

Skylands Report



The e-newsletter of the Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship

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www.skylandsasatru.org

August 2017

A Trip to the Kutztown Folk Festival

On Sunday, July 9, members of Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship and several close friends gathered at the Kutztown Folk Festival in Pennsylvania.

Having had a wonderful time at the Festival last year, we decided to make the KFF an annual event on our calendar.

The Kutztown Folk Festival is the oldest continuously operated folklife festival in America (this year's event is their 68th.) The Festival runs for nine-days each year in early July. The event draws visitors from all over the world, entertaining families while providing valuable insight into the traditions of the Pennsylvania Dutch and their way of life.

Skylands members were happy to run into members of other local Ásatrú tribes who were also enjoying the Festival.



Posing in front of a horse-drawn hearse at the Kutztown Folk Festival



We had a great lunch consisting of various Pennsylvania Dutch specialities including delicious corn fritters. We did some shopping; found several interesting new book titles and found our favorite vendor for Birch Beer. With Birch Beers in hand we attended lectures about the art and craft of Hex Signs and Powwowing or *Braucherei* (the practice of ritual healing).

As we did last year, we had a great time at Kutztown this July. One suggestion for next year is that all the various heathen tribes that visit sit down at a specified time for lunch. Together we shall raise a horn and hail the Gods for all to hear! 🏴



Wick M. finds the Birch Beer distillery

Hiking among the Megaliths

On 3 June, Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship traveled to the Columcille Megalith Park in Bangor, Pennsylvania. We were glad to meet up with members of the Irminfolk Odinist Community who decided to join us for a day of hiking, discussion, and comradery.

The park is the creation of William Cohea, Jr.. One day in 1967, Cohea had a dream. In it, he was surrounded by circles of standing stones that seemed to close in on him. While initially frightened by the approaching stones, his emotions changed when the stones were nearly upon him. At such a close range, Cohea felt only love coming from the stones. When he awoke, he was immediately inspired to purchase land and begin standing stones throughout the property.

In the beautiful setting, which was the fulfillment of Cohea's dream, the wonders of nature and the landspirits can be felt all around. One can certainly dance and hear the songs of the stones described in the Columcille brochure:

*Come dance with the stones.
Touch them.
Hear their songs.
Prepare to enter realms unknown.*



Our group poses under Thor's Gate

Following our magical day, we set off, as we so often do, to get a bite to eat. We feasted on what the local Pizzeria dubbed “Killer Pizza.” It was hearty faire indeed. 🏔️



At the Stone of “Centering and Grounding” at the St. Columba Chapel

Tribal Milestones

Catie R. celebrates one year as an Associate member on August 20. Congratulations Catie!



The Kutztown Folk Festival

The article that follows was written in 2016 by Joseph godi following the first, of what I assume will be an annual, visit by Skylands to the Kutztown Folk Festival. While Joseph was unable to attend this year's event, his thoughts from last year remain very accurate and provide great insight for those who have yet to have the good fortune of visiting the Festival – Ed.

Yesterday the tribe went on a day trip to visit the Kutztown Folk Festival, a nine-day (!) celebration of all things Pennsylvania German (or Pennsylvania Dutch - even within the community, there is division on which is correct).

To get the mundane stuff out of the way; the festival was a total blast, and I highly encourage everyone to go next year. It was much larger than I expected, the food was one of the showpieces of the thing (all home made and entirely delicious) and the craftspeople selling their wares seemed on the whole to be the people who actually made what they were selling. From the extraordinary woodwork and quilts (of course quilts) to metalwork and hex signs, this wasn't just a trip where you could find the same stuff on Amazon. These were the labors of individual craftsmen, and it showed.

I myself came away with a hoard of new books on Pennsylvania German culture, particularly their folk-magical practice of Pow-Wow/Braucherei/Hexerei, hex signs, and a wonderful book on Groundhog Lodges. Yes. Groundhog Lodges.

But what I really wanted to touch on was the reason why this sort of thing would be of interest to us as Ásatrúar.

One of the great things about the Pennsylvania Germans is the fact that they represent a sort of time capsule of pre-Industrial Germanic



Checking out the latest books for sale at the Kutztown Folk Festival

culture. It goes way beyond the stereotypical Amish or Mennonites; these are, for the most part, modern folks living a modern lifestyle that happens to include strong ties back to the Palatinate in Germany. There are ties of language, custom, and religion that hearken back

to a time in Germanic society that predates the coming of industrialization, and in some cases arguably before the coming of Christianity.

Since there is strong evidence that continental German culture and religion is strongly related to that of Scandinavia and England, the interest of such things to Ásatrú, which attempts to restore ancient pre-Christian Germanic religion, is obvious. It is possible to "de-Christianize" some elements, as the Uriglawee experiment is attempting to do.



Attending a lecture on the art of the hex sign

Strong evidence of the continuity of Germanic culture between Scandinavia and southern Germany can also be seen in their respective folk-magical practices; Trolldomr and Pow-Wow/ Braucherei/ Hererei. There are practices that are almost identical across both practices, and which can

additionally be seen in the early conversion-era penitentials from the 5th century onwards, that speak of a commonality amongst the various Germanic tribal groups. There are similar commonalities between folk-practices which, upon examination, can be traced back to possible religious sources as well.

There were local variations to be sure, but the core seems to have been consistent. And the example of the Pennsylvania Germans is a window into that core that has retained its unique character well into the 20th century. It is, alas, dying out in the face of the relentless march of the global monoculture and American commercial society to homogenize everything, but fortunately we still have examples that we can reapply to our own work in preserving and reconstructing Germanic religion. 🏰

By Joseph godi 10 July 2016

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Skylands August Calendar

Ásatrú 101

Our *Ásatrú 101* classes are designed for both the beginner who wants to learn the very basics, to the advanced *Ásatrúar* who is interested in hearing new perspectives, and learning how we at the Skylands *Ásatrú* Fellowship do things.

Each class will have a different topic, but they're all designed to be completely stand-alone. Don't worry if you miss one – you can still show up to the next and get just as much out of it.

The subject of this week's class is manipulation of the *Önd* via structure and proper breathing. The class will also consider mindfulness as well as how to energy-gather and its' relationship to the way Thorsson explains the practice of the *Hagalaz stadha*.

Date: Sunday, August 13, 2017

Time: 06:30 PM to 08:00 PM

Location: Blairstown, NJ

Folkish Summer Hallowing

One of the major *Ásatrú* events in the Northeast each year is Folkish Summer Hallowing hosted by the Irminfolk Odinst Community. While not a Skylands *Ásatrú* Fellowship event, several members are planning to attend and to raise a horn with friends.

For more information: <http://folkishsummerhallowing.com/>

Dates: Thursday - Sunday, August 17-20, 2017

Location: Milford, PA

Full Moon Offering

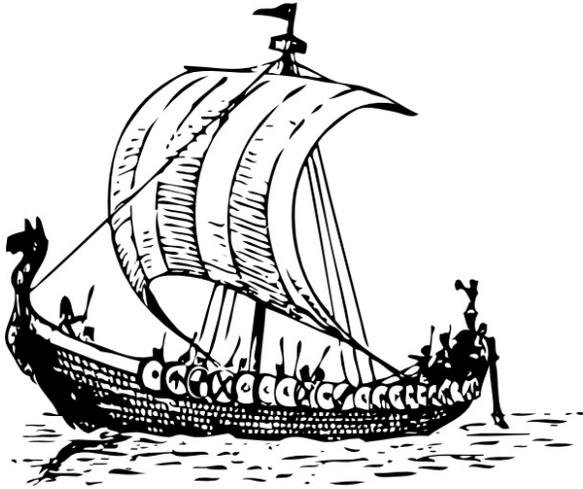
Date: August 7, 2017

New Moon Offering

Date: August 21, 2017

Everyone is encouraged to make an offering to his or her 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.

Save the Date!



- **Folkish Summer Hallowing (hosted by the Irminfolk)** – Thursday - Sunday, August 17-20
- **Nature Hike & Dinner** – Saturday, September 16
- **Haustblót Celebration (Harvest offering)** – Saturday, September 30
- **Dísablót Celebration** – Saturday, November 4
- **Krampusnacht** – Saturday, December 9
- **New Year's Eve** – Sunday, December 31

Help Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship

Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship runs both *Ásatrú 101* classes and *Rúna Workshops*. We hold celebrations for 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 tax-deductible donation to Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship.

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

Follow Skylands On-line!

For more information about our tribe and upcoming 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

About Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship

The Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship is a recognized 501(c)(3) religious organization based in northwest New Jersey. We practice the religion called Ásatrú, which is the modern expression of the ancient religion of the people of northern and western Europe before they converted to Christianity. We hold regular gatherings, some religious, some educational, and some social.

We encourage anyone whose ancestors once worshiped the Gods and Goddesses of the North to “come home” to Ásatrú. You're welcome here!

Skylands Report is the official newsletter of the Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship (SAF). It is a celebration of the accomplishments, the activities, and the plans of the SAF.

We welcome submissions of essays, short stories, poetry, and artwork. Write to us at fellowship@skylandsasatru.org. We would love to hear from you.

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