

Skylands Report



The e-newsletter of the Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship

No. 11

www.skylandsasatru.org

September 2017

New Schedule of Ásatrú Classes Announced

One of the activities that Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship is most well-known for is our series of classes about all aspects of Ásatrú. We are proud to continue our tradition of teaching northern European mythology, history, religion and other relevant topics through our ongoing schedule of classes.

This year we have aligned our class offerings with traditional school semesters. We have divided our offerings into three semesters; a Fall/Winter semester and a Winter/Spring semester, each with five classes covering specific topics, all of which should be accessible to a newcomer. In the summer, we have a special semester that is more hands-on and less academic in focus.

Our classes are free, and open to all; pre-registration is encouraged, but not required. Each class will have a different topic and 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.

Everyone who attends a complete semester's worth of classes will receive a certificate of recognition. Those who attend all the classes offered for the 2017-18 class year will receive a special certificate and will receive a prize. 🏆



Joseph goði leads a class on landwights

2017-18 Class Schedule

Fall/Winter Semester

What is Ásatrú? A presentation discussing the ten-thousand-foot view of Ásatrú; its history, ethics, definitions, and denominations. A perfect start for the beginner. (September 10, 2017)

What is Reconstructionism? Because Ásatrú was all but wiped out, our modern faith must involve a level of reconstruction of and reconnection to the past. We will discuss why we try to practice our religion as our ancestors did, how do we go about it, and what some of the pitfalls might be. (October 1, 2017)

Ritual in Ásatrú. We will discuss the two main types of ritual in Ásatrú - the blót (sacrifice) and sumbel (ritual toasting), and their social, metaphysical, and practical functions, plus their historical evolution. Other forms of Ásatrú ritual will be brought up as well; drama, seiðr, etc. (November 12, 2017)

Fate and the Soul. We discuss the Germanic concept of the soul, including the multi-faceted view of its construction. We will also discuss how it is different from modern conceptions, and how it is related to the Germanic concept of fate. (December 3, 2017)

The Afterlife. What does the lore say happens to us after we die? Everyone knows about Valhalla, but the reality is a lot more complicated, with numerous different afterlife conceptions, including reincarnation. (January 7, 2018)

Winter/Spring Semester

Cosmology. We will discuss the structure of the universe from the perspective of the lore of our ancestors. What are the Nine (or is it Seven?) Worlds, and who lives there? (February 11, 2018)

Cosmogony. The origin of the universe, from the primordial Gap through the creation of the many worlds. (March 11, 2018)

Eschatology. The end of the world. We will discuss what the lore says about how the world will end, the gods will be slain, and what will come afterwards. (April 8, 2018)

Name-Meanings in Myths. We read names like Balder and Fenrir as proper names without much intrinsic meaning. But our ancestors would hear “courage” and “fen-dweller” when they heard those names, and reading the myths in that way can open up new modes of understanding them. (May 6, 2018)

An Alternative Cosmology. Most people think of the Nine Worlds as separate planets floating in space. But the lore suggests the Nine “Worlds” are actually nine “homes” on Earth, that could be visited by mundane means. We will discuss this alternate way of looking at the world as our ancestors might have seen it. (June 10, 2018)

Summer Semester

Herb and Plant Lore. Our ancestors had a wide knowledge and experience using plants and herbs for medicinal and magical uses. We will explore this lore with an emphasis on those plants that are local to our region here in New Jersey. (July 8, 2018, location TBA)

Viking Arts and Skills. The Vikings had a whole list of skills – which they called *íþróttir* – that they felt any well-rounded man should know, from chess to archery, from swordsmanship to poetry. This will be a very hands-on and hopefully fun exploration of these skills. (August 12, location TBA)

Time and Location

Unless otherwise noted, fall, winter, and spring classes will be held at:

Morris County Library conference room
30 E Hanover Ave, Morris Plains, NJ 07950
2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Summer class locations will be announced as we get closer to the date. All class dates and locations are subject to change. Please make sure to check our website, www.skylandsasatru.org to confirm.

Registration

Registration through our Meetup.com page (www.meetup.com/NJ-Asatru) is encouraged, but not required. If you do register on the page, you will receive class change and cancellation notices via email, as well as notifications of our other events.

More Information

If you have any questions, or would like to RSVP for any or all of our classes, please visit Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship at our website: www.skylandsasatru.org



Folkish Summer Hallowing 2017

Last weekend the Irminfolk hosted Folkish Summer Hallowing, as they have for several years running. It's a chance for the folkish Ásatrú community to get together in the beautiful mountains of the Poconos, exchange ideas, hold ritual, and generally recharge the batteries.

The range of groups in attendance was large, and many of them came equipped with their tribal flags and banners to fly from the camp flagpole. As I've written about before, it's sort of a thing here in the northeast for groups to have flags. I love it.

There were also a large number of children in attendance (and several dogs!), and activities were available to keep the younglings occupied throughout the weekend. The Irminfolk are always careful to take very good care that the kids are given stuff to do, and it reflects well on them. There were a number of classes and workshops, including a demonstration of blacksmithing.

I was there not only as a representative of my own tribe (we had a half dozen folks there, both members and family), but I also gave a talk on landwights (one of my hot-button issues) and was vending Viking-themed board games. There were a bunch of other vendors there as well (including

two others from SAF), and the raffle on Saturday night was well stocked with loot. I can report I didn't win diddly, which is par for the course.

On Friday night there was a concert by half of the band Changes (the other half being laid up by car problems), followed by karaoke and not a little drinking. It's fair to say that a good time was had by all!

On Saturday there was both blót and sumbel. Taking the latter first, the sumbel was very well done and heartfelt, and many fine words were spoken over the horn (although no oaths that I recall; the Irminfolk have a somewhat complex tribal *thew* about oaths, involving keeping some of the mead from the horn until the oath is fulfilled). Skylands officially recognized a new member, and the Irminfolk brought in two new folk this weekend.

But the blót that preceded it... the blót was something special.



(Top to bottom: Irminfolk, Scildweall Kindred, Balder Rising, Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship)

It began with a torch-lit procession to the ritual site, led by a military-style color guard bearing flags. The procession itself was great, but I have to say the flag thing got a little much for me, as there were various commands of



The Skylands contingent enjoys the festivities

"honor, ten-hut!" and so forth during the blót. I found it distracting, but that's just me.

But the Irminfolk had built a miniature Viking ship and laden it with pine boughs, mineral salts (to provide color as it burned), and invited the assembled folk to lay within it items to be sacrificed; mostly fruits of the harvest were included, but some other objects as well. The blót was dedicated to Thor, and most of the folks assembled toasted him as the horn went around the circle of people. I'm still not a fan of this particular style of blót, but I have to say it wasn't nearly as tedious as I've seen it done in the past. The ship was then carried onto the fire, and as the words were being spoken, I did what I normally do. I looked for omens.

And boy, howdy! Were there omens.



The Viking Ship is offered to Thor

To start with, the blót began a little before dusk, and naturally the sky got dark as it went on. Just as the ritual was dedicated to Thor a single star appeared in the sky. I was certain it was Jupiter (because I tend to keep track of which planets are visible in the sky), but it was very literally the only star visible. At

all. Until the blót was officially ended, and at that exact moment, one could begin to see all the other stars in the sky. I wasn't the only one who noticed, and it was later confirmed that the star in question was indeed Jupiter.

And Jupiter is associated with Thor. The god of thunder.

But it gets better. After the blót was formally concluded, as we were watching the fire consume the boat with the offerings, we could see things in the fire. Shapes, images, beings. Here are a few photos; I'll let you see what you see in the flames.



Creatures rise up and dance on the bow of the burning ship

But the kicker came as the boat was burning. Off on the horizon, to the west and north, there was a dazzling display of lightning. There wasn't a cloud over our heads, but off in the distance was a continuous lightning storm. At first I thought it might have

been fireworks, but it wasn't contained in a single location; it spanned the horizon for a full 90 degrees.

Let that sink in. The star of Thor the only one visible during a blót dedicated to Thor. Unmistakable images in the fire. And a lightning show afterwards that didn't do anything except inspire awe and wonder in the assembled folk. Not a drop of rain to scatter us under cover.

This was a powerful event. One marked with not a harsh word of hate that I heard, just words of love for our folk. A time when various local tribes came together to celebrate those things that we have in common, Asatru and Theodish alike, and set aside for a time those things that we might not have in common. A time when Thor looked down on those assembled and smiled, to give us strength in the times of trial that are surely ahead of us.

Damn, this was a terrific weekend. 🏔️

By Joseph goði 24 August 2017

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The subject of this week's class is "What is Asatru?" This is the ten-thousand foot view of what Asatru is; a perfect start for the beginner.

Date: Sunday, September 10, 2017

Time: 02:00 PM to 04:00 PM

Location: Morris County Library, 30 E. Hanover Ave., Whippany, NJ

Nature Hike and Dinner

Join us on one of New Jersey's many wonderful hiking trails. Hacklebarney is a beautiful state park that has the Black River as its centerpiece.

We will explore some of the beauty of Hacklebarney State Park and then have an early dinner at an area restaurant.

This is another great opportunity to meet the members of Skylands Asatru Fellowship and to learn what we're all about.

Date: Saturday, September 16, 2017

Time: 02:30 PM to 05:00 PM

Location: Hacklebarney State Park, 119 Hacklebarney Rd., Chester, NJ

Apple Picking and Harvest Celebration

Join us for a day of apple picking and a potluck picnic lunch to celebrate Harvest Home! Everybody bring a dish to share, some chairs, enjoy the crisp autumn weather, and pick all the apples you can eat.

The orchard is vast, and we cannot reserve a space, so the exact section of the orchard will be included in the comments once we arrive.

For more information: <http://www.maskers.com/>

Date: Sunday, September 23, 2017

Time: 12:00 PM to 05:00 PM

Location: Masker Orchards, 45 Ball Rd., Warwick, NY

Full Moon Offering

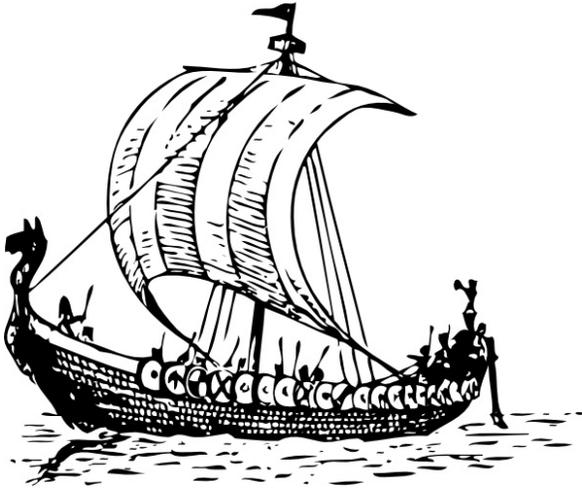
Date: September 6, 2017

New Moon Offering

Date: September 20, 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!



- **Scandinavian Festival** – Sunday, September 3
- **Nature Hike & Dinner** – Saturday, September 16
- **Apple Picking and Harvest Celebration** – Saturday, September 23
- **Haustblót Celebration (Harvest offering)** – Saturday, October 7
- **Dísablót Celebration** – Saturday, November 4
- **Krampusnacht** – Saturday, December 9

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.

Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship
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