

WINTER 2023-2024

HOLLERBEER HOF

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Letter from the Editor

Briana Taylor - San Diego

I'm embarrassed about how long it took me to get this issue out. Yuul is already over half over. The Parade of Spirits came and went. Voryuul came and went. The deadline I set for our contributors came and went... twice.

There are, certainly, any number of reasons why it didn't happen when I wanted it to. November and December are already busy months, doubly so for any of us with children. There are activities, recitals, modified school schedules, parties, gifts to buy or to make, etc ad nauseum. For the aforementioned reasons, contributions were also relatively light this month. AND, a week before Yuul I came down with a nasty virus that I'm still trying to shake off.

None of those, very reasonable, reasons are why this publication didn't get released on time.

Hi, it's me. I'm the problem. It's me.

Originally, I wanted to write a whole article about burnout and Fraa Berchta. That was going to be my contribution to Hollerbeer Hof. It might have become a whole series about different avenues of self-improvement. I wrote a lengthy draft that in no way resembled what I wanted to contribute at all. It was a complete word salad, and one I've chosen not to subject you to.

As the sensation of dropped balls stacked up, I found myself wondering why that happened. I haven't had that kind of a focus problem when writing since I was a teenager. I realized that it ultimately happened for the same reason that this publication was delayed.

I'm trying to do way too fucking much.

Are you laughing? I hope you are. It's hilarious because it's so very relatable. We put so many balls in the air with no realistic hope of catching them all, and sometimes we do it so much that we don't catch any of them. We've got hats stacked on our heads like something out of a Dr. Seuss book.

Why do we do this to ourselves? There are a lot of reasons, and they won't be the same for all of us. We joke about being punished by Berchta for overextending ourselves and we make justifications for our unfinished projects and then we just keep doing it over and over again.

It hurts, a lot, to really prioritize yourself. I'm crying as I write this because I just effectively resigned from a volunteer position that meant a lot to me. And I did it because I know I need to. My circumstances are not the same as they were when I took it on, and there are other commitments that mean more to me.

Plus, those assholes treat their volunteers like garbage.

It will not be the only resignation letter I send today.

It's time to re-prioritize folks. This is the year. This isn't "our" year, I'm not about the platitudes. But this is the year, I think, where some of us will become very acutely aware of that first circle of frith.

So what will I prioritize?

1. My physical and mental health: I put these in the same category because they are 100% connected and interdependent. Did you know that not enough movement isn't just a symptom of depression, it also causes it? It's one of the biggest reasons why mobility-related injuries can come with chronic depression. I have made so much progress with my physical and mental health this last year, and it requires a fair amount of my time. But it's time I *must* devote to it, because if I don't, it affects everything else I want to prioritize as well as my relationships with the people around me.
2. The order of my home and finances: I also put these in the same category, because like physical and mental health, they are very much related. There's an adage that basically says that our immediate controllable surroundings is a reflection of our mental state, and while I'm not suggesting you Marie Kondo your home (fewer than 30 books? pfffft), I would say that clutter can be stressful and costly, and in some cases dangerous to your health. So can debt. Right now, a whole paycheck goes to debt on a monthly basis in my house, and while I know it's not very anti-capitalist to want to be more

financially secure, I can think of nothing more anti-capitalist than not paying credit card fees anymore (or ever again.)

3. Time-related promises to myself: I had to think a bit on how I wanted to phrase this one. It has a lot to do with unfinished projects, but it also has a lot to do with my unwritten commitments to my children, partners and friends. I will keep the promises I make to myself, and be more careful about how those oaths are made, in 2024. For example, if I promise myself that I'm going to continue to prioritize my physical and fiscal health, I'm going to go to the gym every day I'm able at the same time and devote the time I've promised myself (between 45 and 90 minutes) to that end. If I promise myself that I'm going to work on my novel, I'm going to decide how many days a week, or what time of day I'm going to work on it and then I'm going to sit on the computer until the words come. I'm going to spend 10 minutes a day on reconciling my budget with my expenditures. I'm going to spend 15 minutes after dinner playing one of my three instruments. You get the idea.

It's hard to stop doing things we know aren't good for us, especially if they're good for other people, or at least we think they are. We talk a lot about doing more with fewer resources, or taking more joy in the mundane, in Urglaawe. What we don't talk about as much is doing more with less *time*, and what that might mean.

Overextension happens when we underestimate how much **time** we spend on our lives as they are. It happens when we underestimate how much **time** we waste when we use "living in the moment" as an excuse to not plan the important things. It happens when we say yes to more demands on our **time** without examining and truly being in tune with our motivations. Perhaps we should stop asking if we *can* do something and start asking if we *will* do something, or even if we should.

I'm crying because I feel like I'm being disappointing, and I hate being disappointing. But it's **time**; time to sacrifice parts of my ego on the altar of my values.

To Holle, Berchta, time, and an ever-loving community. *Heel!*

P.S. Don't worry. Hollerbeer Hof made the cut.

What We've Been Up To

- **Class Announcement!**
 - Pennsylvania Dutch 1 and 2 will be offered in the Winter session (January 22 - February 29, 2024). \$200, online or in person. Same price regardless of where one resides (no out-of-county penalty).
 - PA Dutch 2 will be from 6:30-8:00PM on Mondays and Thursdays. Level 1 is a prerequisite.
 - PA Dutch 1 will run from 8:30-10:00PM on Mondays and Thursdays
 - Please call to register for this class. 215-968-8409
- The **Parade of Spirits** happened on December 10th! Many in attendance say it was the best yet!





Upcoming Events and Observances

DER YUUL



Along with Voryuul, Yuul is a season of Introspection (der Selbschtreiguck). Over the next twelve nights, we ponder what we'd learned over the past twelve nights, and we strive to incorporate that learning into our plans for 2022.

Urglaawe philosophy names 18 virtues, but it is the interaction among them that is critical. Too much of any virtue turns it upon itself and can have disastrous consequences. Each virtue tempers or enhances the others, and that interplay becomes a meditation point for many Urglaawer during the Twelve Nights. For

many, the results of the introspection serve as the basis for any New Year's Resolutions (singular, der Neiyaahrsvorsatz; plural, die Neiyaahrsvorsetz), which will be a topic covered later on.



DER BERCHTASLAAF

URGLAAWE TRADITIONS:

Berchtaslaaf begins at sunset tonight, local time. This is 16:44, or 4:44 PM. After this time, most Urglaawer will voluntarily restrict their intake of food until sunrise, eating only the foods commanded by the goddess Berchta. While we do see this meal as a requirement from a goddess, it is not up to humans to take any actions to force others to observe this practice. Thus, follow your own conscience on this matter.

Interpretations do vary; some say the lore indicates we may eat **only** that meal. Other reports imply that we must eat the foods but that other food is also allowed. Personally, I go with the former, particularly in contrast with the large

feast that follows the end of the restriction after sunrise on January 1. The contrast of the meals relates to contrasts of time. On December 31, the hourglass of the current year is running out of sand, but, on January 1, it has been turned upside down, and the sand is just beginning its run.

Likewise, if we lay out a lifetime across the calendar, the winter solstice is when the soul emerges from the Mill by itself, stripped of the rest of its construct and losing much of its active memory of what was. It is beginning its next journey, and the new soul construct is built around it. Tonight is the figurative conception of that soul's next life. The hourglass is turned over.

Sunrise on January 1 in Bristol is 07:22.

THE MEAL options include the following:

- Herring, prepared any way
- Gruel, typically oatmeal.
- Zammede, pancakes made only of flour and water.
- or
- Oyster stew
- Crackers
- THREE COINS set out on the windowsill. There is an echo of the Lutzelfraa's begging during Voryuul in this custom.

A common Deutsch tradition tonight is to put a coin (or coins) outside on your windowsill overnight tonight.

Some variations specify that the coin/s should be silver. Others specify three denominations (nickel, dime, quarter, etc.) of coin. Some Christian interpretations are that these are for the Magi on their way to Bethlehem (PA? lol), while other interpretations definitely have this related to magic that easily fits in with Berchta making the rounds as a beggar.

If the coin/s are still there in the morning, bring them back in and "Was hawwich yetz wa ich ganzes Yaahr haawe." ("What I have now I will have all year.")

If the coins are gone, then the need was greater elsewhere, and you will receive good luck for aiding another.

LENTILS (uncooked and not to eat) scattered. Lentils are not part of the required meal, but there is an association in some circles between Berchta and legumes, and our oral lore specifically names lentils.

The lentils are scattered in a manner similar to the three-bean offerings that we are to do when we disturb the soil for gardening or planting. Lentils are good nitrogen fixers, which could be also a link between Berchta's concerns with rebirth and renewal and Luul's concern with keeping young greens safe and strong through the winter.

THE WALK of Berchta's statuary will probably include the Buggy this year, rolling Her image through the streets of the Harriman section of Bristol, if not through town.

MIDNIGHT KLANG: While Holle cracks Her whip out among the realms, Berchta bangs Her pots and pans to clear the air for the arrival of 2022.

For most Urglaawer, the meal restriction is observed until at least sunrise (Zwelder Daag/Twelfth Day), when the Feast of Fro (pork and sauerkraut) becomes the meal of the day, and we go from the the death phase of the Lewesraad into the early birth/rebirth phase by celebrating the "conception" of life as figuratively implanted in the new calendar year.

Best of luck to all in the New Year!

ENTSCHTANNING



ENTSCHTANNING 1: GRUNDSAUDAAG

Sunset on February 1 turns the date by Urglaawe reckoning, and we kick off the twelve-night/day Urglaawe

observance of Entschtanning ("Emergence"). This is a major observance on the Urglaawe wheel of the year. It celebrates the beginning of the emergence from winter (no so applicable this year, though!), the promise of potential life, the manifestation of emergent life (the "baby bump" phase of the wheel of life), and the hope of the emergence from ignorance and into enlightenment.

The first event within Entschtanning is Grundsaudaag (Groundhog Day). The Groundhog (Deitsch: Grundsau, actually a "ground sow") bears some similarities to Ratatosk, the squirrel that runs up and down the World Tree, Yggdrasil, bringing news of the nine worlds.

While we have a Tree of Life (Lewesbaam) in Deitsch culture and in Urglaawe, our forebears saw similar imagery in other contexts as well, including the very land which they farmed. Groundhog burrows are often complex, with different rooms and multiple openings, all of which are used as allegories to the other realms of existence. The forebears thus set an analogy between the burrow and the Nine Worlds.

Thus, the groundhog is the otherworldly messenger. The groundhog brings news and prognostication from all of the visited realms. For an agricultural people, the short-term weather is naturally something that the people would like to know, which is probably why that particular feature was passed on to the wider American culture.

Within the Deitsch culture, the Groundhog Lodges often present other prognostications, sometimes presented in humorous contexts. Some farmers and some Hexerei practitioners observe the behavior of groundhogs and other animals at this time to make other determinations as well.

I am not so well versed in some of those, but one practitioner told me that the depth of, and the slope to, the first room in a groundhog burrow can serve as an indicator of wet or dry weather. If the first room is fairly close to the surface or is of a fairly steep slope, then the weather will be mostly dry. If the slope is not steep or if the room is higher than its entrance from the burrow, then one should expect wet weather. There are other behaviors that are examined as well.

Most historians will grant that Groundhog Day has its roots in heathen-era German practices, but the origins stretch back likely even further. Predicting weather or other things that can impact crops is a practice that transcends cultures, and observing the behavior of animals is an important tool in the forebears' kit. It was certainly not the only tool; lunar phases, historic weather patterns, river depths, etc., all were (and are) considered as well.

Remember that the events in Punxsutawney are not organic. We're not watching the behavior of a groundhog in the wild.

Thus, what may seem to be a silly observance with frequent inaccuracies is not the whole of the story. The annual events in Punxsutawney (and other places) certainly helped to keep the essence of the lore alive, but the true significance of Groundhog Day is masked by the commercial pomp and circumstance of the day.

Groundhog Day is actually a visceral observance. It comes from a time when people had few reliable means of knowing when they could plant, and they relied upon their relationship with nature and with the animals to make determinations about the consumption of remaining food stores and to plan for the planting.

Thus, on this day we honor the groundhog and remember our interdependence on the animal kingdom around us.

ENTSCHTANNING 2: DER FREIDSEGE

3. Hanning

Quite a few divine or semi-divine beings are mentioned throughout the Entschtanning observance, and we'll talk about more of them as the nights go by.

There are two goddesses who are specifically honored during Entschtanning; one of whom is known in our own lore and the other might be known but in a context without a name (wait for Night 7).

Now we will discuss the goddess Freid, who has also been called Frigg in Deutsch contexts. She is, perhaps, one of the most underestimated deities in our

pantheon, but we give her less heed at our own peril. Freid is one powerful, amazing, intuitive, and intelligent goddess.

There is similar lore buried in our oral traditions that place Freid in a position where She spins the clouds and, more critically, She spins the material that becomes the metaphoric cloth of our Wurt. This places Her at, seemingly, the nearest place to Wurt in all of existence. She is not necessarily above it, but She does manage it, and all interpretations indicate that She is the first to have an effect on Wurt, even before the Wurthexe perform their roles of management and organization.

Freid is imbued with a certain cosmic wisdom, and perhaps even has an effect on cosmic time. Norse lore indicates that She, as Frigg, knows all but says nothing. Our oral lore, in contrast, implies that Freid will provide guidance or intervene on behalf of those whom She, with Her cosmic wisdom, knows to be acting from the right place of the heart and the soul.

In Deutsch lore, She is the warder of the home and the garden, and this is where Her place becomes clearer alongside the development of the Butzemann during Entschanning. She is the garden soil personified in the lore and the traditions of this time. As the primary goddess associated with motherhood, Freid takes on this role of providing the womb (the soil) in which the Butzemann's seed will take root.

Think about this for a moment. This is a great gift of life from one of the most elevated beings in existence as we understand it.

The implication here is that the soil of the garden is divine in nature. Indeed, soil is sacred. While we can create soil through decomposition of plant matter, if the matter is tainted, the new soil likely will be, too. This brings in other environmental and stewardship aspects of Entschanning that will be discussed through the remaining days of the observance.

A decade ago, or so, I kept noticing a persistent lack of understanding or even an active disregard for Freid, particularly when it came to domestic activities. The general context was that of the Norse Odin and Frigg vs. the Deutsch Wudan and Freid, but the same pattern sometimes turned up in Urglaawe communities. The

sentiment was something akin to this: while Odin is out changing the universe, Frigg is home washing the dishes.

First, let's not forget that, on at least two occasions, Frigg outsmarted Odin. Second, let's also remember that domestic chores bring stability and health to one's life. Third, and most importantly, -Do not ever underestimate the need for security and for a place to safely rest your head at night.- Freid is the personification of that security. The absence of shelter and protection make it nearly impossible to be out changing anything, much less the universe. Times are never fully stable, but, as we are in a period of polarized flux, the need for shelter and security grows daily. Let's never underestimate the importance of the home.

Among Freid's symbols or associated items are keys. Keys refer back to that safety and security of the home. They have been used in weddings as symbols. There are difference precedents I have come across, so some of our experiences will be the opposite of those of other Heathen traditions. In some cases, it is the groom who gives the keys to the bride, symbolizing him ceding the responsibilities of the home to her; she gives him a Hammer in exchange. In more circumstances (and we're not talking a huge number of weddings in total yet), the bride gives the keys to the groom. The keys can symbolize the property, but, in a larger picture, they symbolize trust, security, welcoming and the pairing of the two lives. The groom then gives a hammer as a sign of trust, protection, and fidelity. These roles have been-- and must continue to be --expanded beyond the male/female binary and the bride/groom designations. Either party may give either tool to the other regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, or other consideration.

Freid is also associated with spindles, distaffs, spinning wheels, and other tools of the industry. She has an association with geese (though not as strong in Urglaawe as do Holle and Berchta), hounds (stronger in Urglaawe with Holler), and sheep (strongest in Urglaawe). The Belt of Orion in the constellation is called "Frigg's Distaff" in some cultures (not ours, though; the stars are instead called the "Three Mowers" ("Dreie Maehrer," with variations in spelling).

Her name is also whence the Deutsch name for Friday (Freidaag) is ultimately derived. Interesting, in 2012, a lost trove of "fairy tales" recorded by Franz Xavier

von Schönwerth was discovered in Regensburg, Germany. In it was one particular tale named "Woud und Freid," which bore a striking resemblance to the Nordic tale of Freya crying tears of amber. In this version, Fried cried tears of pearl. The questions about connections between Frigg and Freya have been going on for ages, but we in Urglaawe know the name Freid from (admittedly few) sources within our own culture, but the etymology and evolution of the name for Friday do play a role in our decision to recognize this story as a tale of our goddess Freid, even if the context is so similar to that of Freya (whom we know as Frouwa, and Her holiday is coming up in March).

So, during the "baby bump" phase of the wheel of the year, we honor the great, powerful, generous, and loving goddess Freid, who is associated with motherhood, potential life, cosmic knowlege, security of the home, bounty of the garden, and so much more.

Heele zur Freid!

Hail to Freid!

ENTSCHTANNING 3: DIE WIDDERAASCHTELLING

4. Hanning

As I have probably mentioned before, the order of which the various rites that fall within Entschtanning can be held in whatever suits the Urglaawe adherent or the community best. There's a lot going on within this twelve-night, twelve-day observance, and it can get very busy very quickly.

One of the more time-consuming-- yet highly sacred and spiritual --tasks for many of us is what I refer to as the Widderaaschtelling (roughly the re-placing or the re-engagement), though there are several aspects to it, thus resulting in different people calling it by different names.

It is customary at this time of year to allow the fires in the hearth to burn out, then to clean to hearth out, and then to begin a new fire using Birch. This is a new fire, but it is also a re-engagement of the importance and symbolism of the hearth in our lives.

The lore of some lineages of Braucherei and Hexerei extend the cleaning of the hearth to anything that carries a primary flame of a flame used in food production, home heating, and in religious or spiritual contexts. The Urglaawe expression of this code results in a great many of us cleaning out our fireplaces, fire pits, candleholders, ovens, stoves, and some (please consider safety first) will put out the pilot lights on their heaters and water heaters.

In the hearth, fireplaces, and fire pits, some ovens, and some stoves, Birch wood is then set aflame, traditionally by making a spark (der Funke) onto the bark from stones or friction, but birch matches will suffice. Birch matches may also be used on the candles and or to light pilot lights (again, be very cautious before messing with the pilot lights). Another method I have seen used is to start the fire in the hearth or fire pit, and then take burning twigs of birch and use them to light the candles.

One tradition which we've been only rarely able to revive due to distance and safety is the sharing of the fire. This is most easily accomplished on properties that have several buildings or in situations when participants live in close proximity.

In this case, the hearths or fireplaces, etc., in several locations are all extinguished and cleaned out. Participants go to the central hearth and all work together to build the main fire. Once the fire has caught and the wood is sustaining the fire, the participants engage in fellowship by the hearth; they tell stories of times gone by, sing songs, engage in pleasantries, and, essentially [re-]engage with one another by the burning Birch. As the fire approaches the need for more wood, hot, glowing embers are removed from the hearth or the fireplace. They are set into durable ember boxes that are to be taken to the hearths and fireplaces of other buildings or others' homes. To me, this is one of the most beautiful and sacred acts of communal hospitality and kinship that I have ever been a part of.

The need to drive cars over long distances has reduced the convenience and safety of this expression of re-engagement within a community, but there ways that one could still do something similar. For example, the Entschtanning fires could be used to light a new candle for the home or property or each participant. While that candle would need to be extinguished during the transit, it could be relit

in the home and still bear a bit of the energy and spirt of what was said and done in the building of the main fire. The community's spirit and blessings can then become part of each home's celebration of the emergence of the self into the community as part of the Entschtanning observance.

ENTSCHTANNING 4: DIE LENTZBUTZEREI

5. Hanning

die Lenzbutzerei - "Spring
Cleaning"

The concept of Spring Cleaning has a cognate in cultures around the world; thus, its origins are debatable. However, within the Urglaawe traditions, we follow Pennsylvania Dutch myths or legends that relate it to Holle's commands of keeping order in the home. The home (barn, garage, etc.) are all to be clean with clear corridors through which the Geischderschtrutz (Parade of Spirits, Wild Hunt) may pass as the Parade returns from its journey among the nine realms, and, from our perspective, touches back to Mannheim (observed sunset April 30) on its way to the final destination of the spirits at Holle's Mill.

There is a hint in our myth of Holle's Return that She provided expectations for Her people to follow in order to prepare for Her inspection. These expectations, as we have been able to deduce from various texts, superstitions, and reports from Braucherei and Hexerei communities, are as follows:

- Floors are to be swept free of dirt and debris.
- Paths through the house are to be free of obstacles. The path could have books and magazines stacked, narrowing the walkway, but, as long as none of those books or magazines is actually in the walking area, it meets the letter of the law.



- Items that can easily fall or be knocked over should be moved to a safer space.
- Items need to be donated or removed that you have known for three years (some say six, which I support, because six has some “sacred disposal” aspects to it) are no longer useful yet you hold onto thinking, but I might need this someday.”
- All dishes, pots, pans, etc., cleaned and put away.
- Oven cleaned. This would include microwaves, toasters, toaster ovens, etc.
- Clean other appliances, including refrigerators; check dishwasher, washer and dryer. This would also include the outside of the appliances
- Windows cleaned (safety is a factor to consider) and opened with signs welcoming Holle.
- Clean the bathroom.
- Dust furniture. Urglaawer should dust their altars.
- Porches swept. This is tied to April 29 on solar calendar but for us would be by sunset on April 30, and is usually the last official act of the Lenzbutzerei: It is an expression of welcoming and hospitality toward the coming arrival of the Parade.
- You do not need to do everything in the house, but try to do a bit more than you think you can. Some also say clean clothes that have not been worn since the end of the last growing season should be taken out and either aired or laundered.

Urglaawer strive to align disposal with the Lenzbutzerei season that begins at Entschtanning and ends at Wonnenacht. This means almost three months to work on getting things into minimum order. This time is principally about cleaning up the physical environment, but the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual are all related.

Although this process is the result of the command of Holle, it begins during the observance most closely associated with Freid. This is because the Lenzbutzerei, much like the hearth cleaning and the re-engagement of communities, is part of the whole emergence theme of Entschtanning. Additionally,

broken, dangerous, feckless items are to be removed in order to prepare for the arrival of new life as Oschdre approaches.

This is a sacred act that is central to this quarter of the year. Many of us, myself included, are not huge fans of certain tasks (I hate mopping but I don't mind cleaning walls or doing laundry), adding that bit of spiritual oomf or engaging the chores in a meditative way can be cathartic.

Indeed, when the process is done, many report a rewarding and liberating feeling bringing them joy as the warmer weather sets in.

ENTSCHTANNING 5: THE KANNSEGE AND EEDE/OATHS

6. Hanning

The importance of oaths within Heathenry is pretty well known, so I will not reinvent the wheel; instead, I will add links to a few relevant articles at the end of this post. The long and the short of it is that one's word is paramount. A good reputation leads to smoother relationships, better luck, and, quite possibly better Urleeg for the next life.

Coming from an Anabaptist background, the change from avoiding oaths (in favor of affirmations) to depending on them required a mind shift on my part. I still use affirmations sometimes instead of oaths, particularly if a component of what is required for an Urglaawe oath is missing.

Oaths in Urglaawe are not all that different from those of most other Heathen denominations. We stipulate, though, that the oath must have a beginning and an ending, must be well defined, must be realistic, must be measurable, and must contain a description and timeline of what happens (Schuld) if the oath cannot or is not completed. Oaths may be adjusted if both parties (and witnesses, in most cases) agree to new terms.

Unfortunately, modern American society does not generally reinforce the importance of oaths. Take, for instance, the complex and sometimes controversial topic of the Pledge of Allegiance. The Pledge is, in effect, an oath. Students historically have been (and, in many places, teachers still are) compelled to say the Pledge every morning in school. Do they really understand what they are saying,

though? I remember having cursory instruction in school (4th grade, maybe?) on what the literal meaning of each line of the Pledge meant, but no real instruction on just how serious the intention behind the words are. The addition of the prepositional phrase, “under God” in 1954 makes the nature of the Pledge particularly toxic to anyone outside of the most dominant religions, and, as a Heathen, I will not utter those words. However, every day, millions of students are taking an oath while not recognizing the gravity of what they are saying.

Then we have New Year’s Resolutions, which are also oaths, even if they are only to the self. Every year during Yule, we remind folks that New Year’s Resolutions can be wonderful planning tools, but they must be clear, measurable, and realistic. For instance, if someone is not already going reliably to the gym twice each week, it is not likely that they will suddenly start going to the gym five days a week throughout the entire year. Instead of that open, unrealistic oath, we would advise the oath-taker to take a smaller oath over a shorter period. If they are not going to the gym twice weekly now, we might advise them to oath to go twice a week for two weeks, then take a new oath once they have successfully completed those two weeks. Completed oaths help to build stronger luck and a better Wurt. I’d rather hear twenty-six successful biweekly oaths than one annual failure.

Then we have the Butzemann. Creating and activating a Butzemann typically takes place during the Kannsege at Entschtanning and requires that some things be put into place. The Butzemann benefits us, so we are to make offerings or to share parts of our bounty with the Butzemann. Most of us oath to giving something monthly while actually giving things to him more frequently. We also are to give him clothes, and any items we give to him are his, and to take them from him is considered to be an act of inhospitality. In fact, there is a Verbot in Braucherei on wearing any item of clothes that has been on a Butzemann.

The most important oath to the Butzemann, though, is that he will be burned at the onset of Allelieweziel, which begins at sunset on October 30. Deutsch folklore is full of tales (see the Delbel link below) of what happens when a Butzemann is not burned. The plant spirits within him depart onto the Wild Hunt, leaving behind a shell that is occupied by Butz (puck, pucca). The Butz then wreaks havoc throughout the countryside. Many Deutsch people remember their parents

scaring them into staying in bed on Christmas Eve by saying the “Butzemann” will get them. This is, effectively, the bogeyman.

The Butzemann ties into tomorrow’s topic, the Zusaagpflicht, which is an unwritten contract among plants, animals, humans, and minerals and relates to hospitality and stewardship.

Breaking oaths can have dire consequences in general. I have heard rationalizations and justifications, some of which may have had merit, but the fact is that an oath was still broken. For instance, I have counseled people who were prohibited from completing an oath because the person to whom they took the oath would not allow them onto their property after a falling out. There is really not much that can be done, but Hexerei practice advises offering three times to be allowed to complete the oath. If the requests are denied, then the oath is considered completed because the oath-taker had no other option.

If someone fails to complete an oath and lives up to the Schuld terms, the oath is considered nullified, not completed. If they fail to live up to the Schuld, then the weight of the oath could result in damaged relationships or even outright shunning. This is why oaths must be taken carefully with due consideration to whether it is even necessary to stake one’s reputation on a verbal contract.

ENTSCHTANNING 6: DIE ZUSAAGFLICHT

7. Hanning

Die Zusaagpflicht, also called die Zusaagfassing: The closest loose translation would be that of a “Sacred Duty” or a “Sacred Promise” as it relates to an unwritten (though guidelines are in process) moral and ethical “contract” among the plant, animal, human, mineral, and spirit realms (Tobin, The Sacred Promise 14, 16). This concept of symbioses comes straight from Braucherei and relates to the Urglaawe virtue of Verwalting (Stewardship) and conscious living in the world around us. While it is not certain that the terminologies or the organized concepts behind them are of Heathen-era origin, they are almost certainly evolved from a Heathen worldview of personal responsibility and self-discipline.

Even though no one really knows how old this concept is, it is certainly consistent with Heathen worldviews. As part of a living culture, though, it has evolved within Deutsch culture (and, presumably, Palatinate, Swabian, Westphalian, Hessian, Silesian, Alsatian, and Swiss cultures prior to emigration) over the centuries.

Each domain (humanity, plants, animals, spirits, and, yes, minerals) has had, since time immemorial, roles to perform in the cycle of life (Lewesraad). The roles evolved over the course of time and developed into an unwritten or spiritual social contract (to use Hobbesian terminology).

Our modern society separates us not only from the reality of the seasons but also from the plant and animal kingdoms. Although we are fortunate enough to live close to the land here in this area, much of our food is still processed and appears as convenient little meals. An understanding of the Sacred Duty includes recognizing and respecting the loss of life, whether animal or vegetable, that resulted in those meals.

For the last several years, there have been efforts here in parts of Pennsylvania to reduce sludge farming (the disposal of wastewater on farmlands), to put an end to the inhumane treatment of puppy mills, and to end some of the more destructive practices of Big Agro that have resulted in a great volume of food but, very likely, in less actual nutrition. These efforts are all aiming to put an end to violations of the Sacred Promise.

As almost any good, effective manager knows, being at the top of an organization does not mean that power can be used indiscriminately. Eventually, morale breaks down among the staff. Rancor develops, and the health of the organization grows sour.

The same arrangement exists throughout the physical world. The fact that mankind can do something does not mean he should do it. Morale is breaking down throughout the physical world as a result of the abuses therein. In a manner of M. Night Shyamalan's "The Happening" (which was filmed not far from me in Pennsylvania), the land may someday rebel or simply to die off.

Living consciously and deliberately within the parameters of the Zusaagpflicht can also help to diminish the impact on our Wurt (Wyrd) that we draw simply from the need to eat in order to survive. The Zusaagpflicht is not a call to perfection or austerity. It is, however, a matter of maximizing respect for, and harmony with, the creation and life around us.

ENTSCHTANNING 7: IDISE AND FEMININE ENERGIES

8. Hanning

die Idis; plural: die Idise: An Idis is a matriarchal spirit who watches over the progression of her clan (which is not necessarily defined by bloodlines; this will be covered in the write-up for Night 11). Many of those interviewed in the Folklore Research Project were aware of the fairy godmothers actually being ancestral spirits, but the term had been lost within Deutsch culture, so "Idis" is a backformation.

We do find remnants of concepts regarding deceased ancestors serving as guardians. Stories, legends, and folk tales of "guardian angels" and "fairy godmothers" bear some traits in common with both the Idis and the Walkyrie. There is a belief in Braucherei that spiritually-evolved forebears go to the Weschtledder (Western Leaves of the Lewesbaam/World Tree). Whether this evolution removes them from the rebirth cycle is unclear, though most practitioners believed that an Idis is typically not reborn into a new soul construct.

Many of the understandings of these entities are most clearly described and presented in Scandinavian lore, yet it is quite possible that they became culturally encoded and were carried into some of the most famous "fairy tales."

Theory: The Three Good Fairies in "Sleeping Beauty" remind me a little of the Wurthexe, or Norns.

Although the fairy tale of "Sleeping Beauty" was authored by Charles Perrault and is thus French (the Grimm Brothers' Dornröschen version was based on Perrault's), the oldest known version of the story is from the 14th century. The gifts that the Three Good Fairies each intend to give to Aurora could be interpreted as Urleeg. Flora gives her beauty, Fauna gives her song, and Merryweather is unable

to give her gift (which I believe was to be happiness), Maleficent appears and changes the expected future by cursing Aurora to die if she touches a spinning wheel's spindle before sunset on her sixteenth birthday. The future flow was changed by Maleficent. Merryweather cannot undo the action that was done, but she is able to mitigate the damage (and to alter the expected course of the future again) by weakening the curse. Instead of dying, Aurora will fall into a deep sleep until awakened with a kiss.

It is interesting that the the plot is consistent with the Germanic understanding that the future is not written. It is also interesting that Flora is said to be the oldest of the three, Fauna the middle, and Merryweather the youngest.

The number of Wise Women is also unclear. While we tend to see the Wurthexe as a trio operating in the past, present, and future, there may well be myriad Wurthexe. One Hex asked me a question on this topic, "Why would the time be limited to the past, present, and future? We have other verb tenses in Deutsch and in English, and the nuances of each tense are very important. Could a Wurthex govern each tense?"

I am actually not sure that the Wurthexe operate by our grammatical rules and time concepts, but her question did make me think. Time is a baffling concept, especially when one believes that time is more of a spiral or helix than a line. And, to hearken back to Sleeping Beauty (Grimm 411): "...in the German kindermärchen (Dornröschen) it is twelve wise women, the thirteenth as been overlooked." In this case, it appears the Wise Women have been reduced only to fairy godmothers. With all of the named Valkyries and all the evolved Idise, I am reasonably sure there are more than twelve.

Granted, this Sleeping Beauty part is all theory.

One thing that Idise, Fairy Godmothers, Wurthexe, and Valkyries all have in common is feminine energy. Historically they were called Wise Women (die Kluuche Weiwer). Trying to pore through Grimm's Teutonic Mythology on some of these topics can be a little bewildering. The Wise Women chapter (XVI) runs from pages 396-437, contains comparisons and contrasts to numerous European cultures' folklore, and tosses in all sorts of linguistic references. It's actually

fascinating stuff, but it is not something that is easily consumed for a small article such as this. Throughout that chapter, though, I can see a relationship between what Grimm describes and some of the lore on the Kluuche Weiwer that got passed down through Braucherei and Hexerei.

At Entschtanning, we honor all feminine energies. This is due, in part, to this time being the “baby bump” phase of the Lewesraad. We hail and honor the Idise, even if we do not know their names. We recognize and celebrate the feminine energies within each of us. We honor the women in our lives and recognize the sacrifices they make and the power they command.

Hail to the Wise Women!

Heelt zu de Kluuche Weiwer!



ENTSCHTANNING 8: BUTZEMANN, BUTZEMANNSEGE, KANNSEGE

9. Hanning

We have touched upon these topics earlier in the Entschtanning observance, but let's talk about the Butzemann and the Kannsege again!

The Butzemann, the related honoring Butzemannsege (honoring of the plant spirits within the scarecrow), and the Kannsege (Ceremony of the Corn, which is when those plant spirits are awakened) are among the most "woo" traditions within Urglaawe. It stems directly from Braucherei practice, and it appears to be connected to other scarecrow traditions in neighboring European cultures.

This is, of course, the construction and activation of the Butzemann (note: the plural is Butzemänner).

In Deitsch, a scarecrow is called a "Lumbemann" or a "Butzemann." Within Braucherei and Hexerei, though, there are connotations to those terms that carry into Urglaawe. A "Lumbemann" is a simple scarecrow; a Butzemann is a scarecrow in which the dormant plant spirits have been ritually activated and awakened. You may sometimes hear us saying that a Butzemenner are essentially "zombie voodoo dolls" (that was how outside observers originally described them, with a bit of disdain and concern attached to the comment). While it is not exactly accurate and carries potential misinformation about practices we are not experts in, it also does transmit just how astonishing this practice can appear to outsiders. We tried to adjust the phrasing over the years, but we still have not found the right way to express the viewers' sentiments. We need to find a culturally appropriate way of transmitting that shock that was expressed by the external viewers. Maybe this year we can find a better phraseology, yet this was how it was expressed to us.

In a sense, though, there is some truth to this. Remnants of old Germanic lore cite a particularly close connection between humans and plants because we are constructed from plant parts and rely on plants to feed ourselves. Plant spirits are said to be able to be broken into parts and to stay dormant within dead physical plant material until reactivated. These spirits are what gives a Butzemann "life."

The Butzemann is symbolically (and often literally) the father of the coming year's crops. He is traditionally constructed from the remnants of last year's crops (sometimes still containing seed). Do NOT use Elder in the construction of a Butzemann. The mother is the soil, signified at this time by the honoring of the goddess Freid.

The activation rite is called "der Kannsege," or the Ceremony of the Corn. Some of the traditional ritual is under Verbot, but it can be effectively done in an altered format. I have gone over this ritual with numerous informants, and quite a few of them instructed me that the key to the process is to seek the "Anwadde" (the "answer").

Although I had learned of this process during my Braucherei training, it was from other practitioners that I had learned the actual process. The first was a Braucherin who was activating her own Butzemann. She drew a symbol with her

thumb over where his pineal gland would be until she received the answer. I asked her to draw the symbol with a pen, and it looked somewhat akin to an Ansuz rune. How old that function or that symbol is unknown, but she was not the only one to use it. Others used the heel of their palm. The Braucher (or adept layperson) "steps out" of this realm and into the Weschtbledder (Western Leaves of the World Tree), which is sort of like Grand Central Station for evolved spirits. The Braucher becomes a bridge for the plant spirits in the Weschtbledder to carry reviving energy through the Braucher and into the Butzemann. The dormant spirits wake up and "answer" the calls of the transitory spirits. The Braucher then closes the bridge, and the Butzemann is awake and active.

Since we discussed the Idise on Night/Day 7, I should mention that these plant spirits are comparable to our evolved ancestors. They are, essentially, the Idise of the plants.

The activated Butzemann must be given a name and I'll be posting some articles below in Comments related to all of this. The named Butzemann often starts a lineage that has a naming convention. Oaths are often taken to the Butzemann and to the plant spirits, often relating to ways they will be honored. The most critical oath, though, is that the Butzemann will be released from his duties by being burned no later than Allelieweziel (starts at sundown on October 30) so that he may join the Parade of Spirits/Wild Hunt.

The Butzemann is shown the turf he is expected to patrol. He is then perched and will stay there through the growing season. Anything that is given to a Butzemann MUST be burned with him; to take it back is considered an act of inhospitality. There are stories about Rumlaefer (wanderering laborers, hobos) from the Colonial Era became hexed because they stole the clothing off a Butzemann.

A Butzemann is most typically burned sometime between the Autumn Equinox and Allelieweziel. They often take with them things we intentionally discard from our lives, but they also take well wishes with them.

Deitsch folklore is riddled with stories about a Butzemann who was not burned by the designated time. It is common in many Deitsch households even

today to scare children into staying in bed on Christmas Eve by saying, "The Butzemann will get you!"

At its root, the word "Butz" is akin to a puck or a pucca. A Butz is also the "it" in games like tag, but a Butzemann is not a puck. Instead, pucks are the creatures who are most commonly said to take over the shell of an unburned Butzemann. These pucks are given specific names in Deutsch lore, all of which refer to the "buckled man" (Buckliches Mannli, with numerous spelling variations).

There is no requirement in Urglaawe to build a Butzemann, and not everyone takes the lore behind the Butzemann so literally. However, even those for whom the hexich elements do not resonate, it is easy to see the importance of our relationship to plants and our need to respect the Plant kingdom.

ENTSCHTANNING 9: MATRONAE

10. Hanning

The Matronae (Deutsch: Midder or Hausmitter) are deities who were honored Northwestern Europe. Numerous (over 1,100 throughout Europe) votives dating from the 1st to the 5th century are found in that region. Their depictions almost always show three Matronae together, usually within a context of bounty. There is significant crossover among Gallic, Germanic, and Roman cultures when it comes to the shrines. The names of the Matronae show influence from all three cultures, and sometimes the names appear to be partly Germanic, partly Gallic.

Some scholars connect the Matronae to the Idise (Disir), Valkyries, and Wurthexe (Norns). This is certainly possible. Some of the shrines also reflect that they may be goddesses associated with a particular place. I can see a link to the Idise fairly readily in many cases.

Triple goddesses appear as a motif in many European cultures, so it is possible that the placement of three Matrone together is a reflection of that motif.

Many of the votives indicate that they were erected in exchange for gifts provided by the Matronae.

Modern Pagans have started to actively use the shrines in their worship. Unfortunately, some worshipers have been irresponsible in their treatment of these

sacred shrines. There are reports of charcoal being burned on the shrines (I mean, really?) and items left behind that others needed to clean up.

The idea of these shrines resonates strongly with me. I would like to see more such shrines erected. Time, talent, and money are always issues, but I have pondered placing such a shrine to some of the deities or entities associated with the land by my cemetery. Future consideration.

I am not as well versed in the archaeology and lore of the Matronae as I would like to be. We incorporate Them into the Entschtanning ritual partially because of that association with the Idise and other feminine energies. We honor Them and hope to expand our understanding of Their role in our lives today.

For more information on the Matronae, I would recommend GardenStone's "Gods of the Germanic Peoples," both volumes. Also, River Devora has expended a lot of time and energy on the study of the Matronae. River has contributed a chapter in the slowly-forthcoming Urglaawe 101 book, and there's a lot of great information there.

ENTSCHTANNING 10: DIE GEMIETLICHKEET

11. Hanning

Some of this was written way back in 2010; some is new for 2023. Gemietlichkeet is actually a tough topic. On the surface, it is a fairly simple concept, but the execution and attainment of it is very complicated. Sometimes, unfortunately, it can be difficult to maintain, too.

Virtually every language has words that are difficult, if not impossible, to translate into a different language, which is why words are often adopted from one language into another.

Some words reflect concrete items, such as insects that are native to a particular area or a legal process that is unique to a given country. Other words reflect concepts that are new or are unique to a given culture, such as the Polynesian system of tapu or kapu becoming (with some revision) known as “taboo” in English.

One Deitsch word that does not translate exactly into English is Gemietlichkeet (or Gemietlichkeit, depending on one's local variant of the language). This word is frequently translated as coziness, and that translation is certainly valid. However, there is a deeper aspect to the word that warrants more explanation.

Gemietlichkeet is also a state of belonging to everything and having everything belong to us. It is also a soul-satisfying joy or happiness that simultaneously emanates from and includes that state of belonging. Urglaawe philosophy holds that Gemietlichkeet is a primary goal for personal and community achievement.

A lack of a sense of belonging permeates much of our society in the current era. Very real circumstances force our attention to be focused on paying bills, finishing school projects, ensuring that our jobs skills are current (if we are lucky enough even to have a job!), worrying about the wars or politics, or any number of other issues that constantly bombard us. Many of us barely know our neighbors or are unable to spend a significant amount of time with loved ones. This disconnection from home, family, and community has led to numerous social problems about which all of us are most certainly already painfully aware.

There are many agents of chaos. Some of them we see in the Giants. Others we see in other entities from among the Nine Realms. Some of the worst agents of chaos, though, emanate from ourselves and create social ills. There are many among them, but some of the most commonly seen are Rootlessness, Apathy, Ignorance, and Unenlightened Self-Interest.

Outside of taking prescription medications, what can be done about this situation? One seemingly simple answer comes to Urglaawe via Braucherei: attune your mindset with the time of year.

On Night 4 of this Entschtanning, we looked at how Spring Cleaning is as much about the preparation for new projects as it is about bringing order to the home. We called this “nesting” because it is similar to the way humans and animals prepare their environment for the arrival of a new birth. Typically (though certainly not always), this new life is met with unconditional care, love, and a belonging that

transcends the difficulties and challenges encountered in birth. An instilled sense of belonging and investment in family and/or community can also help to increase one's investment in oneself.

Unfortunately, achieving *Gemietlichkeet* is very difficult in this world. It is an ideal. However, the aspiration remains in place as part of the process of living deliberately and consciously. It does not mean that there will not be disagreements or arguments; instead, it means that those moments are handled in a measured manner as charitably as possible in order to retain the integrity of the belonging.

We also saw, on *Entschanning* 5, that oaths play a role in keeping social order and keeping a charitable perspective in place while attempting to work through challenges, issues, perceived slights, etc. We are living, though, in a very polarized era, mostly due to the idiocy of alt-right types of mindsets. No one -- but no one -- did more damage to the reputation of the German nation than did the Nazis, and, even if their twisted vision of reality would ever have happened, there never would have been *Gemietlichkeet* because their philosophy and all of their actions were crimes against humanity. They were tainted to begin with, and everything that stems from those actions is corrupted by them.

The authoritarian mindset is not limited to just Nazis and fascists, though. It permeates the fringes of the political circle to the point at which it sometimes becomes unclear where one extreme leaves off and the other picks up. Political disagreement (whether real, inflated, or perceived) does not automatically cancel out an oath, especially if there are provisions for how to end the commitment of the oath properly.

Gemietlichkeet is difficult to achieve, and the truth of the matter is that some people simply do not fit together. If you are getting that feeling that you are "walking on eggshells" around an individual, then *Gemietlichkeet* is a foregone conclusion unless you and that person are able to talk to one another with each party aiming to improve relations. The latter part of the preceding sentence is where the biggest challenge is: both parties have to want to improve things.

Heathenry is about connection: connection to oneself, connection to community, to the world around us, to the forebears, to the deities, etc. At this time,

we invite others to consider what they have to be grateful for in their lives. What ideals are worth working for, and who is involved in that same pursuit? How can we work best to decrease the impact of rootlessness in our communities and in our country?

Hail to connections and to those that hold them fast!

ENTSCHTANNING 11: FETTKUCHE, EMBERS, AND GREASING OF THE TOOLS



If you live in the Deitscherei or in any Deitsch colony, there's a very good chance that you have come across the Fastnachtskuche (usually called just Fastnacht) on Shrove (Fat) Tuesday. This is a widespread tradition that continues vibrantly into the current era.

If you ask the average consumers what the purpose of these deep-fried, lard and potato doughnuts is, they will likely tell you that they are made to consume the fat in the house before Lent begins. However, there are elements of the Fastnachtskuche story that reveal connections to older practices.

In "Beliefs and Superstitions of the Pennsylvania Germans," Deitsch historian Edwin Miller Fogel, Ph.D., cites quite a few living Deitsch traditions and links them to pre-Christian practices or to the old German deities. Many of these include traditional cattle-driving and wedding days (Tuesday (Ziu) and Thursday (Dunner)

still observed among many Plain sectarians, ironically, although the sectarians almost certainly are unaware of the origin of the custom (11)), and also sacrificial practices.

Fogel cites (15) the tradition of taking embers from a central fire to which everyone in a community has contributed something. This is connected to the Haerdbutzerei that we discussed on Night 3. Embers from the fire are taken out to the orchards and made to smoke in order to bless the trees. Herds were driven through the cooled embers of the main fire, and charcoal from the fire was fed to the pigs. Some of what Fogel cites are actually practiced at Wonnacht (Walpurgisnacht), namely people walking among embers, too. However, despite some discrepancies found between Fogel's text and the reports of practitioners from our ongoing interviews, Fogel's information is valuable.

Fogel describes Shrove Tuesday as taking over some of the festivals that honor Dunner and refers specifically (12-13) to "Easter cakes" in honor of Ostara (whom we know as Oschdra). This presents a discrepancy in terms of the timing and the significance of the Fettkuche, but the premise of the cakes being of pre-Christian origin fits with the beliefs of numerous Hexerei and Braucherei practitioners. Most tied the Fettkuche more to Groundhog Day and Fasching than to the Spring Equinox or Easter. The Hearth Lady or Hearth Goddess (Freid) was the "helpful entity" with whom the Fettkuche were associated, and they were said to represent pregnancy and the emergence or manifestation of new life. This is the context in which Urglaawe utilizes these cakes. Typically, but not restrictively, we consume them on the last Friday of Entschanning.

Fettkuche are typically dipped and eaten nowadays in molasses or Turkey Syrup, but trees that run sap in February also have traditionally provided some flavor to the doughnut.

There is one additional aspect to the Fettkuche that shows a possible link to Charming of the Plow traditions elsewhere in Europe. Even today in the Deitscherei, the grease from the preparation of Fettkuche is collected and used on tools in a ritual we call the Waerkzeichfettung (Greasing of the Tools). Any tools may be ritually greased to ensure prosperity, but it is specifically gardening and plowing

tools that are featured in our folklore. For Urglaawer, this once again brings Freid to mind.

There are many recipes under search terms Fettkuche and Fastnacht. Some folks within our community make the doughnuts as part of their offerings to Freid prior to our group Entschtanning ritual. Many supermarkets throughout the Deitscherei and even well into the Philadelphia suburbs have the doughnuts available beginning early in February.

Hail to Freid!

May the coming Spring bring prosperity!

ENTSCHTANNING 12: ES LICHDERFESCHT

13. Hanning

Tonight at sunset we begin the closing of the Entschtanning observance and enter the Vorlenz season.

Tonight is what we Urglaawer call "es Lichderfescht," which is our festival of lights. On Entschtanning 3, we discussed the cleaning of the hearth and of other fire-bearing vessels, including candleholders. This echoes pre-Christian customs that ended up featured as part of Christian Candlemas practice (Yoder 49-50).

As the interviews and collecting of stories from across the Deitscherei progressed, some interesting interpretations of the use of light during this time emerged. Some of these were "superstitions" and involved sympathetic magic; others were more philosophical.

The superstition that turned up most frequently was an idea that we sometimes hear of at Yuul: adding light to the night will help to strengthen the Sun. One elderly man likened the ritual practice of lighting candles from Groundhog Day onward to a parent pushing and guiding a learning child's bike and then releasing hold when the child had acquired ample balance to move alone.

The philosophical interpretations are more far-reaching. The whole of this observance is about enlightenment, conscious and conscientious living. At this time,

we strive to finish the preparations for the ideas that we developed for the New Year at Yule. We are to be ready to put those ideas into effect by Oschdre in March.

This brings us to the mind shift (Umdenk) that we often speak about when one converts from monotheism (particularly Christianity) to Heathenry. Within the Urglaawe community, this shift was first expressed by my kinsman, Daniel Riegel, prior to his passing in 2011. He described the mind shift in the context of embracing the dark half of the year, which was consistent with many others' experiences of recognizing the totality of the self, shadow and all. This recognition of our whole being is not the same as accepting ourselves "as is" and not striving to be better. Instead, it is using the totality of ourselves in order to become the best we can be.

There is a tendency in our society to pretend the shadowy sides of ourselves do not exist. We bury them deeply, and we are ashamed of them. This attitude is pervasive in some Plain sectarian communities, and it is rooted in Christian orthodoxy. Shadow sides are generally viewed as being "evil" or profane. Orthodoxy, meaning that one is required to believe a certain way, trumps orthopraxy, meaning that one is required only to practice the same way within a group. Orthodoxy leads to dogma, and dogma leads to suppression of variant ideas.

One of the more common beliefs within Urglaawe is that the deities want for us to be at the end of this cosmic cycle where they were at the beginning of it. To achieve this, we have to grow as a race of beings. Such growth, particularly an evolution of consciousness, is very difficult when the largest religions in the world actively attempt to limit questioning and independent thought.

Maintaining perspectives from Christianity while practicing Heathenry can result in confusion. Our relationships to the deities and to our ancestors differ from that of the Christian understanding. Our relationship to the world around us differs (see Entschtanning 6). It is difficult to wrap one's head around the idea that there may be multiple "truths," or that our deities have individual personalities that may lead them even into conflict with each other.

And, at the risk of offending some readers of this post, the "lore" is not Gospel, and to treat the myths as such can lead one to disconnected from the

spiritual essence of either religion. The baggage of orthodoxy remains even though the trappings of the religion have changed. Germanic Heathenry has never (at least within the period in which history has been written down) been monolithic. Different tribes knew different deities in different ways... and that is wonderful!

Ditching the mindset of Christianity is critical. We are not “fallen.” We do not need an intercessor to remove the stain of sin. We have the ability and responsibility to improve ourselves, yes, but we do so to create a better future for ourselves and for our descendants, not because we have a bill to pay from the past.

During Lichderfescht, we embrace this ability and this duty to bring enlightenment into ourselves, our communities, and our world.

This ends the musings of the Entschtanning season. The next Urglaawe observance is Grumbieredaag (“Potatoes Day”), which is the feast day of Frouwa, on March 17. This is when, traditionally, the remainder of last year's potatoes would be used ritually during the planting of this year's potatoes. It is the first planting of the season.

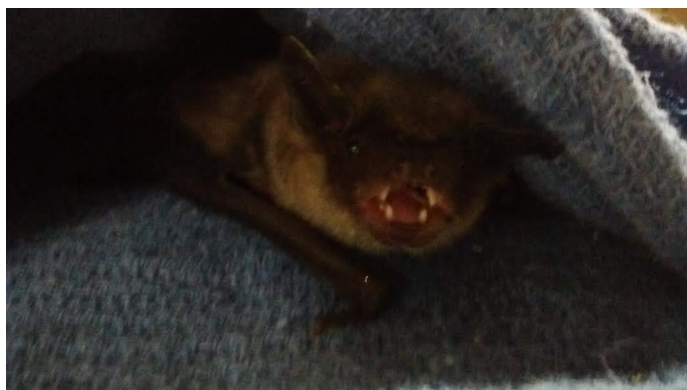
Hail to those who have gone before and the wisdom they left us!

Hail to those yet to come. May we be worthy of their honor!

Animal Husbandry: Wildlife: die Schpeckmaus (Bat)

Storm Smith - Columbus, OH

No one can give a better introduction to bats than Conservation International,



"Bats are mammals that belong to the order Chiroptera (from the Greek 'cheir'--'hand' and 'pteron'--'wing'. [...] Bats have been on Earth for more than 50

million years. With more than 1,400 species, they are the second largest order of mammals, and are widely dispersed across six continents. Globally, bats provide vital ecosystem services in the form of insect pest consumption, plant pollination, and seed dispersal, making them essential to the health of global ecosystems. Today, bats are under unprecedented threat from widespread habitat destruction, accelerated climate change, invasive species, and other stresses. [However] the primary cause of their decline is human activity, including: the ongoing destruction of natural habitats, hunting and persecution for sport and meat, the growing use of wind-turbine energy, and the proliferation of harmful myths" (Bats 101).

Specifics will vary depending on where you are geographically of course though, since just the Appalachian region is home to at least 8 different species of bats, including:

Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)

Tri-Colored Bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*)

Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*)

Eastern-Small Footed Bat (*Myotis leibii*)

Northern Long-Eared Bat, or Keen's Myotis (*Myotis keenii*)

Indiana Bat *endangered species* (*Myotis sodalis*)

Virginia Big-Eared Bat *endangered species* (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*)

Gray Bat *endangered species* (*Myotis grisescens*)

However, there is some general North American information that will help you be a good neighbor to those you may encounter, and to help you encourage a healthy ecosystem that helps them flourish!

The majority of North American bats are insectivores.

"About seventy percent of all bats are insect eaters that feed on a tremendous diversity of bugs including pests that consume the crops we need to survive. Each bat is capable of eating a whopping 5,000 insects per night; a lactating female will eat twice that amount. [...]They eat crop pests that cost

farmers billions of dollars annually. Insect control by bats keeps down prices of fruits and vegetables in the market place" (Why Save Bats?).

The consumption of mosquitos is one of the most significant benefit bats have to humans in North America, especially since they are a major carrier of infectious diseases in certain areas (such as malaria and west nile virus).

Bats primarily roost and forage in forested environments. Which unfortunately are experiencing record habitat destruction from climate change and urbanization. Individuals are also killed due to fear and superstitions, wind turbines, as well as being hunted for food and folk medicine (Bats 101). Bats are wild animals, please do not take or buy one for a pet (Bats As Pets).

Bats are most well known for their incredible ability to echolocate; which means they project rhythmic sounds in order to register the returning sound waves to sense their surroundings, including prey. Their echolocation is very well honed--so don't worry, they "see" you quite well and have no desire to dive into your hair!

Bats primarily roost in caves (though some are also known to rest on the bark of trees), and in urban environments will often appear under bridges, in warehouses, and in abandoned mines. Bats roost in groups, and use a large main location to hibernate together during the winter. "Bats are among the slowest reproducing mammals on earth for their size--on average, most species only give birth to one pup per year" (Bats 101), making population maintenance and recovery a very slow process. One of the precautions that should always be taken while caving is wearing separate shoe covers for each cave in order to reduce possible contamination and spreading of White Nose Syndrome--a deadly infectious disease that has decimated many colonies across North America (see "Omens" section).

“Signs”: (healthy patterns)



The best sign of a healthy bat is no sign! Despite old worry about a bat flying into someone's hair, bats are naturally averse to humans, have very good senses, and try to avoid us. The most common intersection between our habitats occur in barns, attics, and warehouses where there are high reclusive corners for them to roost during the day. In the cases of outdoor locations with little suspected interaction (abandoned buildings, or unused areas of a barn

or shed) feel free to leave your bat neighbors alone. Not only will they eat insects but they're an excellent sign that the surrounding environment is harmonious. (Called an "indicator species" by scientists, certain species—such as bats and salamanders—are so sensitive to toxins and pollutants in their environment that they are used to indicate the overall health of their ecosystem.) To encourage these neighbors to move in, try installing a bat house!

However, sometimes they will roost or accidentally get inside where we're more active—like our homes or classrooms. Often it's simply because they just got confused while foraging or migrating. While bats only attack food or defensively, they are a rabies vector species--which means it's possible for them to carry the disease (see "Omens" section). In many states any bat thought or known to have bitten someone is required to be euthanized, unless handled by qualified individuals such as wildlife rehabilitators or pest control. Ultimately it's in everyone's best interest to find out the contact information for your local non-kill pest control agency for any wildlife that you need removed.

"Omens": (negative indicators)

White nose syndrome is a relatively recent epidemic in North America, but has quickly become the biggest threat to our bats. This white looking fungal pathogen (*Pseudogymnoascus destructans*) grows "on the noses and wings of hibernating bats, ultimately causing their death. The condition was first documented in 2006 and then identified in several caves near Albany, New York in 2007. [...] As of October 1st 2017 [...] the disease has been positively confirmed in 31 [...] states, [...] killing over 7 milion bats. In some roosts, 90 to 100 percent of the bats have died from the disease." (White Nose Syndrome). Unfortunately the only widely used preventative is the implimentation of cave gates, and requests that cavers be mindful of cross contamination between caves.

Despite the common understanding that bats are "riddled with rabies[,] a study by University of Calgary researchers has confirmed that bats are not as disease-ridden as the stigma suggests. 'The notion that bats have high rates of rabies is not true', says Brandon Klug, a graduate student at the University of Calgary and the lead author of a paper published in the Journal of Wildlife Diseases. [...] Previous studies have suggested that typically about 10 percent of bats taken by the public to be tested have the disease [...] but University of Calgary research says the number is closer to one percent. [...] This study is significant because it confirms that rabies rates for bats has been over-estimated. [...] However] healthy bats normally don't come in contact with people, so those that do are more likely to be sick" (Biology & Nature).

"Unlike humans, bats can harbor diseases without becomeing sick [...] and] are natural resevoirs for more than 60 viruses that (although rarely) can infect humans such as [Coronavirus], Ebola, rabies, and Histoplasmosis. [...] The important thing to understand is that [...] it's the way humans are treating bats that is allowing these diseases to spread. For example, humans are hunting and eating bats[,], encroaching on bat habitat [...], and even harvesting bats for the cruel exotic pet trade" (Bats and Coronavirus, Ebola and Others – The Facts).

While widely regarded as a useful fertilizer, accumulated bat guano (excrement) can be toxic in certain conditions so it's advised to take precautions.

"Histoplasmosis is a respiratory disease caused by a fungus that grows in soil enriched by animal droppings, including those from bats. Ninety percent of all reported cases in humans come from the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys and adjacent areas where warm, humid conditions favor fungal growth. [...] The majority of cases are asymptomatic or involve flu-like symptoms, though some individuals, primarily those who are immune-compromised, become seriously ill, especially if exposed to large quantities of spore-laden dust. To be safe, avoid breathing dust in areas where there are animal droppings; if you must clean an area of bat or bird droppings, wear a respirator that can guard against particles as small as two microns" (FAQ).

Folklore:

In Deutsch folklore references to bats are primarily related to using their body--or body parts--in charms. While this was practiced in the past at minimum there is risk of disease, not to mention the harm caused to the animal itself and your own ecosystem. In the Urglaawe belief system the Zusaagpflicht ("sacred promise/duty") emphasises reciprocity of care for the natural world (Entschanning 6: Die Zusaagpflicht), which goes against wasteful taking of life. However the "bat nut" (*Trapa bicornis*) which is the seed pod of an aquatic Asian plant (Yronwode), or any other item which resembles a bat in form or symbolically, can easily be used as a replacement in workings.

According to Deutsch Hexe Silver RavenWolf, "a bat was thought to bring good luck for participating in games of chance. Bat magick was also used to 'see in the dark' and to see things in the astral" (RavenWolf).

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Also Recommended:

<https://batworld.org/local-rescue/>

<https://whitenosesyndrome.org/>

https://www.nwrawildlife.org/page/Coexist_with_Wildlife

<https://www.ohiowildlifecenter.org/found-an-animal/>

They Came in Droves

Gretchen Swank - Boalsburg, PA

They came in droves. Filled with faith. A new land, ripe with hope. Many traded their freedom for servitude, and passage, into the unknown, riding on a promise.

Their motherland scorched, burned—they walked away from bodies buried in ash, marked with the scars of generations passed-- a thirty year war had left their land as barren as their own souls—the dryness – the emptiness—the fear of tomorrow. They walked away. Torn and tattered. Destitute.

Yet, passion grew within them; propelling them forward—the essence of life pursuing itself, calling to itself—to grow, stretch, move... and be free. Saaga emerged. She could not be silenced. Her call was heard through her fellow Maiden, Holle; she spoke, first—a whisper—then a frustrated sigh, before her loud roar. Saaga awakened within our people.

They gathered their families. They worked for a dime. Bartered and haggled their way to a port. The movement within them was too great to wait. And so they went.

The Port of Philadelphia and her waters of welcome ushered them into lush land to be settled.

They were of varying faith, dialect, and ideas... sharing a common goal.

Culture was to be grown from the seeds of community. And from prosperity came creation.

Pain that once stirred inside was translated into a story told through art, food, and dialect.

Saaga was felt by her people. She was among them, inside of them, and expressing herself through them.

She is present in all things; within the creator's hand, and the creation itself. She longs to move her people, her culture, her passion forward through expression—through the telling of one's story and deepest emotions through their manifestation on this earth in a tangible way. Saaga recognizes the contribution of one's experience to the culture, through the culture; and this expression is two-fold—history is created and recorded, and the future is simultaneously created as the creative force of Saaga longs to flow on, fueled by the transformation of pain and fear, to comfort and joy, within community that moves and creates together.

Saaga is the essence of life moving toward itself. She cannot be stopped. She will roar.

Our ancestor. Our forebears. They listened.

They came in droves.

Artist's Corner



Illustration by Susan Elizabeth

Resources

Books

The First Book of Urglaawe Myths

Available on [Amazon](#)

A Dictionary of Urglaawe Terminology

Available on [Amazon](#) and [Lulu](#)

Websites

[Urglaawe International](#)

Social Media

[Urglaawe Facebook Community](#)

[Heathens Against Hate](#)

[Alliance for Inclusive Heathenry](#)

[Heathens in Recovery](#)

Blogs and Podcasts

[Blanzenheilkunscht](#)

[Braucherei](#)

[Deutsch Mythology](#)

[Urglaawe](#)

[Holle's Haven Podcast](#) (also available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts)

Regional Groups

[Distelfink Sippschaft](#) Southeastern PA, NJ

Distelfink Sippschaft P.O. Box 2131

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Nadd Freibesitz New Jersey

[Hottenstein Freibesitz](#) Pennsylvania

Bolroiger Freibesitz Washington

staci@urglaawe.org

Schwazwald Sippschaft Michigan

[Weisser Hund Freibesitz](#) North Carolina

[Bittreselaatsaame Freibesitz](#) San Diego

Landmarks

[Lüsch-Müsselman Graabhof](#) (Graveyard) Pennsylvania

Die Urglaawich Sippschaft vum Distelfink

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Submissions for the Spring 2024 issue must be received by March 1, 2023 and may be submitted for consideration to briana@urglaawe.org. Artists retain all rights to their work. By submitting, the artist agrees to allow Hollerbeer Hof to publish their work within one year of the submission due date; after that year, Hollerbeer Hof must reacquire permission to publish.

