

March 2017

Skylands Report

The e-newsletter of the Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship



Skylands Publishes 2017 Schedule

Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship has published our 2017 schedule of events – and a jam-packed schedule it is! It's been said that Ásatrú is a religion with homework! There's certainly some validity to that; there's much to know and much to study. For the new Ásatrúar the vast store of knowledge, from the Eddas to the Sagas to the various books on runic knowledge, can be a bit foreboding. But have no fear; Skylands has you covered! The backbone to our schedule is our series of classes designed to impart much-needed information in a friendly environment. Led by Joseph goði, Skylands offers an Ásatrú 101 class and a Rûna workshop each month. These classes are a wonderful source of information and are invaluable to all interested in our religion.

Next be sure to mark your calendars for our major holiday celebrations. The year we have expanded our celebrations including our first celebration of Krampusnacht! The major holidays are not to be missed!

- **Sumarmál (Summer-meal) Celebration** – Saturday, April 22
- **Midsummer Celebration** – Saturday, June 24
- **Hrattablót (Sacrifice to the river-goddess Hratta)** – Saturday, August 26
- **Haustblót Celebration (Harvest offering)** – Saturday, September 30
- **Dísablót Celebration** – Saturday, November 4
- **Krampusnacht** – Saturday, December 9
- **New Year's Eve** – Sunday, December 31

But we have even more planned for the year. We have scheduled several meet-and-greets at local restaurants and taverns, a movie-night in March (see the March calendar below), a few nature hikes including a trip to the Columcille Megalith Park. We also have planned attendance at the Kutztown Folk Festival and the Vasa Park Scandinavian Festival.

You will find the complete calendar on Meetup. Please sign-up early and mark your personal calendars. 2017 is shaping up to be a great year for Skylands and we hope to share it with you. Full details may be located here: <https://www.meetup.com/NJ-Asatru/>



The SAF flag waves over one of our 2016 celebrations

Skylands 2016: A Retrospective

As we begin a new year, there is always value in looking back and considering the year that has recently come to a close. We can only set our course for the coming year by considering what was accomplished in the prior year.

For members of Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship, 2016 got started with an amazing Yule celebration. Our Blóts tend to be our most popular events and Yule the most popular of our Blóts! The month continued, as with most months with two Asatru classes. The Ásatrú 101 classes are designed for both the beginner who wants to learn the very basics, and the advanced Ásatrúar who is interested in hearing new perspectives.

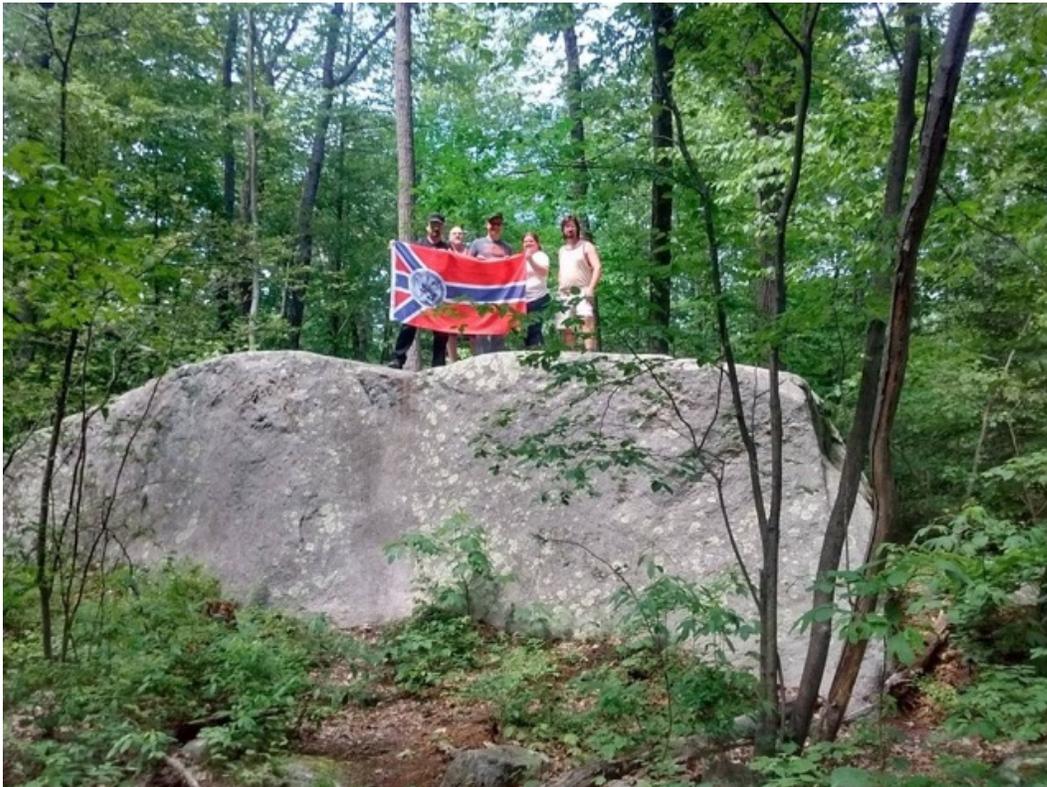
Included in our schedule were other great get-togethers that were a bit less formal, like our Super Bowl Party and the terrific Pub Moot at Thatcher McGhee's. As the spring arrived, we celebrated one of our major holidays, Sumarmál which, as usual, featured a bountiful feast.

In June we held our first tribal nature walk. This very popular event has resulted in our scheduling several hike days for our 2017 schedule. This year we'll be sure to bring a compass! June was also the month in which we celebrated Midsummer. Midsummer is the time of the Skylands Thing where business may be raised up to the tribe for consideration.

The months that followed were equally active. In July we were off to the amazing Kutztown Folk Festival, a festival celebrating the heritage of the Pennsylvania Dutch with amazing displays, lectures, food, and... let's not forget the birch beer!

As the fall kicked off, we had the opportunity to show off our new tribal t-shirts as we hosted an informational booth at the Scandinavian Festival. We had the opportunity to speak to many wonderful people about Ásatrú all while enjoying the splendid fall weather and exploring the tables of the many vendors who participated. In the fall we also introduced our Rûna workshops, which provided our tribe members with a greater focus on Germanic magical practices. In October we held the third of our major rituals, Haustblót, our celebration of the harvest. As the winter approached, we had a contingent attend the Lake Mohawk Weihnachtsmarkt, a great opportunity to get some Yule shopping done early.

Thinking back on 2016 reinforces the idea that while Ásatrú is a religion, Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship is more than a church. We're a tribe – literally an extended family, and everyone is there for everyone else. You're never alone when you're a member of a tribe. While I have highlighted many of our events, it is important to remember that we don't just live our faith once a week. It informs our lives every day.



June 12 - Nature Hike



June 25 – Midsummer Celebration



July 10 – Kutztown Folk Festival



September 4 – Scandinavian Festival

Skylands March Calendar

Movie Night

Join us for a movie night! We'll watch the 1958 classic *The Vikings*, starring Kirk Douglas and Tony Curtis. Popcorn and hot dogs will be provided. We request a \$5 donation per adult 18+ to help cover costs.

Date: Saturday, March 4, 2017

Time: 06:00 PM

Location: Stanhope, NJ

Asatru 101 Class

The subject of this week's class will be an open Q&A. Any topic is on the table for discussion - myths, history, gods and goddesses, contemporary issues; if you've had any questions come up that were nagging you, we'll get to the bottom of it!

Date: Sunday, March 12, 2017

Time: 06:30 PM

Location: Stanhope, NJ

Meet and Greet

This is a perfect opportunity to get to know us, learn a little about what Asatru is (and isn't), and in general have a good time in a relaxed atmosphere.

Date: Friday, March 17, 2017

Time: 06:30 PM

Location: Thatcher McGhee's, 53 Broadway, Denville, NJ

Rûna Workshop

The subject of this week's class will be chapter 3 "Theory of Rune Magic" in Edred Thorsson's *Futhark*.

In addition, we will be doing a practical rune-carving exercise; each participant will design and carve a bind-rune talisman. *Because materials will be provided, we are asking a \$5 donation to cover expenses.*

Date: Sunday, March 26, 2017

Time: 06:30 PM

Location: Stanhope, NJ

Everyone is encouraged to make an offering to their local land-spirits. By making regular offerings, we increase our bonds of friendship with the spirits of the earth. Such offerings may be made on the Full Moon or the New Moon.

Full Moon Offering

Date: March 12, 2017

New Moon Offering

Date: March 27, 2017

Review: Myths of the Pagan North

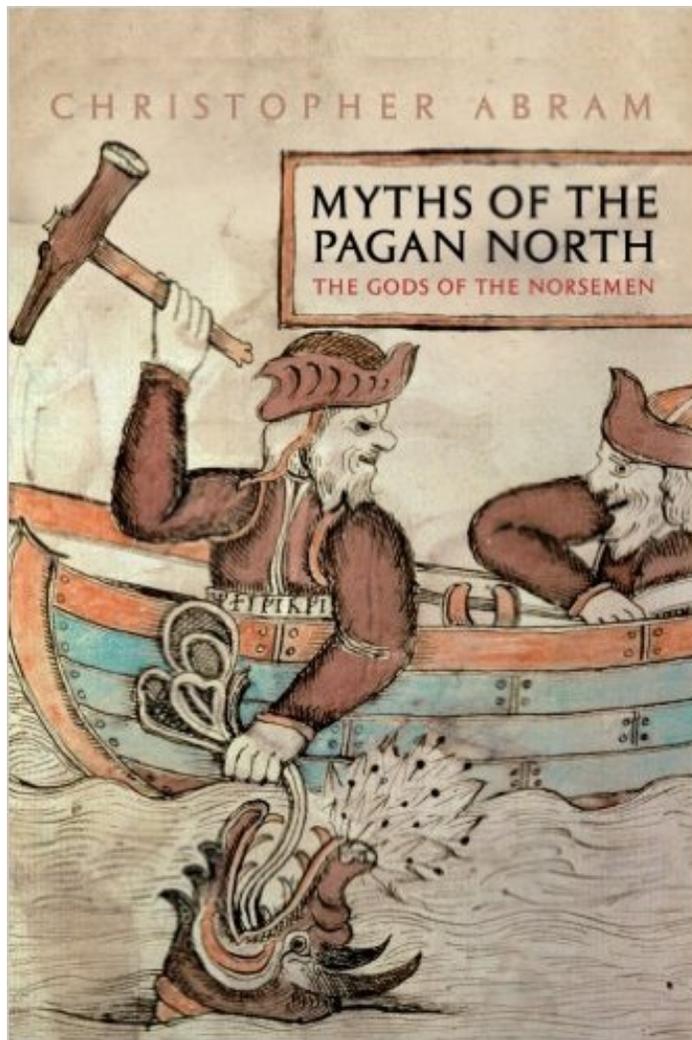
When I first saw Christopher Abram's *Myths of the Pagan North*, I figured it was yet another retelling of the myths, maybe with a little analysis thrown in. Boy, was I wrong. This is a wonderful textual analysis of the various sources of northern lore, from runic inscriptions to skaldic poetry to the more familiar Eddaic poetry and Snorri's *Prose Edda*. In it, he discusses the pros and cons of each source, giving valuable insights into the timing and motivations for each, and uses specific myths as case studies to demonstrate how different sources treat the same material and how the myths themselves morphed over time in response to changing social conditions.

The chapter on the mythological value of skaldic poetry alone would be worth the price of the book, but his insights into how the stories changed as Christianity became more dominant, and his thoughts on the relevance of the myths to the practice of religion are wonderfully interesting as well.

Highly recommended.

This review originally appeared on Jon Upsal's Garden at:

<http://jonupsalsgarden.blogspot.com/2017/02/book-review-myths-of-pagan-north.html>



Tribal Milestones

Wick M. celebrates his birthday – March 11. Happy birthday Wick!

Contribute to *Skylands Report*

Skylands Report is the official newsletter of the Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship. As such, it is a celebration of the accomplishments, the activities, and the plans of the SAF. If members of the SAF have an item that they would like to have included in a future issue of *Skylands Report*, let us know. This might be a photo of a piece of art that you have made. It could be a poem that you have written. Perhaps you have decided to write a review of a recently read book on Ásatrú. Write to us at fellowship@skylandsasatru.org.

Help Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship

Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship runs both *Asatru 101* classes and *Rúna Workshops*. We have celebrations of the major holidays in the heathen calendar. We run several on-line sites and produce this newsletter. All of this is possible through donations from members and friends. Please consider making a donation to Skylands Asatru Fellowship today!

Donate today! http://www.skylandsasatru.org/?page_id=183

Follow Skylands on-line!

For more information about our tribe and our events, please visit our website at www.skylandsasatru.org

Don't forget to *friend* us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/skylandsasatru/>

Remember to sign up for our events on our Meetup page: <http://www.meetup.com/NJ-Asatru/>

Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship is also on Twitter. Follow us at: https://twitter.com/Skylands_Asatru