

Minutes of the Heathen Freehold Society of British Columbia Althing 2015

Online: Date commencing: 13 September 2015

Old Business:

Kindred Affiliation Program: Kindred Affiliation with the Troth under their KAP program has been a success with the Heathen Freehold KAP status raising our profile in the Heathen Community and granting us access to the resources of a national, or in this case, international organizations depth of scholarship and skills, without sacrificing our own local focus and unique thew.

The ability to perform legal marriage: This has been a goal for the Heathen Freehold Society of British Columbia since its inception, and work is now under way to that goal. Both several members of the Heathen Freehold are working on the Lore Program now, and I am finishing the Lore Program and accelerated Clergy Program towards getting my status as Troth Clergy. With this status, I can apply to the Provincial Marriage licence authority to get standing to perform legal marriages. This status will also increase my ability to work with CF Chaplains, ease access for hospital visits and other pastoral access needs.

1. Society Reports

1.1. Men's Guild

1.1.a. No activity to report

1.2. Women's Guild by Freydis Haimdallson

1.2.a. I should probably submit some kind of a report for the Women's Guild, except we didn't officially do anything this year. With the website inaccessible for so many people (and most of the online traffic moving over to Facebook), we simply haven't had any Guild-related or Guild-encompassed discussions.

I suppose we could start a FB page for each of the various Guilds, the way we had forum threads for each, but that feels clumsy somehow. To be honest, I'm not even sure how many female actual paid members we have right now, although we definitely have women posting and commenting here regularly.

The Women's Guild went dormant originally, back in the days of the emailed mailing list, simply due to a lack of interest. It was revived to provide a private discussion place to work on the Freehold's banner so we could present it as a surprise.

Since then, it's only really been active when we are working on something as a group, and right now we are not, so it seems to have naturally gone dormant again.

That may not be an entirely bad thing. The Men's and Women's Guilds were originally formed to be a safe haven in which to hold gender-specific discussions that might be of concern but embarrassing to bring up in front of other genders, but so far it seems that we actually haven't needed to have that safe space away from others. I mean, it's good that it's there if someone wants to use it; but it's also good that people don't seem to feel a need for walling themselves away from half the membership in order to discuss personal matters.

Anyways, not much happening with the Women's Guild right now, as we aren't collaborating on any group projects right now, and that seems to be the main need that the group fulfills

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1.3. Brewer's Guild

1.3.a. No activity to report

1.1. 1.4. Craftsmen's Guild by Freydis Heimdallson for Mikhail Heimdallson

1.5. Freyfest:

Host Cheryl Price Heathen House

Attendance 50 Camping event at Greene Woode SCA site

Very good location, reasonable price, fifth year it has been held. Strong local attendance, mostly heathens with some Pagans looking for stronger community.

Good recurring event

1.6. Pub Moot, Everet, Labour Day weekend

Host: John T. Mainer

Attendance: About a dozen, some Heathen Freeholders from the US, the Troth Washington steward, and the Northern California Steward/Hrafnar KAP Kindred rep, along with local Troth heathens, and the local Forn Sen group.

This was about building community, building support for the Trothmoot that we, the Heathen Freehold, are hosting next year at Ft Flagler. Event was a success, and the beer was amazing. Much good networking done, much good will formed, many gifts exchanged, and we swore the Washington state steward in on both Heathen Freehold and Hrafnar rings.

1.7. Trothmoot 2015

Location Camp Netimus Pennsylvania. Its in the Pocono's believe it or not.

Host Distlefink Kindred. Attendance 100 plus.

Lots of really good workshops, powerful rituals, amazing community building. Oddly a lot of good Canadian networking done around the breakfast table. Distlefink did an amazing job, but we are going to do better. 2016 is ours.

1.8. Serpent Lake Kindred Meetings: by Graeme A. Barber

Two meetings were held in Kelowna, at the Sturgeon Hall pub. The first was a meet'n'greet, bringing together Heathens who had until then been solitary practitioners. The second was a bit more business like. These were followed by long online discussions and planning, ultimately leading to the official formation of the SLK.

We are currently preparing for our first ritual event, Hausblot.

2. Project Reports:

2.1. Open Halls

2.1.a. No new contributions to report.

2.2. Kindertales

2.2.a. Work has begun on a third volume of Kindertales, with John T. Mainer and Aaron N.W. Brookes volunteering to contribute stories: and Kate Brookes and Freydis Heimdallson contributing artwork so far.

2.2.b. Volumes 1 and 2 of Kindertales remain the Freehold's largest stream of revenue.

2.3. Website by Teunis Peters

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2.3.a. Webmaster report : any number of unknown problems, many to do with security and/or very old code that doesn't work any more. Must consider moving to different software and maybe to hosting that isn't US\$20/month. Will require communications with Mikhail & Freydis for most changes though as they're the only ones with many of the internet keys.

Options and suggestions welcome. Status quo isn't working any more. (that it functioned at all over the last 4 years is something lucky)

email has been disabled and will not return - it gets hijacked when active by spammers and there's no way to stop the hijack without google's budget. (and even they can't stop all of the spammers)

Likely John T Mainer's continued problems linked to either disabled email or broken code. I can't confirm either.

Some solutions it -is- possible to migrate existing content to, but not all. so please make sure they can handle phpbb3 at least, because that's the most difficult component to move.

e107 is abandonware now, it seems.

2.4. Official communications

2.4.a. Nothing to report.

3. Witan Reports

3.1. Treasurer W. Keith Baldwin

3.1.a. Financial Records

- i. Paypal \$628
- ii. BMO \$92

3.1.b. Summary

- i. Revenue from Kindertales I and II remains the single greatest revenue stream of the Heathen Freehold. Cost other than the yearly filing with the ministry remain donations.

3.1.c. Other

- i. Outstanding fees: \$100 for the BC Registry, which will be sent when the Paypal has been transferred to the BMO account to cover.

3.2. Secretary John T. Mainer

3.2.a. Correspondence

- i. Nil

3.2.b. Membership Count

- i. Trothed Members/Full Members: 8
- ii. Journeyman Freeholders/Probationary Members: 1

New Business

4. Shire Recognition: Lake Serpent Kindred has been stood up on the shores of Okanogan Lake by Witan Graeme Barber. I call now for official recognition of the Serpent Lake Kindred as a Shire in good standing of the Heathen Freehold Society under our bylaws. This

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will extend the reach of the Freehold into the heartland of British Columbia, and pave the way for new regional shires, perhaps including Vancouver Island.

4.1.Votes

- i. For: 5
 - ii. Against: 0
 - iii. Abstain: 3
5. Nomination: Lifetime Achievement Award-for those who have contributed to the growth of heathenry through their lifetime work as organizers, as authors, artists, leaders, or simply by their works in any form.

5.1.Candidates

5.1.a.From the Freyr John T. Mainer

I hate to do this to a fellow Freeholder, but I have to nominate Mikhail Heimdallson. Founding Freyr of the Heathen Freehold Society, he steered the Heathen Freehold through some tumultuous periods with the strong reserve that marked his tenure. Many good and worthy organizations have failed with their founders, and the transition of leadership is the great test that many organizations fail. As is typical of Mike, he chose to deal with that himself, quietly, efficiently and with a grin.

On the national and international scene, the Heathen Freehold is one of the few long lived organizations, and one marked by steady presence and growth, where the Frith of the hall has been enforced with rigor and with an even hand. The culture we inherit is one that is built on the frame he hammered together, and the roof we have shingled so many times is laid over beams and trusses he left for us.

For this reason, I nominate Mikhail Heimdallson for the Lifetime Achievement Award. What we build today, and what we have enjoyed for years was from his hands, and stands head and shoulders above the other heathen organizations that have risen and fallen in his years.

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5.1.b.From Aaron N.W. Brookes

If looking for another contender I'd recommend Alaric Albertson, a prominent member of the Anglo-Saxon Heathen community. He is also involved with ADF and is the leading representative of Saxon Heathens within that organization. He was a founding member of Geferraeden Fyrnsida (GFS), and is a prominent author on Anglo-Saxon Paganism and magic. In addition to these Heathen specific accomplishments he is also an openly gay Saxon Heathen, and has been since before our communities became widely accepting of such things.

Not to detract from Mikhail's worthy accomplishments, but an unopposed competitor is not really a winner.

5.2.Votes

5.2.a.Mikhail Heimdallson: 5

5.2.b.Alaric Albertsson: 0

5.2.c.Abstain: 3

5.3.Winner is Mikhail Heimdallson

6. Nomination: Tyrbold Award: for those who have served their folk by standing into danger, by embodying the warrior virtues in service to their nation.

6.1.Candidates

6.1.a.From our warrior guild Drighthen [Graeme A. Barber](#)

Tatyana Danylyshyn is a sergeant in the Primary Reserves (The Militia) currently serving with her home unit, A Company, the Canadian Scottish Regiment, based in Victoria, BC. A fellow British Columbian, she first excelled in life by becoming one of the youngest pilots in Canada. Later, she would take a break from working on a degree at UVic to volunteer to deploy to Afghanistan on 1-08 (Jan-Aug 2008). An infanteer, polyglot, and having the right education for the job, her service took her further outside the wire than most, seeing her serving in both Kandahar and Helmand provinces before her tour was complete. After returning to Canada, she quickly rose to become one of Canada's top service rifle competitors, representing both 39 Brigade (British Columbia's reserve brigade) and 3 Division in competitions at home and abroad. She took top marksman in the 2015 service competition in Bisley, in the UK, where she out shot 1300 of the world's best military shooters, including the winner of the Queen's Medal (which she was denied as it goes to the top British shot).

For her bravery and professionalism under hard conditions in Afghanistan, outstanding military prowess as both an infantry sergeant and marksman, and her continued service to Canada, I nominate Sgt. Tatyana Danylyshyn for the Tyrbold award.

6.1.b.From the Freyr John T. Mainer

The Tyrbold award is the award we use to recognize the person who best exemplifies the warrior virtues of Tyr. War is a terrible thing, and those of us who have taken up the profession of arms understand that its needs and its demands are not those of civilian life, nor are its virtues the same as civilian life. There are harsh truths found upon the field, and in the place that exists beyond all civilian reality, and where civilian law has no place, virtue is all you have to sustain you.

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Tyr is the patron of this award, as through his sacrifice of his sword arm, and pre-eminence in war power, he proved his honour was more important than his personal power or prestige, for this reasons both Tyr and honour itself are kened “the leavings of the wolf”.

Sometimes the leavings of the wolf are wounds more terrible than any should have to face, and too often the soldiers that have already paid one price upon the field for their duty, pay another price at home from a people who choose not to understand the realities of war, who chose to pretend that those they send into hell may function by the same rules that obtain in their comfortable Starbucks lineup, where every resource, aid and assistance is a single phone call away. From this safe, perfect harbor, from this ivory tower of artificial security, they condemn the choices of those who have stood on blood soaked fields, and granted such mercy as was theirs.

I nominate Captain Robert Semrau for the Tyrbold award.

October 19 2008 Captain Semrau was attached to an ANA unit, he was an observer, not in command, of a Afghan unit that came under fire. A US Apache helicopter took out a Taliban sniper, and the wounded Taliban fell to the ground, dying, in great agony. Asked if the Afghans were going to supply first aid, the reply was no. He was left to the arms of Allah and the mercies of the battlefield bugs, birds and other scavengers to pick over while writhing helpless in his death throes. Given no option provided by Canada, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), or Afghan National Army (ANA), to provide any medical treatment, first aid, or comfort, and given no authority to order the ANA troops to provide such, Captain Semrau was left with two simple choices; allow a dying man to suffer needlessly, or grant him the coup de grace, the mercy kill. This has been an accepted battlefield practice since the tribes of man became civilized enough to accept the humanity of those they fought, as well as those they fought beside.

The Canadian Armed Forces chose to break him from ranks, and dismiss him from service.

Charged with Second Degree Murder, Attempted Murder, Negligent Performance of Duty, which three charges are fact based, and denote the commission of an illegal act, he was also charged with Disgraceful Conduct, a charge that is not fact based, which means essentially that whatever act is in question although not actionable in and of itself will be used as pretext for punishment as it brings the Canadian Forces into disrepute. He was found innocent of all three fact based charges due to the facts of the case being quite simply in his favour. He was found guilty, broken in rank, and dismissed from the Forces because he had made the kind of hard ugly choice that the board, made up of officers who have never served in combat roles in any theater of service, don't like to think are called for. He was broken from rank and dismissed because he made the hard choice, to choose to do the human thing, the merciful thing, rather than the safe and legal thing.

Tyr gave up his arm without hesitation, for his honour meant more than his power, or even his life. Captain Semrau gave up his career, and even his good name, for the same reason. His was the choice of Tyr, his the virtues of Tyr, and I ask that his be the award of Tyr as well.

I understand that I am asking recognition by the Freehold of a man convicted under

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military law for an offence on the battlefield. I ask those who have served, or who serve now to ask themselves if the this award is for the virtues of the warrior, or the laws of the lawyer are what we honour here.

Now broken from the service he gave his all for you would expect bitterness, but it is not there. Still his love is for the Canadian Armed Forces, for the men and women he served beside, and nation that he chose to serve under arms. I direct your attention to his blog post where he reaches out to those we reach out to, to those veterans who are having such trouble with their adjustment to a world that no longer has a place for them, as it has no place or acceptance for their truths that they are committing suicide in such numbers as to make the true casualty lists of the conflict something that will not be known for decades. He lives the virtues of Tyr even now, he has lost his career, his rank, his pension, but what is left is the leavings of the wolf, is the honour of Tyr.

6.2. Votes

6.2.a. Tatyana Danylyshyn: 3

6.2.b. Robert Semrau: 2

6.2.c. Abstain: 3

6.3. Winner Tatyana Danylyshyn

7. Review of proposed changes to Society By-laws

7.1. A complete overhaul of the by-laws, rendering them into an easy to read and reference format. The introduction of clauses relating to Social Media Policy, Provisional Shires, and the Order of Precedence. Changes to the by-laws required a 75% vote in favour.

7.2. Votes

7.2.a. For: 6

7.2.b. Against: 0

7.2.c. Abstain: 2

7.3. Motion Carries, new by-laws adopted.

8. Motions from the floor.

8.1. A request from Aaron N.W. Brookes for \$25 CAD to create an Etsy shop for the Freehold to sell runic dice, tiles, and curios to raise funds.

8.1.a. No seconder, motion fails.

9. Open nominations for Witan

9.1. Open election for Freyr

9.1.a. Candidates:

- i. John T. Mainer nominated by Aaron N.W. Brookes, seconded by Graeme A. Barber.

9.1.b. No other candidates John T. Mainer wins by acclamation

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9.2. Open election for Secretary

9.2.a. Candidates:

- i. Aaron N.W. Brookes nominated by Aaron N.W. Brookes, seconded by W. Keith Baldwin.

9.2.b. No other candidates Aaron N.W. Brookes wins by acclamation

9.3. Open election for Treasurer

9.3.a. Candidates:

- i. W. Keith Baldwin nominated by John T. Mainer, seconded by Aaron N.W. Brookes.

9.3.b. No other candidates W. Keith Baldwin wins by acclamation

9.4. Open election for Ombudsman

9.4.a. Candidates:

- i. Freydis Heimdallson nominated by John T. Mainer, seconded by W. Keith Baldwin.

9.4.b. No other candidates Freydis Heimdallson wins by acclamation

10. Motion to close Althing by W. Keith Baldwin, seconded by John T. Mainer, no objections.

11. Althing 2015 Closed on 27 December 2015