

AFA UPDATE

A PROJECT OF THE ASATRU FOLK ASSEMBLY

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THE SEARCH FOR RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

There's an important set of articles in the latest Newsweek (on the newsstand until September 5th) concerning "Spirituality in America." It contains a lot of information directly pertinent to the presentation of Asatru in the United States, and anyone concerned about the future of our faith over the next few decades would do well to examine it.

For example, there is the revelation - not so surprising, really - that spirituality, rather than just "religion," describes what most people are after. When forced to choose between the two, 24% said they were spiritual, but not religious. A mere 9% claimed to be religious, but not spiritual. However, a much larger 55% said they were both spiritual and religious.

In a way this is no surprise; you'd have to be pretty soul-dead to say you were religious, but not spiritual. The important thing here is that people want both - but if forced to choose between only one, will opt for spirituality.

Related to this is the question of why people said they practiced religion in the first place. Fully 39% said their motivation was "to forge a personal relationship with God." Another 30% cited being a better person and leading a moral life. Only 3% stated that their reason was to be part of a community.

As stated several times throughout the articles, what people are looking for is personal religious experience. To some extent this reflects the American tendency to individualism, or even to selfishness and narcissism - but it is not, in itself, invalid. We

who follow Asatru and other ancestral ways balance it with the concerns of the group, of course. For that matter, perhaps it could be said that much of our personal religious experience deals with our connection to the Folk, so there is not necessarily a contradiction between the two.

We have plenty to offer the public in their quest for an individual relationship with the divine, and we need to let the world know. Communing with the Gods, contemplating the Runes, feeling the very pulse of life flowing in the beauty of the natural world, reveling in our connections to our kin and our ancestors - all these are ultimately personal experiences that can transform lives.

To know what we need to stress as we present Asatru to others, we have to know what it is they are looking for. When we can legitimately provide those things - and in this case we can - then we need to showcase those particular aspects of our spirituality.

In the final analysis, our own spiritual richness needs to show in our lives, proving the validity of our Way and making each of us a beacon to bring our people home...to themselves and all they can be.

WINTER NIGHTS IN THE REDWOODS!

Don't forget! The AFA is hosting its first large gathering in several years, and all AFA members and trusted friends are invited to be there.

This milestone event will happen October 21-23, in a beautiful redwood forest near the picturesque town of Mendocino, on the California coast. There will be plenty of workshops, lectures on leadership, the unveiling of our new "Fundamentals of Asatru" course, an opportunity to meet the Board of Directors, and much more! To top it off, the facilities are outstanding...participants will be housed in cabins, complete with a fireplace and balcony.

Contact us at info@runestone.org for more information!

WALK FOR THE WOLVES!

The AFA's effort to save the endangered wolves of Norway has entered a new phase! Kimberley has come up with the idea of staging a "Walk for the Wolves" sometime next summer. On the day of the event, people all over the world would walk a predetermined route in their local area with the idea of publicizing the plight of the wolves and raising funds to help preserve Odin's favorite predators.

Kimberley is determined to do this in a big way - to get celebrity supporters, for example. She will need help from biologists, activists, organizers, and just plain people

who want to help save the wolves. Please drop a line to Kimberley@troi.ws to find out what you can do to help.

In addition, we hope you'll visit our Yahoo group, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/norwegian_wolf/. Here you'll find updates on the wolf project as well as photos, various files, and other resources.

And if you haven't yet done so, please sign our petition at <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/399085910>

LINKS ON ISSUES THAT MATTER!

In the CD Vision, I described three trends in the world around us that were of key concern to our welfare and the survival of our ancestral Way. These three trends were the degradation of the environment, the threats to indigenous peoples (and especially to our own Eurofolk), and finally the erosion of freedom. All these crises are ultimately spiritual in nature. We have the solutions, in the revival of our ancestral faith!

Here are some links to recent news on these three trends -

Environment -

Sharks facing extinction

<http://msnbc.msn.com/id/9039083/>

Alaska melting

<http://rense.com/general67/BASK.HTM>

Preservation of peoples -

Efforts to build Hawaiian sovereignty

<http://rense.com/general67/hawaii.htm>

Swiss separatists

<http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/article307426.ece>

White minorityhood

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/08/12/news/census.php>

Freedom -

UK ID cards could be used for surveillance system

<http://rense.com/general67/msurv.htm>

LORE CLASSES

The AFA sponsors twice-monthly classes on Eddic lore in the Sacramento area. Anyone interested in attending can contact us at info@runestone.org.

AFA MEMBERSHIP

The AFA is doing things! We are determined to make a difference, and to do that, we have to grow. In short, we'd like you to consider becoming a member of the Asatru Folk Assembly.

You can find an application form on our web site at <http://www.runestone.org> or you can contact us at info@runestone.org.

DONATIONS!

The Asatru Folk Assembly is a 501 c (3) religious organization, and donations to it are tax-deductible. Why give money to the IRS when you can use it to advance the program of the AFA?

ODIN LIVES!

The groundbreaking radio program Odin Lives! is broadcast every Thursday night at 8 PM Eastern Time on a frequency of 7.415 MHz. This broadcast is repeated the next Tuesday morning at 12:15 AM on the same frequency. You can learn more by going to their web site at <http://www.odinlives.org>.

IMPORTANT DATES

September 9 - Day of Remembrance for Herman of the Cherusci. Herman learned the art of war under the Romans, then deserted the Imperial eagles to lead his tribe in revolt against the Mediterranean intruders. In the fall of the year 9 CE, he annihilated three legions in the Teutobergerwald, a victory which saved Germania from Roman occupation. Plant an oak tree, eat in a German restaurant, and remember Herman with a glass of fine beer from the Fatherland.

September 22 - Winter Finding. Now, at the fall equinox, is the time when day and night are of equal length. This is a harvest festival, and you can celebrate it with a meal at which you give thanks to the Gods for the powers of the soil. Raise a horn of your favorite drink to our two deities connected with fertility and prosperity - Freya, and her brother Frey.

Hail the AFA!

Stephen A. McNallen
Asatru Folk Assembly

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND WHO SHOULD BE GETTING THESE UPDATES?
Please refer him or her to AFA_Bearclaw-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE at <http://www.runestone.org>.