

BEARCLAW

Heilsan!

Lots of content for you today, from near and afar. I continue to be inspired by the spiritual earthquake that was Ireland, and the connection with the ancestors that I acquired there seems as strong as ever. I'm told - by one who knows - that the real import of the pilgrimage may not be apparent for years, and I await the unfolding of the layers that have been laid in the Well of Urth.

If you like BEARCLAW, please recommend it to a friend!

Now, on with the news!

ASATRU YOUTH INJURED IN ASSAULT

Many of you will have seen this message Sheila sent out to various lists, but in case you haven't -

About a year ago, Ginger Marsh moved from Wyoming to Sacramento with her three sons. We've had the pleasure of Ginger's company on several occasions including our seasonal blots. Yesterday morning we received word that her youngest son, 13 year-old Justin, was attacked by three black men Saturday about 6 PM in an attempted robbery. The single blow to Justin's head crushed his skull but restorative surgery yesterday to implant a metal plate was successful, and Justin is now home with his family. The other boy with him was not seriously hurt. There is no arrest so far and the police are not considering this a hate crime. Our stalwart kinsman, Ed Broneske was at the hospital with Ginger and performed runic work and blessings over Justin before his surgery. Diane Schachterle relayed phone calls and was there with Ginger when Justin got out of surgery. Our special thanks goes to these two kindred members.

Ginger, a single mom, was not able to carry health insurance on her boys so the hospital and pharmacy bills are on her shoulders for now. As this brutal attack was totally unprovoked, we are hoping that there will be victim assistance money to help with the majority of the costs.

I think we all agree that it's times like this that the community reveals itself, so we are asking you, our kinsmen and women to help Ginger in this time of need. We are running this through the AFA but want to stress that 100% of all donations will be sent to Ginger and her family. Please earmark any check or money order with the notation "Ginger Marsh Fund." As the AFA is a tax-exempt entity, your donations are also tax deductible, should that apply to you. Your \$10, \$15, or \$20 will be of great help to this family.

You can also make donations using PayPal through the AFA site. (If I see that you are charged a \$3.50 "shipping & handling" fee, I will either refund it to you or include it with your donation, as per your request.)

Mailing address, checks payable to the AFA:

AFA

Re: Ginger Marsh Fund
P.O. Box 445
Nevada City, CA 95959

Thanks to all!

Sheila McNallen
Calasa Kindred/AFA

MIDSUMMER IN NEVADA CITY

Calasa Kindred, made up of local AFA supporters, met on June 14 to honor Sunna at Midsummer and to give our thanks for her life-giving might. Blot was held in our secluded grove as we called on all the Holy Powers and renewed the bonds that connect us to them.

We sat in the shade before dinner and talked about several questions now facing the AFA. Ways of presenting out ideas to the larger public were discussed, as was the form our future publications should take. The results of our mooting will be shared with *Bearclaw* readers at a later time.

Our celebration concluded with a powerful sumbel as we gathered around the fire pit and spoke over the horn concerning the Holy Ones and the ancestors.

PROGRESS ON THE HOF-SITE

The next weekend, AFA supporters met to work on the land where our hof sits, high in the Sierra Nevada mountains. A day's labor gave us most of a shed for housing kitchen supplies. We took turns sawing, hammering, and carrying boards, or just catching up on the news of our various families.

Later, as the sun sank lower toward the horizon, we gathered at the ritual site overlooking one of California's many inspiring river canyons. Calling on all the Gods and Goddesses, we praised Sunna in her strength and let the warmth of her rays wash over us. We were truly blessed, and the golden mead sprinkled on the assembled folk reminded us of the sun's sparkling radiance.

As the daylight faded on the horizon and the shadows overtook us, we gathered around the fire for sumbel. The mead traveled three times around the circle, with strong toasts matching our mood. Diane stood over the flames and declared her dedication to our kindred, to this holy hof-place, and to the community we are forming here in northern California. We all rose and joined her, placing our horns alongside hers.

Like any human venture, our fledgling community has had its share of troubles and false starts. But those of us who were there that night renewed our faith and our loyalty to our common endeavor and to the noble ideals that inspired it. We will persevere - even though saddened by the news that the Tobin family is moving out of the area. We will miss them, but they will carry the AFA to their new home and spread the Asatru revival still farther afield. Horns were raised to them at sumbel. Hail the Tobins!

We parted late that night, firm in our dedication to each other, to the AFA, and to the community we are building.

MIDSUMMER IN PRISON

Monday, the 23rd, I journeyed to Solano State Prison, at Vacaville. The kindred there is an energetic one, and I visit them a couple of times a year.

After being ushered into the chapel, we sat in a circle and I told them of my recent trip to Ireland. I emphasized the spiritual impact of making such a powerful connection with my ancestors. I told them of the many online genealogical resources they can access once they are free, and urged them to explore their ancestral line in a real way - and, if they can, to make a pilgrimage like mine. One of my goals was to give them something positive to look forward to when they are back on the street; another was to help them tap into the support that the bloodline can give them as they rebuild their lives.

Later, I read them some of my recent writings and then we gave blot for Midsummer. We can't use real mead, of course, so I take a mixture of honey and water with me. I also take a bowl, a horn, and an evergreen sprig (a little hard to get in prison...).

Lunch was next on the agenda - simple institutional fare, but plentiful and eaten in the company of men following the Gods. Our meal was followed by the story of Frey's winning of Gerd, and in our last minutes I taught the men a simple breathing technique for meditation and explained its relationship to *ond* or *anda*, the energy associated with the breath in Germanic lore.

Of the "graduates" of this kindred, the only two I know are thriving in the outside world. They have decent jobs, pretty girlfriends, and real lives. They carry themselves with dignity and honor and I am glad that Asatru was there for them. Now, they are there for the Gods and the Folk. The Gods have great power to help men and women fix broken lives.

THOR'S HAMMERS IN GOLD AND SILVER!

For outstanding hammers in sterling silver and 18 karat gold (as well as a line of clothing to match!) go to <http://www.hammersofthegods.org>. These feature the name “Thor” in Younger Futhark runes, and they actually look like hammers! No more comments like “Hey, why do you wear a little anchor around your neck?” ever again... Tell Thom that Steve McNallen sent you!

SAGAS OF THE ICELANDERS - CHEAP!

Daedalus Books, at <http://www.daedalusbooks.com>, has copies of the paperback edition of *Sagas of the Icelanders* by Jane Smiley...for \$5.98! At this price, buy one and give another to a friend who needs to learn more about his or her heritage.

SCHOOLBOY DISCOVERS VIKING RING

A sixth-grader in Norway found a Viking ring during a class trip to Borre National Park, the site of an ancient ship burial.

“I was digging for something like this and there it was!” said Magnus Hempel Naess of Galleberg Elementary School. The children had been allowed to try their hand at actual excavation, and for Magnus it was certainly a success.

Archeologist Terje Gansum commented that the ring was probably part of a larger assembly that hung like a necklace, judging from its size and the way it was fashioned. It was estimated to be 1,100 years old or older.

NEW LINK BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND GENETICS

Traits such as introversion, inhibition, and our reaction to new people and novel situations are partly determined by specific brain structures, according to the ABC News article “Born Shy” (June 23, 2003). The news item reports on a study led by Carl Schwartz, director of the developmental psychopathology lab at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston and reported in the latest issue of *Science*.

The new findings reinforce the work of other scientists over the years whose studies demonstrate that personality traits are largely inherited - though one’s life experiences may determine how the traits actually manifest in one’s life.

AND THAT’S IT for now. May the second half of your year be even better than the first!

Hail the Gods and Goddesses!

Hail the Folk!
Hail the AFA!

Stephen A. McNallen
Drihten

BEARCLAW is a free update from the Asatru Folk Assembly. Tell your friends about it!

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

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ASATRU FOLK ASSEMBLY ARE WELCOME, AND
ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.

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