone articles about work weekends and such. If we haven't met, my name is Brodie Sutherland. I am now an Apprentice Folkbuilder of Óðinshof out of California. I've been a member of the AFA since 2019. I'm a blue-collar former Marine, father of three, and I have a beautiful wife, Folkbuilder Olivia Sutherland.

My first time coming to Óðinshof was such an incredible experience. I was welcomed with open arms and felt every bit like I had come home to a family I'd never known. I hope to help others achieve this and to bring our Folk home to where they should be, shoulder to shoulder with us in worship to our Gods.

I look forward to working with all of you and helping our Folk come home.

Double the Work Weekends, Double the Fun!



The title says it all Folks--it was double the work weekends and double fun!

In preparation for Midsummer, we called on the Folk, and they showed up in full force! The whole gaggle was present, and it's a good thing too. There was plenty to be done.

The Sons of the High One and other menfolk were seemingly everywhere. Dan the Man Odom kicked it off weed whipping his way through the underbrush, and Bobby Popcorn was making short work of the grass with the lawn mower that he donated to Óðinshof.

The majority of the men were led my Smoke Shack Zac out in the camping area, and they did a great job clearing away the pine needles, fallen debris, and dreaded POISON OAK. Wild Man Paul Stevens was in the midst of splitting, cutting, and stacking wood aided by our Honorable Andrei. Commander Cool Breeze took care of painting the trim around Óðinn's mural. The ladyfolk cleaned and organized the kitchen, fridges, and the multi-use room. I did a wee bit of plumbing; there was a comically large crack on the outdoor showers' piping. I can't tell you how many dump runs were done, how much raking took place, or how many small projects were completed, but there were still a few loose ends to take care of at close of business that weekend.

The second half of this work weekend epic begins with a exciting Saturday that had Yours Truly, Daniel the Manual Odom, and Bobby Popcorn in a pitched battle with an electric lawn mower, an unearthly bunch of pine needles, and a pile of stuff desperately in need of a dump run. I won't bore you with the details..some of which are too graphic for such a prestigious newsletter as this..so I'll just roll over to Sunday, where we helped out with our monthly food pantry then tied up the rest of the loose ends for Midsummer.

Overall, it was a great time.

We served our Gods, we served our Folk, and we severed our local Óðinshof community. One thing we could always use is more hands-on-deck, not just so I have more nicknames to add to my articles, but also to accomplish all we can to make Óðinshof every bit as great as it ought to be.

If you or a loved one is afflicted with the desire to join us for an Óðinshof Work Weekend, PLEASE reach out to me or your local Folkbuilder. All skill levels are welcome. All Folk are welcome.

Brodie Sutherland
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A Re-Introduction



Greetings from the West Coast! For those that don't know me, I'm Daniel, the newest Apprentice Folkbuilder and Hof Steward for Óðinshof District. I am excited to give Folkbuilding another shot and hopeful to network with as many of you as possible. I have learned that you definitely get out what you put in. Take care all, and please never hesitate to give me a call or to drop me an email.

Hail the Gods!

Hail the Folk!

Hail the AFA!



Daniel Odom
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Together



Together: In dawn's soft whisper, as first light caresses the horizon, my wife and I embark on another journey, intertwining our lives ever more tightly. Each step is a testament to the passion, respect, and trust that binds us, traversing nature and trail.



Courage: We often find ourselves on narrow trails, mere steps from cliffs, where the world falls away. Here, every step requires trust in each other and the ground beneath our feet. The sheer drops and jagged rocks remind us of life's challenges. Yet, with each careful step and hand held for balance, we fortify our bond. Standing on the edge, gazing at the horizon, we feel our unity's power, hearts beating hard, echoing our purpose.



Simplicity: Traveling to cold shores, where beach sands welcome our bare feet, the waves, fierce in approach yet gentle at our toes, mirror our longing for each other, a soothing yet untamable rhythm. Walking hand in hand, the simplicity of the moment is profound. The endless ocean reflects the boundless depths of our affection. In fog and mist, every wave whispers trust, every grain of sand a testament to the many memories we forge together. We are two, bound as one, finding joy in the simplest pleasures.



Reverence: Our path leads to ancient redwood groves, towering sentinels of time. Among these giants, we feel small yet significant. The redwoods, with deep roots and lofty heights, symbolize our dreams. Walking in their shadows, we feel reverence for age and experience. Each tree, a silent witness to centuries, reminds us of the virtue of perseverance, mirroring the respect we feel for one another.



The Path: Miles we travel, across trails, waterfalls, streams, beaches, forests, and streets. Each step, each breath, is an ever-continuing chapter in our story. A testament to the forces that challenge us, the Holy Powers that inspire us to face every challenge and overcome together, so we build a fortress of respect, loyalty, and trust. A journey, not just physical, but a pilgrimage of the heart, a sacred one, leading us ever closer. In the end, it is not the miles but the bond that grows with every step that matters.



Folkbuilder Ryan Skinner

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BBQ by the Bay



In June, we were delighted to meet up with Folk at a BBQ festival. We all had a great time catching up, talking about the Hof, listening to some live music, and devouring the delicious pulled pork and brisket.



Everyone had a blast. The children enjoyed playing at the park onsite and getting to check out the inside of a real fire engine. It was especially awesome for us meeting one of our newest members—the bay membership is growing!

It was also a treasure to see 106 of our joyful members and their families at Óðinshof for Midsummer. Many of our Folk traveled a great distance to be there--by car, bus, and plane. Thank you for all of your sacrifices--time, money, resources--to be there this year. I know it is not easy to travel to rural California for an event, but coming together

to worship our Gods and build everlasting bonds with Folk at a Hof is a spiritual experience like no other. Your presence was a gift to all of us and to the Gods. If you missed this one, try to come out to one of our smaller monthly events and/or to the big 30th Anniversary event at Midsummer next year. If you need help getting there, please reach out! If you're looking to carpool or need picked up from an airport, let us know.

Upcoming Events



For our next moot, we'll be beating the heat at a pool and splash park. It's free and fun, so please come out! There's also a grassy area where we can have a picnic, so bring whatever you'd like to eat or drink. See you soon!

Folkbuilder Olivia Sutherland
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Building Frith Through Hard Work at Óðinshof Midsummer



I wrote previously on the actual happenings of Midsummer, but I do have a more specific topic surrounding the celebrations that I'd also like to discuss.

Óðinshof witnessed a remarkable demonstration of Frith through hard work during our Midsummer celebration. Our leadership and volunteers showcased the essence of community spirit and dedication through ensuring that the event ran smoothly--from timely meals to joyful and peaceful interactions in the Hall.

Our efforts began with dedication and adaptability. Leaders and volunteers coordinated their tasks, from setting up the venue to organizing activities. Each of us understood our role, contributing to a harmonious workflow that minimized confusion and maximized

efficiency. Throughout the event, our commitment was evident. Despite the long hours and the demands of the event, our tireless work and positive attitude were unwavering. We embodied the spirit of Frith, fostering a sense of peace and kinship among all participants. After working all day to ensure a copacetic event, Folks sacrificed sleep and stayed up into the wee hours to build Frith with the night owls, only to turn around and do it again mere hours later. We were running on no sleep, an overbearing amount of caffeine, and the wonderful desire to serve the Gods and our Folk.



The kitchen has historically been one of the biggest stressors at Midsummer. For me, it always means sacrificing the ability to attend certain aspects of the event to guarantee timely and sufficient meals so that everyone gets fed. Running the kitchen and making the meals are my offering to the Gods and how I show my dedication to the Folk. At this Midsummer, we overcame challenges in the kitchen to ensure meals were provided and sufficient to feed the large number of Folk and children attending. Many of us worked diligently in the kitchen while others focused on maintaining positive and productive communication.

When my fellow leaders noticed me struggling to stay afloat at Midsummer, they didn't turn their back and go enjoy the event. Instead, they rolled up their sleeves and asked, "How can we help?" This Midsummer, we stayed focused on our goals and worked efficiently together, even when stress was high; it seemed to strengthen the bonds and bring us closer together. This operation was a testament to the effective communication

and hard work of our entire team. The success of this Midsummer celebration at Óðinshof was not just in the execution of events, but in the bonds that we strengthened through our shared efforts. By working together towards a common goal, we reinforced our community ties and created lasting memories.



Building Frith is not just about maintaining peace; it's also actively fostering relationships through hard work and cooperation. The dedication we displayed at Óðinshof's Midsummer celebration this year is a shining example of how collective effort and effective communication can achieve great things, strengthening our community for the future.



Folkbuilder Sierra Chapman
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Mountain Lake Moot



Sardine Lake, at the crest of the northern Sierras, is an ideal location for an afternoon moot. The lake sits below a mini-mountain range called Sierra Buttes, with amazing views from every angle. It's also convenient to our AFA neighbors on the east side of the Sierra Nevada, but my last-minute planning meant that most were unable to come. It was our delight, though, to have the Flavel family join us.



We found the perfect picnic table on the shore of the Sand Pond, which is a shallow, but wide, body of water created during the 19th century gold mining days. Even with snowmelt feeding Sardine Lake and the lower Sand Pond, little Aubrey entertained us with her wading, watching minnows and dragonflies, and making big splashes with rocks. It was her first time swimming in a lake!



Being the ninth of the month, it's a McNallen tradition to do an Óðinn World Prayer Day ritual. There were no peaks for Wotan on this day since we chose the pond's shore for our simple Blót. At the close of that, we walked up to the shoreline of Sardine Lake to get a full view of the majestic crags, still splashed with snow, reflecting in the water below. The day ended with a stop for ice cream just down the mountain. It was the perfect completion to this tranquil interlude in our busy lives.



Gyðja Sheila McNallen
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Idaho

Hello from Southeast Idaho



Our Midsummer moot had the biggest turnout yet for Idaho Falls! We feasted on some amazing smoked pulled pork and smoked mac and cheese, held a Blót to Baldr, and had some amazing conversations. We built friendships with Folk we had never met before. This moot also happened to be the one-year mark of me being an Apprentice Folkbuilder. One year doesn't seem like a lot of time, but one year of serving my Folk has truly changed my life for the better. In that time, I have grown personally and spiritually in more ways than I can count. I have become a better father, husband, brother, and friend. I have learned to be more patient, understanding, and how to truly enjoy the small things in life. I have made friendships with Folk all across Miðgarð. I never would've thought that going to Midsummer 2023 would have changed my life so much.



Then came this year's Midsummer. I was so excited to get there and meet people that I had only ever talked to over the phone and MeWe. I had amazing conversations with so many wonderful Folk that will stick with me forever.



I was asked to lead the Children's Sumbel which was probably the cutest thing I've ever seen. My children loved every second of it, and they made friends they will never forget. They are already asking when they get to go back so they can see them all. My oldest son found the Gods, and all he has been doing since we left is asking questions about the Gods and our Lore. That alone would have made this Midsummer the best yet, but then Alsherjargoði Matt Flavel called upon me before dinner Saturday night and asked me if I wanted to take my Oath as a Folkbuilder.



Taking my Oath as a Folkbuilder is something I have wanted to do for months now. I love serving our Folk and doing whatever I can to help out wherever I can--even if it is just lending an ear to listen. When I was called upon, my heart stopped for a second. I was filled with so much joy that I could barely talk. Then, as I stood in front of all the gathered Folk, a man I look up to and am glad to call brother, Ryan Skinner, was also called upon to take his Oath alongside me.



Taking that oath in front of my Gods, the assembled Folk, and my Ancestors that I know were watching sent chills through my body. I felt every word as I swore it. Then hearing all the kind words from Leadership about me brought me to tears. I could not ask for a better family than the Asatru Folk Assembly family that we all share. Midsummer 2024 will live in my head forever.

Upcoming Events



On July 20th, we will be holding our Sigrblót dinner moot at my home. I'll be cooking up an amazing dinner that you all don't want to miss. As always, my home is welcome to all who need to stay the night due to long travel--so don't let a couple hours' drive stop you from coming out!



Folkbuilder Kyle Reader
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Additional Idaho Events



Montana

Only a Sunrise Away



Midsummer is a celebration of life, rejuvenation and love. It is a time that is the brightest in our year and folk gather together from all over. This time of the year has a palpable energy to it.

It is in this time of year I hear the most plans being made. There is a buzz of excitement, and a great deal of things people want to do.

Often, however, I have found that once they are pressed to turn desire into action there comes a deafening parade of excuses. My ears are bombarded with claims reeking of predetermined failure. Some of these excuses you'll be familiar with, such as not getting in shape because working out is too tough. Others have thrown me off guard such as the birds are listening so I can't attend that moot.

No matter how grounded or deranged an excuse is, at the end of the day that's all it is.

We have to understand that an excuse just represents at best that something holds a greater desire than our supposed goals. At worst, it represents a lack of will, the mental roadblock to negate the need to apply effort.

This is not to say that excuses aren't good indicators of desire. If I feel I need to prioritize my family over a hobby group, this isn't inherently bad. It does get problematic when I choose to use my family as an excuse. There is a huge difference

between saying that one cannot attend because of their family versus saying that the family function takes priority. One is an excuse, the other direct communication.

It is in this honesty that we can build esteem in others' eyes. It's true that some may see this as a lack of tact, but this will spoil like milk if one is consistently honest. The esteem gained from never providing an excuse goes well past merely being dependable. An honest and direct approach to life has numerous benefits while excuses only show the worst in us.



This Midsummer I had the pleasure of rolling up my sleeves in a kitchen full of hard workers. Fellow Folkbuilders worked hard to provide timely meals for guests and to the outside eye it went smoothly. Inside the kitchen was a very enjoyable experience marked with good natured joking and quick knife work. With Sierra Chapman taking charge and the rest of us generally having had restaurant kitchen experience it went off almost without a hitch.

When things ran out or adjustments came on the fly there were plenty of opportunities for excuses, but none reared their heads. Instead, quick decisions were made and solutions brought forth. Perhaps this is simply the training and life experience gained from the cook line but when the rest of the event is taken into account that theory doesn't hold up.

Out of the kitchen and into the general populace, I was greeted by people from near and far. Many had traveled from out of state and my guys were no exception. We had traveled ranges of twelve to thirty hours to be here. No matter how close or how far, everyone had things they had to figure out before coming. I myself had to make plans for my livestock, others adjusted childcare routines. Hearing all these folk talk about

how they made it to midsummer I was struck at how none of these factors were looked at as inconveniences but merely part of the journey. I had felt the same way but knowing that we had all reached that same conclusion stuck with me. Here was one hundred people that chose to find solutions rather than problems and join in the celebration and worship of our gods.



For some the journey to this Midsummer was symbolically much longer, for this Midsummer Kyle Reader and Ryan Skinner both took their Folkbuilding Oath. Those two had embarked on an apprenticeship that was filled with learning curves and difficulties. At any point they could have opted out or made excuses but they both showed their true grit and stuck it out. Both are fine additions to Óðinshof leadership, and they both exemplify courage and integrity, the two things that excuses hate the most.

On the other hand, some people's journeys were longer in the very literal and I'd be remiss if I didn't boast at my triumph. For years people in the northwest had talked about carpooling down to Óðinshof for Midsummer. They wanted to rent a van or a bus but no matter how much talk went into it, nothing materialized. One thing I've learned about myself for better or worse is that the more people complain about how they can't manifest a good idea the more likely I am to steal their idea. So, this year with help from Apprentice Folkbuilder Aaron Simbeck and the Odinic Order of the Ulfhidnar, we bought a bus. With a low mileage diesel engine and a gutted interior, it would definitely

make the journey soundly, but it wasn't enough for me to get the bus there I wanted to do it in comfort. Mind you there is no comfort in driving thirty hours in a thirty-five-hour block, but the comfort was for my passengers. I fitted the bus with cushioned seats, storage options, food and drink as well as entertainment. For those that came on the bus we had jeopardy, songs to sing along to, license plate bingo and all sorts of stereotypical road trip fun. During this process we were presented many obstacles concerning legalities, licensing, safety, comfort and more. Each one was succinctly dealt with until our plan and bus were ironclad. From that point only the miles remained and when all excuses have been carved out like the cancer they are, only victory is left.



When we live our lives in accordance with the Nine Noble Virtues excuses do not have a place to exist. There will always be difficulties in our lives but finding joy in these struggles is part of the process. I promise you there is always a way to achieve noble goals if there is enough will behind them. Sometimes all we need is a little advice and for that I invite any of you to reach out to me or any of the leadership of the Asatru Folk Assembly. We can aid in these endeavors and if you're willing to abandon excuses and only bring factors to be mitigated you'll see the results you seek.

As Founder Steve McNallen says—each day is not a promise but a gift. In that we find a new opportunity to improve with every sunrise. Carving out excuses takes longer than one sunrise. Therefore, it's my wish you get started right away for when excuses melt; Will triumphs and Victory is only a sunrise away.



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Mighty Muddy Midsummer in Montana



It's been hot, and cold, rained, and snowed. Hailed, and been windy. Yup. Summer is here in Montana.

To start our month here in the Western part of the state, we celebrated my oldest daughter's 7th birthday. She was a D-Day baby, and every year, I stop and reflect on the senseless loss of so many lives when our Folk were put against each other, but I also

marvel on the life we made, and revel in knowing we created something so beautiful!
Happy birthday Heidi!



Our Highland Games moot was scheduled for June 15th. Unfortunately, it was cut short due to inclement weather. Rain, hail, and high winds decided that the games would have to wait. Even my daughters' Irish dance group called it quits, and everyone began breaking down their tents and awnings. Many tents were already damaged by the wind, and the spectators were leaving in droves. We stayed a while and helped vendors load

up, and wound our way back to the MacDonald homestead to try and salvage the day and enjoy some Frith.



While many of our Montana Folk were able to make the trip down to Óðinshof for Midsummer, we unfortunately could not. Instead, we opted for a campout in the Northern/Central part of Montana that same weekend. Nestled in the Bear Paw Mountains, we made our camp. Those that showed up early faced an amazing storm which blew rain and large hail. Even taking refuge under the large shared awning, under which we would do our cooking and crafting, we still got soaked. My family and I drove through part of the storm, but luckily, we missed the thick of it.



The next day, after the clouds had passed, we were greeted by the Sun, and most of the moisture dried up...most of it. My youngest decided to spend the day in the remaining mud puddles but stayed clean enough for at least a few pictures.



After breakfast, our ladies and girls used flowers to craft offerings to Baldr, and we made our way to the creek where we discussed the importance of Solar heroes and gave a Blót to Baldr. The gifts of flowers were sent down the stream--a stream which winds its way to the ocean only to rise from the ocean to become rain, and which, in turn, falls and becomes the river once again.



We're already looking forward to next Midsummer, and we're hoping to see you all at Óðinshof for the AFA's 30th Anniversary!



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Nevada

Alsherjargothic Adventures



June was busy as always here in Northern Nevada. Witan Cliff Erickson and his wife Gyðja Catie came out with their children to spend some time with us and to attend Midsummer at Óðinshof. It was great to get to spend time with some of my favorite folks.



Mandy and I also got to show newly oathed Folkbuilder Kyle Reader the greatest gym ever as he passed through Reno on his way home from Midsummer.



As always, we had a great dinner at our home with amazing guests including the McNallens! Please join us on July 13th for our next dinner.

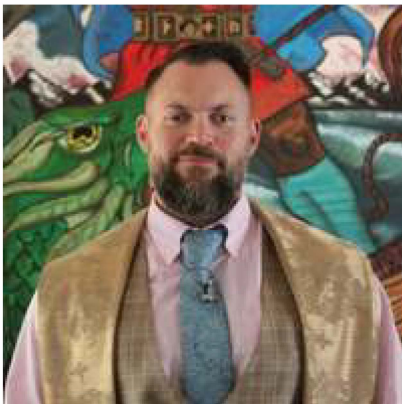
Upcoming Events



RENO, NV

ALSHERJARGOTHIC DINNER

JULY 13, 2024



Matthew D. Flavel
Alsherjargoði , Asatru Folk Assembly
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Washington

♪ *The Wheels on the Bus Go to Óðinshof* ♪



It's safe to say that, in the eyes of all our Folk who attended, Midsummer 2024 at Óðinshof was a resounding success! This was the first Midsummer celebration of any kind I've ever been a part of, and while it exceeded my expectations on every front, none of this would have been possible without the Folk Bus facilitating the entire journey. This bus was financed through a collaboration between Folkvangr Kindred and the Odinic Order of the Ulfhidnar for the purpose of providing members across the Pacific Northwest with a means of convenient and comfortable transportation to and from national AFA events.

The bus was an idea that had been on the back burner for a couple of years now. Many of our Folk have expressed an interest in having a tangible, cost effective way of getting out to events at the Hof's. Buying a bus was always the most obvious solution, but, until relatively recently, it had remained an ephemeral 'what if'. Tyler Heinlein, Aaron Simbeck and I put a lot of work into turning this vision into a reality over the past several months, and not without a few minor setbacks here and there.

Once the trigger had been pulled and the bus itself was purchased, my enthusiasm waffled back and forth at first, I'll admit. There was a litany of concerns fielded when the proposed trip was first made public, the most prominent of which were variations of:

“Where are the safety features? How do I know my kids will be safe?”

“Is that legal to drive without a special license? What if we get pulled over?”

“This bus is old, how do you know it’s mechanically sound? What if we break down?”

All were completely reasonable and sane questions to be asking, and precautions were taken to make sure everything was completely airtight before the maiden voyage. Though I wasn’t onboard for the first leg of the trip from the center of Montana to Spokane, I heard a thunderstorm had turned some of the roads into rivers of mud and that the bus was able to handle itself well under those conditions. It should, it’s an eight-ton metal beast. In essence, the first stress test had been passed. Tyler and family passed through Helena and Missoula to pick up members, arriving in Spokane at around 3am on Thursday morning. Aaron had parked his car over at my place for the weekend, and, around 6am that morning, we rendezvoused with the bus at a truck stop a couple miles due southwest of Airway Heights.

Since about two weeks prior, when we loaded the benches into it, the seating arrangement hadn’t changed much save for everything now being securely bolted in place. After Tyler gave an entertaining tour guide brief, we hit the road. Flyers with printed-out song lyrics were passed around, and, within about an hour and a half, we’d already run through the roster of songs we had on hand and had crossed the Columbia into Oregon. The songs served their purpose to raise our morale, which remained consistently high throughout the trip. Mt. Hood stood like a sentinel keeping watch over our journey through sparsely-populated central Oregon. Everybody except our driver took sporadic naps in shifts around this stretch. Tyler, being the absolute trooper that he is, insisted on doing all the driving himself despite the offers I made to take over if he got tired. It was genuinely commendable driving. To keep him sharp though, those at the front of the bus engaged in a sort of impromptu Q&A session over the bus PA system--which got hilariously abstract at times, but kept everyone entertained.

The longest stop of the trip was in Klamath Falls where we briefly debated whether or not to camp out at a Love's for the night or push on to the Hof in one go. By this point, the sun was starting to set and real fatigue was beginning to set in. After some deliberation on the pros and cons of driving in the dark and a somewhat disappointing walk around town to kill time on my part, it was decided we’d push on.



Dusk set in around the time we got to the fruit checkpoint, a few miles from the California state line, and Mt. Shasta came into view. By the time we made it around the mountain, it was fully dark, and smoke covered the valleys below the highway. Conversations turned to impassioned ranting about sacrificing oneself to higher self, which continued until we got to Chico to gather supplies for the final push. It was around then that I proposed the idea of the bus needing a name, but it wouldn't come to any of us until the return journey.

By now, all of us were nearly tapped. We stocked up on energy drinks and got back on the highway, manically scream-singing as loud as we could to stay awake. Óðinshof was an hour or so within reach. We'd fallen behind our original estimated time of arrival and knew that it was unlikely anyone would be awake to greet us at one in the morning. Regardless, we were fully re-energized by this point, and, with only Google Maps to guide us through unfamiliar territory in the dark, we tore up the winding mountain roads. After a couple of wrong turns and close calls with almost getting stuck on narrow side roads, the Hof suddenly materialized on our right, and I breathed a sigh of relief. We'd finally made it. It was a little surreal. We'd crossed a massive swath of territory in a relatively short period of time, and in the process everyone on that bus had grown closer.

After a beautiful Midsummer weekend with the Folk, we returned home along roughly the same route. In view of Lake Oroville, Tyler coined what was to be the name of the

Folk Bus from that point forward: "Drakkr". Drakkr the Folk Bus is now a permanent fixture of our all-future Hof trips, and if you're an AFA member in the Northwest, you'd be remiss not to come along for the ride next time. It's a blast.



Nick Gunn
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Óðinshof: A Must See!



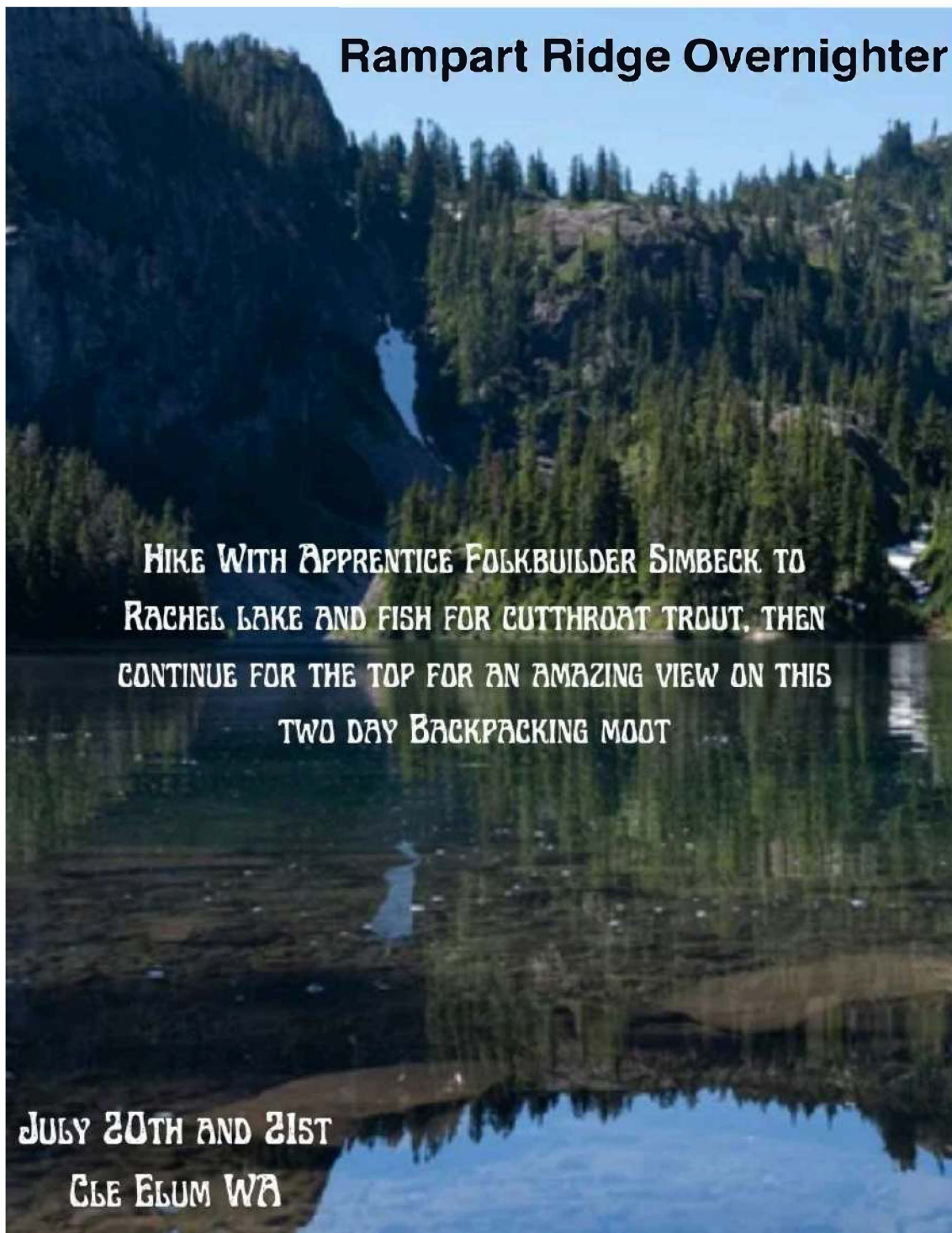
June was a great month! Full of hiking, fishing, and an amazing trip to Óðinshof. I finally made it out to one of our Hof, and it was well worth the trip. I was expecting it to be an awesome experience, but seeing it in person far exceeded what I had expected. The Hof is absolutely stunning; from the beautiful grounds to the decorations in the Hall and the mural of Óðinn, something just feels right while you're there. What is most impressive about the Hof are the people who fill it with joy and Frith. Being at the Hof, you're able to relax and be yourself, you're able to have long, joyful conversations with

people you've never met before. From good food to even better people, I would rate Óðinshof a ten out of ten, a must see.



If you haven't had the opportunity to make it to one of the Hofs, I challenge you to make it to the Hof nearest to you by September 2025. There are so many events going on all year that you don't have to attend a National event. You're always welcome at any of our Hofs, so make it happen. If you've already been to Óðinshof, I challenge you to visit one of the others. We have four Hofs--pick one and go!

Upcoming Events



In July and August, Western Washington has a lot going on--from fishing and cider pressing to a cowboy moot. Take advantage of the nice weather, and come on out! First up, we will be hiking to Rachel Lake again in July. If you haven't read my June Runestone article and you're new to overnight backpacking, it's worth a quick read through.

As far as backpacking goes, you want to pack light. Not *light* meaning "don't bring the things you'll need", but rather as in choosing items that don't weigh as much. You want your pack to be between 30 and 50 pounds. When I went up to Rachel Lake in June, my

pack weighed 75 pounds, and it was a tough hike. Keep in mind that you don't have to bring every item in every category. If you bring matches or flint and steel, you won't need a lighter. You don't need 2 water filters; 1 will do. Bringing a filter so you don't have to boil all of your drinking water for the trip will save you weight on propane. Do you really need a fixed blade camp knife, your pocket knife, a multi tool, a small carving knife, and a machete? No. Bring the camp knife and the multi tool, as those two will be able to handle the same tasks as the other knives.

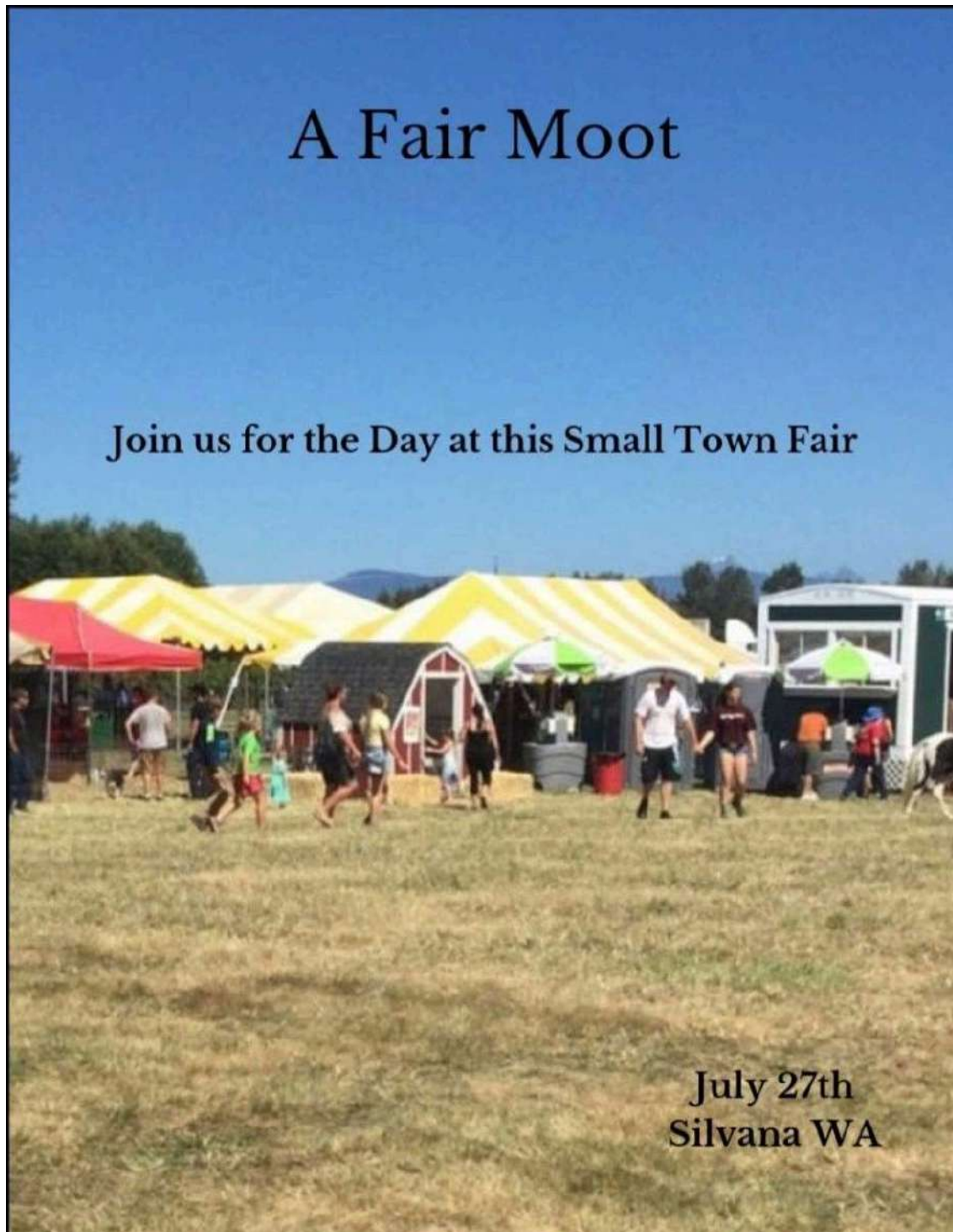
If you have trouble shaving weight off your pack, I recommend putting everything you want to take in your pack, then walk up and down a staircase with your pack on a couple times. You'll soon appreciate how heavy it is and start tossing things. It's better to have what you need and a heavy pack than to be comfortable on the walk in but go without something important. That's why I took an extra 35 pounds of clothing, tarps, and food when I went in June, as I anticipated colder temperatures and more wind chills than normal due to the runoff. We'll be going in later July and it should be great weather, so we won't have to worry about snow or excessive wind. If you need help cutting down the weight of your pack, feel free to reach out to me, I have lots of experience and am more than willing to help.

Fishing Moot

**Join Apprentice Folkbuilder Aaron Simbeck for
Salmon Fishig on the Puget Sound**

**July 26th
Everett WA**

After the hike, we're going fishing on the Puget Sound for salmon. This should be a lot of fun and a great opportunity to catch some of the highest quality of fish. Fresh, hand caught salmon is far better than ANYTHING you can get in a restaurant or fish market. If you don't believe me, show up and I'll prove you wrong. We'll be targeting king and coho salmon this time around as the pink salmon are out of season until next summer.



A Fair Moot

Join us for the Day at this Small Town Fair

July 27th
Silvana WA

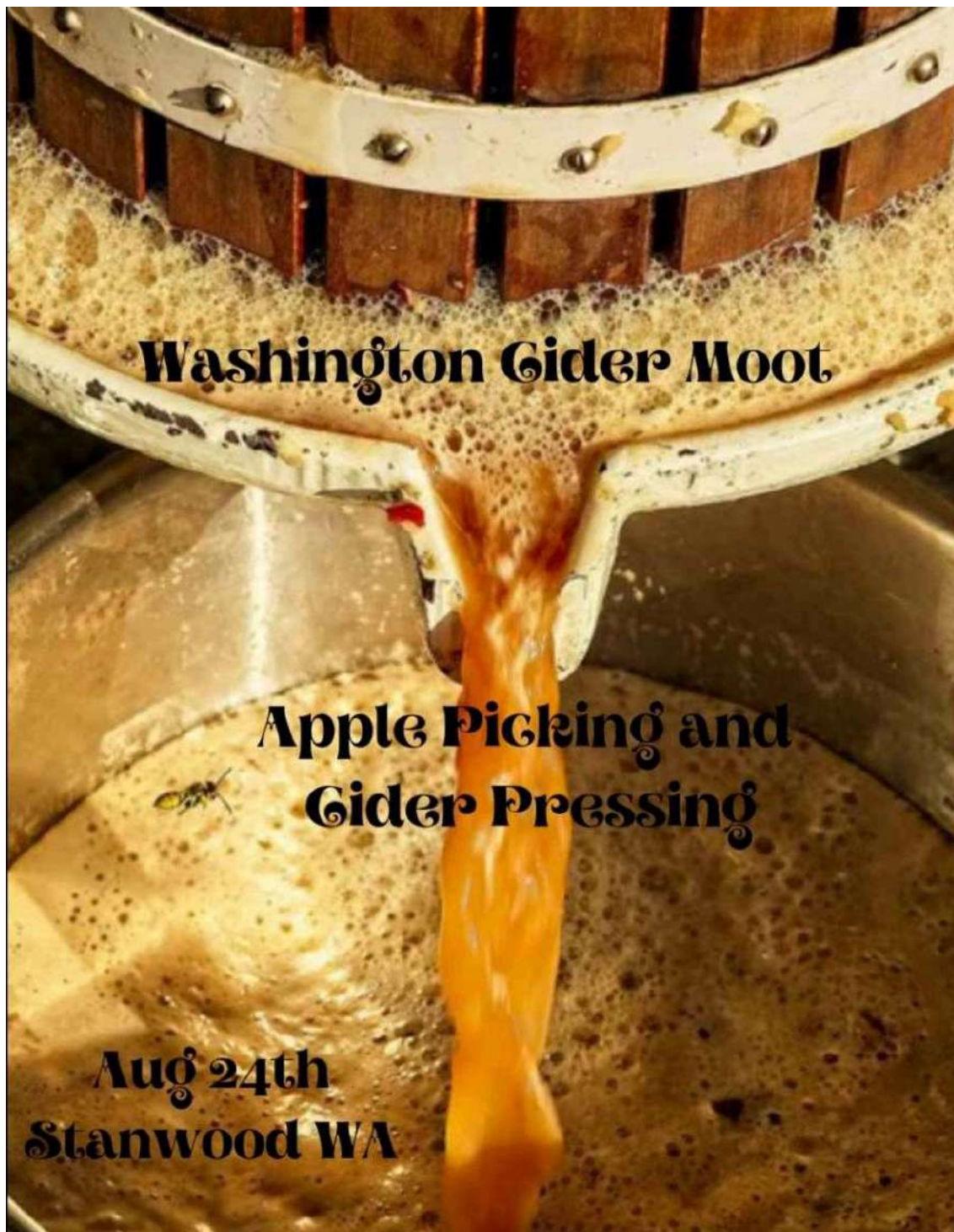
We'll be going to two small town fairs that I enjoy attending every year. The first is in Silvana, Washington on July 27th.



The second fair moot is on August 3rd in Stanwood. There's a ton of stuff to do at the fairs, and children will have a lot of fun, so come on out!



After that, myself and Folkbuilders Heinlein and Gunn will be getting together in the old cowboy town of Winthrop. Bring your hats and boots; it's going to be a real shindig!



Near the end of August, y'all are welcome to come to my home for apple picking and cider pressing. Bring a ladder and bucket, if you can, but, most importantly, be ready to work! I'll be making homemade lemonade and sandwiches (made with homemade jam from our home-grown raspberries and strawberries) for those who show up. If the berries are ready and you're willing, we'll also pick raspberries, blackberries, and strawberries for canning. Potentially, we may pick gooseberries, elderberries, and blueberries as well.

If you are interested in attending any of these events, just reach out! I don't bite. I hope to see you out there!



Aaron Simbeck
Apprentice Folkbuilder
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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 volunteer@runestone.org to help us make a difference in our world.

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 depression or PTSD? Is your baby having a hard time with teething? Please reach out to us about these important concerns!

Once a month, women of the AFA 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 fruitful, healing magic, please let us know! It's easy, but it makes a huge difference to those in our community who need our help!

You can reach us at EirsBlessings@runestone.org

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 photos@runestone.org. The larger the resolution the better, so please email them from the device where the photo was taken.

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...

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 folkservices@runestone.org.

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

Thanks in advance!

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 <https://www.doyourownwill.com/>.

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



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aturnage@runestone.org



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