

## AFA UPDATE

### A PROJECT OF THE ASATRU FOLK ASSEMBLY

Issue 64

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### ON OUR WAY TO MEADHALL MOOT!

Shortly after punching "send" on this 64<sup>th</sup> issue of AFA Update, Sheila and I will head off to the Meadhall Moot, in Missouri. This lively annual event sprang from a Yahoo! Group, when people who had met online decided to actually get together and meet face-to-face (What a quaint idea, eh?). I attended the one held year before last, and it was excellent - a great mix of people, lots of energy, and a very rewarding time, spiritually.

We'll be presenting a new CD I've just produced - more on that in the next AFA Update! - and sharing our expertise in any number of ways, formally or informally.

### EOSTRE IN SACRAMENTO

The weather was threatening as we met for the AFA's Eostre/Ostara celebration. Rainclouds had unleashed showers all over northern California; we were definitely in the "showers" rather than the "flowers" part of springtime! We wondered - would people make what was in some cases a long drive in the rain to be with us?

Our worries turned out to be unfounded, as folk both familiar and new came from all over the area to honor Eostre and celebrate the renewal of life.

A quick look over the assembled people showed trusted friends and newcomers who were experienced Asatruar. Feeling comfortable with the mix of people, I made a last-minute alteration to the ceremony and inserted a traditional AFA-style blot into the Three Horns ritual we normally do in the presence of people we don't know well.

This modification worked even better expected. Everyone seemed to experience a deep connection with the Goddess of the Dawn, and with the surging life force in all its manifestations. As each of us in turn approached the horg, we placed a flower in the

Goddess's wagon and drew a rune stave - "a gift calls for a gift." The rite closed with a blessing of the children and, filled with the blessings of Ostara, we silently filed back into the warmth and dryness of the building.

The Ostara egg hunt produced a crowd of delighted children, each with a basket filled to overflowing. They were happy and filled with life, as were we adults in our own way!

Thank you, Eostre, for your blessings!

## GENETICS AND RELIGION

Certain aspects of religious belief and practice seem to be genetically based, according to a study done on 500 identical and non-identical twins. In particular, things like regularity of church attendance and belief in a "higher spiritual force" seem to be largely hereditary.

The original study was published in The Journal of Personality, but for a descriptive news article go to

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/03/22/wrelig22.xml&sheet=/news/2005/03/22/ixworld.html>

The idea itself is far from new, and a number of studies in recent years have shown things like values, attitudes, temperament, and even political convictions to be more or less genetically based. This does not mean that there is a specific gene for Asatru, or for being a Republican, but rather that the underlying personality factors that influence a person one way or the other are hereditary.

Perhaps the most exhaustive research on the subject appears in the book Human Sociobiology, by Dr. Daniel Freedman. Freedman and his wife studied newborn infants in hospitals around the world and found clear differences in response to basic stimuli between Caucasian, African, Asian, and American Indian babies. Interestingly, Asian and American Indian infants displayed similar characteristics - as one might expect, considering the close genetic link between these two groups.

Studies like these confirm our belief that our links to our respective ancestors permeates every aspect of our existence.

## AND NEWS FROM CHINA...

Three recent articles out of China caught our attention recently.

The first one, titled "Tomb Dig Findings Shrouded in Mystery," describes 163 tombs dating from about 1,500 years ago. The discovery took place in "Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region" - the same territory where the blond mummies were found some

years ago. There are lots of strange things about the tombs, not the least of which is the boat-shaped coffins found in them. Boats are all the more interesting since the complex is located in the middle of the Lop Nor Desert.

Here's the link: [http://english.people.com.cn/200503/21/eng20050321\\_177616.html](http://english.people.com.cn/200503/21/eng20050321_177616.html).

A second, earlier article describing the same site is at [http://english.people.com.cn/200501/04/eng20050104\\_169523.html](http://english.people.com.cn/200501/04/eng20050104_169523.html).

The third article is "Ancient European Remains Discovered in Qinghai." It tells of the graves of three Europeans dating back some 1,900 years. The burials were found southeast of the Xinjiang area, indicating an even deeper penetration of Chinese territory by Europeans than previously thought.

Check out [http://english.people.com.cn/200407/06/eng20040706\\_148672.html](http://english.people.com.cn/200407/06/eng20040706_148672.html) for more information.

#### NEW STUDY ON THE ENVIRONMENT: EARTH IN TROUBLE

A new study conducted by 1,300 scientists around the world concludes that "human activity is putting such strain on the functions of Earth that the ability of the planet's ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted."

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment collated data that is generally agreed upon by scientists, rather than engaging in speculation or worst-case scenarios.

Furthermore - and this is something highly consistent with the freedom-loving values of Asatru - many of the suggested remedies are of a free market, non-authoritarian nature.

The AFA's opinion is that the environmental crisis is fundamentally a spiritual one, and that the ultimate solution is to change the way individuals relate to the Earth. Changing people's awareness will change their behavior - from home energy usage to decisions in the corporate boardroom.

One of the many links concerning this study (which broke only in today's news): <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L30649669.htm>.

#### RUNE AND LORE CLASSES

The AFA sponsors twice-monthly classes on the runes and on Eddic lore in the Sacramento area. Anyone interested in attending can contact us at [afa@lanset.com](mailto:afa@lanset.com).

## DONATIONS!

The Asatru Folk Assembly is a 501 c (3) religious organization, and donations to it are tax-deductible.

## 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

April 9 - Day of Remembrance for Jarl Hakon of Norway. Hakon restored the worship of our true Gods after it had been suppressed by Christian kings. Recall his virtue by formally renouncing foreign creeds, or by vigorously exercising your guarantees under the Bill of Rights.

Also April 9 - Sumarsdag/Sigrblot. This was the first day of summer in the Icelandic calendar. It falls at about the same time as the annual sacrifice to Odin, for success in the upcoming raiding season. Welcome the warm months, and make an offering to the Father of Victory for triumph in your personal struggles!

April 30 - Walburg. This Germanic Goddess safeguards the dead heroes who sleep in the burial mound, and harbors deeds yet to bear fruit. Pour a libation to the bold ones awaiting rebirth, and think on how your own acts will live after you.

May 1 - From the gloom of Walburg we enter the sunshine of May Day. Think on Freya, take a walk in the forest, go on a picnic, or send flowers to a friend.

Hail the AFA!

Stephen A. McNallen  
Asatru Folk Assembly

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