

## AFA UPDATE

### A PROJECT OF THE ASATRU FOLK ASSEMBLY

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### “WINTER NIGHTS IN THE REDWOODS” UPDATE

We've gotten a couple of emails from people who were not sure if they were eligible to join us for the upcoming Winter Nights event. They were under the impression that because they were not yet AFA members, and did not personally know anyone in the AFA, that they were not welcome!

Allow me to clear up any misunderstanding!

AFA members, of course, are welcome. In fact, they can attend at a reduced rate. But if you haven't joined yet, but have looked into the AFA enough to understand what we're all about, drop us a line! Introduce yourself, and we'll take it from there.

The workshops for Winter Nights are firming up quite nicely. Subjects now being entertained include things like public relations, image, leadership, personal financial growth, the program for the next few years - plus a late-night Odin blot, a blot to the disir and alfar, guided meditations, lots of kids activities and more.

Be here, and you won't be disappointed!

BOOK CONTENTS: INPUT WANTED!

Supposing someone wrote a book describing Asatru from the AFA's perspective - a sort of "AFA handbook," but broad enough to appeal to anyone interested in Germanic religion. What should be included? What should be left out? How can such a volume stand out from all the others out there?

Send me your thoughts, please!

#### IN FAVOR OF PROSELYTIZING

One often encounters the opinion that Asatruar should not go out of our way to attract people to our faith. The dividing line between acceptable outreach and unacceptable harassment, however, is open to some debate: Just when does outreach become outrage?

As for me, I have no problem with proselytizing. I should define that: Proselytizing, according to most dictionary definitions, means trying to convert someone to a different religion. The means used to do so can be subtle, in-your-face, arrogant, mild, casual or insistent; no matter how it is done, it is still proselytizing.

Probably, though, we need to use another word so as to not set off peoples' "evangelism buttons."

Given the distinction between the definition of proselytizing and the means by which it can be conducted, I should qualify my approval. Here is my personal breakdown of acceptable versus unacceptable means of spreading the word about Asatru: I would not go door to door bothering people...I would not call strangers on the phone at dinner time...I would not accost innocent bystanders on street corners...In short, I would not do anything that would make my beliefs seem undignified.

Would I run radio and TV ads? Would I put our message on billboards? Would I take out advertising in mainstream publications? Would I create documentaries, or full-length feature films depicting our lore? Yes, absolutely - while ensuring, of course, that the actual content of the message was up to standard.

In short, I would never cram our beliefs down anyone's throat, but if I had the ability I would make it clear to hundreds of millions of people that we are here, and that we are a viable choice. This attitude might be summed up in the sentence "We're ready when you are."

If we do not grow, our Way will die. We owe it to the Aesir and Vanir, to the ancestors, to life itself to see that does not happen. The question is not whether or not we reach out to others, it is how can we do that in a way that is honorable, dignified, and in keeping with our values.

## THE BATTLE FOR THE HEART OF WILDNESS

Wolves, those ultimate symbol of wildness, are in dire danger in Norway. Special interest groups and complacency have brought them to the edge of annihilation, and if they die out, something wonderful will be gone from the world.

The AFA is trying to avert such a tragedy. Kimberley Remen, leader of the AFA's Norwegian Wolf Project, has delivered stacks of signed petitions to leaders in the Norwegian government. (You can sign that petition by going to <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/399085910?tl=1127421847> .) She was recently interviewed by Nationen, one of Norway's leading newspapers, about the Norwegian Wolf Project and the "Walk for the Wolves" she is coordinating for next August 9<sup>th</sup>.

Please visit the NWP web site at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/norwegian\\_wolf/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/norwegian_wolf/) for much more information...and lend your support!

## 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

October 8 - Day of Remembrance for Erik the Red. Erik was the stouthearted father of Leif Erikson, and a dedicated follower of Thor. Hot-headed and clever, Erik made his mark on history by organizing the Viking settlement of Greenland. Raise a toast to this rascal, or read from his saga, in honor of his intrepid spirit.

October 9 - Leif Erikson Day. This holiday was first officially proclaimed by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965. Remind your friends of the Norse colonization of North America more than a thousand years ago!

October 12 - Winter Nights. This is the time we honor the Disir, conceived of as the female ancestors of our family lines. The Disir look on from the Otherworld, with loving concern for us, their descendants. Pour them a libation on the chilling autumn earth, and think on the wise and powerful women whose blood flows in your veins.

October 31 - Samhain, the Celtic New Year. The Celts among us will honor the ancestors on this day and celebrate the unity of the clan, which transcends time and space and mortality.

November 9 - Day of Remembrance for Queen Sigrith of Sweden. Sigrith was offered marriage to Olaf Tryggvason, the Christianizer of Norway. The condition was that she give up the religion of her ancestors. She refused to do this, and Olaf ignobly slapped her across the face. In retribution, she played a key role in his downfall. Meditate on the glory of strong women who will not compromise on matters of honor.

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](mailto:AFA_Bearclaw-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

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