

Concerning New Leadership Structure

Establishing an annual Thing

- I propose the establishment of a Thing of Fincastali, such as would convene once in the year, in early May.
- The Thing would be declared and recognized as the sole sovereign entity of the Hearth.
- Membership, attendance rights, and speaking rights would extend to all recognized Karlar of the Hearth.
- A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of members.
- Votes shall be assigned one per Karl.
- By default, unless otherwise specified in Thew, all acts of the Thing shall be approved by a simple majority of those qualified to vote when a quorum exists.
- In the absence of quorum, the present membership shall be empowered solely to set an alternate date, time, and place at which the Thing should again attempt to convene.
- The rules, regulations, and definition of the Thing shall be subject to the will of the Thing, such that any may be amended, stricken, or otherwise altered.

Establishing a Court

- I propose the establishing of a Court of Fincastali, such as would attend to various duties assigned to them in Thew.
- The Court would convene at fixed meetings once every three months, as well as any special meetings which the Court itself should deem necessary.
- Membership would extend all elected Officials of the Hearth; attendance and speaking rights would extend to all recognized Karlar of the Hearth.
- A quorum shall consist of the full membership of the Court.
- Votes shall be assigned one per Official.
- By default, unless otherwise specified in Thew, all acts of the Court shall be approved by a two-thirds majority of those qualified to vote when a quorum exists.
- In the absence of quorum, the present membership shall be empowered solely to set an alternate date, time, and place at which the Court should again attempt to convene.

- The rules, regulations, and definition of the Court shall be subject to the will of the Thing, such that any may be amended, stricken, or otherwise altered.
- All acts of the Court shall be reported to the Thing, and there be subjected to a final approval or disapproval.
- All acts of the Court are in full enforcement and effect between the time of the Court act and the next Thing.
- Should the Thing elect to retroactively disapprove a Court act, the Thing shall immediately determine whether to recognize prior enforcements of the act, and resolve or establish some committee to resolve any and all ambiguities or other concerns as may have been raised.
- Recommended timings and specific duties of each of the quarterly meetings:
 - Early March
 - Finalize plans regarding the midsummer retreat.
 - Hold nomination hearings.
 - Early June
 - Hear proposals regarding the budget, including any new projects which would be paid for by the treasury.
 - Early September
 - Read and assess the previous fiscal year's final budget.
 - Finalize the next fiscal year's budget plan.
 - Hear proposals regarding the general calendar guidelines.
 - Hear proposals regarding the Yule observance.
 - Early December
 - Finalize the next year's general calendar guidelines.
 - Finalize the plans for the Yule observance.
 - Hear proposals regarding the midsummer retreat.
- The fiscal year should run from September 1 to August 31.

Concerning Elected Officials

I make the following suggestions regarding the establishment and evolution of offices in the Hearth.

- Prior to having twenty members, the Hearth shall limit itself to these Offices, unless altered by an act of the Thing:
 - Lawspeaker – executive of the Hearth, executive and chairperson of the Court, chairperson of the Thing, keeper and enforcer of Thew.
 - Priest/Goði – spiritual leader and service-person; superintendent over the education and preparation of applicants.
 - Clerk – keeper of records and archives, scribe of the Court agenda, treasurer.
 - Each of these shall be elected by the Thing to a term of one year.
 - Nominations shall be submitted to the Clerk no less than two weeks prior to the last fixed meeting of the Court just prior to the Thing. The Clerk shall add nomination hearings to the Court agenda. In these hearings, the Court shall prepare a report for the Thing recommending either acceptance or rejection of each nomination, and the reasons for any rejection, according to standards established in Thew.
 - The Thing, having heard the nominations and recommendations in the Court's report, shall nonetheless act as it sees fit in proceeding with elections.
 - Any Office for which there is but one nominee, if such nomination was recommended by the Court to be accepted, the sole nominee shall be automatically elected.
 - Any Office for which there are no nominees shall be filled temporarily by Court appointment, and special referendum held after three months to elect a proper officiant. This shall be repeated as necessary.
- Having at least twenty members, but no more than forty, the Hearth shall evolve to possess these Offices, unless altered by an act of the Thing:
 - Lawspeaker – executive of the Hearth, executive and chairperson of the Court, chairperson of the Thing, keeper and enforcer of Thew.
 - Deputy Lawspeaker.
 - Alshergoði – spiritual leader and service-person; superintendent over the education and preparation of applicants; superintendent over the priesthood.
 - Secretary – keeper of records and archives, scribe of the Court agenda.
 - Treasurer – accountant and master of finances.

- Each of these shall be elected by the Thing to a term of three years. In one year the Lawspeaker and Alshergoði shall be elected; in the second year the Deputy Lawspeaker, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected; and in the third year no election is held.
- There shall be established at this time a standard of no more than one Priest per ten Karlar.
- Nominations shall be submitted to the Secretary no less than two weeks prior to the last fixed meeting of the Court just prior to the Thing. The Secretary shall add nomination hearings to the Court agenda. In these hearings, the Court shall prepare a report for the Thing recommending either acceptance or rejection of each nomination, and the reasons for any rejection, according to standards established in Thew.
- The Thing, having heard the nominations and recommendations in the Court's report, shall nonetheless act as it sees fit in proceeding with elections.
- Any Office for which there is but one nominee, the same rule as before shall apply.
- Any Office for which there are no nominees shall be filled temporarily by Court appointment, and special referendum held after six months to elect a proper officiant. This shall be repeated as necessary.
- Having at least forty members, but no more than one hundred, the Hearth shall evolve to possess these Offices, unless altered by an act of the Thing:
 - Lawspeaker; as before.
 - Deputy Lawspeaker.
 - Alshergoði; as before.
 - Vicar – deputy to the Alshergoði, elected by and from among the priesthood rather than the Thing, to a term of two years.
 - Secretary; as before.
 - Treasurer; as before.
 - Deacon – supervises the activities of other Officials; interacts regularly with the membership and speaks on their behalf regarding any matter not inherently considered by the Court.
 - Terms and years of election:
 - In the first year, the Lawspeaker and Alshergoði shall be elected by the Thing to a term of five years.
 - In the second year of the first cycle, the Deacon shall be elected by the Thing to a term of two years; and then elected every second year thereafter.

- In the third year, the Deputy Lawspeaker, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected by the Thing to a term of five years.
- Nominations shall be submitted to the Secretary no less than two weeks prior to the last fixed meeting of the Court just prior to the Thing. The Secretary shall add nomination hearings to the Court agenda. In these hearings, the Court shall prepare a report for the Thing recommending either acceptance or rejection of each nomination, and the reasons for any rejection, according to standards established in Thew.
- The Thing, having heard the nominations and recommendations in the Court's report, shall nonetheless act as it sees fit in proceeding with elections.
- Any Office for which there is but one nominee, the same rule as before shall apply.
- Any Office for which there are no nominees shall be filled temporarily by Court appointment, and special referendum held after six months to elect a proper officiant. This shall be repeated as necessary.
- Upon reaching one hundred members, the Thing shall be tasked with establishing a final structure and rules for the leadership/governance of the Hearth.

Concerning Membership

I propose establishing the following set of rules regarding the process of seeking and obtaining full membership as a recognized Karl of the Hearth. In particular, I propose recognizing three means of obtaining recognition.

1. Karldom Through Thralldom

One may become recognized by the Hearth by first undergoing a period of Thralldom, subject to certain rules and regulations as would be established in Thew or by other authorities on behalf of Thew.

- The applicant must be at least eighteen years of age, attend a minimum of three study meetings, and find a Karl willing to sponsor and mentor them, and to be responsible for them according to the definitions of Thralldom as may be established in Thew.
- Both the Karl and applicant shall petition the Court. The Court shall then interview the would-be Thrall, regarding these topics:
 - Does the applicant have a history of conviction or criminal activity? The main point of interest is their honesty, although standards may be established which prohibit membership for persons with certain histories.
 - What does the applicant hope to accomplish or obtain through membership? The main point of interest is in whether they understand the nature and purpose of the Hearth; the quality of the answer is irrelevant.
 - What are the applicant's impressions and opinions regarding the Hearth at this time? This is purely informative and for the Hearth's benefit, and shall have no actual bearing on the applicant's petition, so long as the answer is honest and in no way offensive.
- If the Court elects to deny the petition for Thralldom, the Karl and applicant shall be informed, and the applicant excused.
- If the Court elects to reject the petition with prejudice, the identity of the applicant shall be recorded, such records persisting for a period of ten years, and in that time no further petition on their part shall be ever entertained by the Court unless specifically ordered to do so by an act of the Thing. The Karl and applicant shall then be informed, and the applicant excused.
- If the Court elects to grant the petition, the applicant shall be Enthralled to the sponsoring Karl for a minimum of one year.

- If such a Thrall must take an extended leave – more than two weeks unavailability – for any sound reason, their minimum Thralldom shall be extended by an equal amount. If for any unsound reason, or for sound reason but for such a duration as to obstruct their education and/or other obligations, their Karl may petition the Court to relieve them of their Thralldom. Such petition is either simply granted or denied.
- The duty of a sponsoring Karl is to mentor their Thrall, according to standards established by the Court.
- The duty of such a Thrall is to be present, whenever possible, in the company of their Karl during activities of the Hearth, and to perform any other duties of a Thrall as maybe established in Thew.
- Upon completion of their minimum Thralldom, both the sponsoring Karl and their Thrall shall petition the Court for recognition of the Thrall as Karl. The Court shall then interview the Karl and Thrall in the following manner.
 - First, the Karl shall be addressed alone; the Thrall having been excused temporarily to some separate but nearby location. They will be asked for their impressions and opinions regarding their Thrall. This is their one opportunity to speak directly for or against their Thrall being recognized by the Hearth, however their statements are not authoritative.
 - Second, the Thrall shall be addressed alone; the Karl having been excused temporarily to some separate but nearby location. They will be asked for their impressions and opinions regarding their Karl. This is an opportunity for the Court to ascertain whether the Karl has dutifully fulfilled all expectations in preparing the Thrall.
 - Third, both Karl and Thrall are present, but only the Thrall is addressed. The Thrall is asked to speak on these topics:
 - Their study of the lore. The main interest is in whether they have thought beyond rote learning and sought insight from the lore; any further considerations shall be established in Thew.
 - What they hope to accomplish or obtain through membership. This shall be compared to the answer given in their petition for Thralldom. The main interest is in their understanding of the nature and purpose of the Hearth, and secondarily in any signs of growth which may be represented by a change in the answer.
 - What they hope to contribute to the Hearth. The main interest is sincerity and a comprehension of the value of community. The quality and particulars of the answer are otherwise irrelevant.

- Their understanding of, attitude toward, and relationship with, the gods and other vights. The main interest is in whether they are actively thoughtful and spiritual in any manner. The quality and details of the answer are otherwise irrelevant.
- Fourth, both Karl and Thrall are present, but only the Thrall is addressed. The Thrall is asked again for their impressions and opinions regarding the Hearth. As before, this is purely informative and for the Hearth's benefit, and shall have no actual bearing on the petition so long as the answer is honest and in no way offensive.
- If the Court elects to deny the petition, the Karl and Thrall shall be immediately informed. At this time, the Karl and Thrall shall determine whether to continue or terminate the Thralldom. If they choose to continue, they may petition the Court again after a period of at least six months.
- If the Court elects to reject the petition with prejudice, the Karl and Thrall shall be immediately informed. The identify of the Thrall shall be recorded, such records persisting for a period of five years, and in that time no further petition on their part shall be ever entertained by the Court unless specifically ordered to do so by an act of the Thing. The Thrall shall be relieved of their Thralldom, excused, and escorted out of the Court's presence.
- If the Court elects to subject the petition to new conditions, they shall arrange for the fulfillment of all such conditions, and set an appointment at the next fixed meeting for reconsideration.
- If the Court elects to grant the petition, the Karl shall be addressed and given the Court's spoken approval, upon which the Karl shall instigate the Rite of Recognition.

2. Karldom Through Transfer

One may become recognized by the Hearth without the need to undergo Thralldom, if “transferring” from some other heathen kindred of good repute.

- The applicant must be at least eighteen years of age.
- The applicant must attend a minimum of three study meetings.
- The applicant must find a Karl willing to vouch for their intent and character.
- Both the Karl and the applicant shall petition the Court. The Court shall then interview the would-be Thrall, regarding these topics:
 - Does the applicant have a history of conviction or criminal activity? The main point of interest is their honesty, although standards may be established which prohibit membership for persons with certain histories.

- What does the applicant hope to accomplish or obtain through membership? The main point of interest is in whether they understand the nature and purpose of the Hearth; the quality of the answer is irrelevant.
- What are the applicant's impressions and opinions regarding the Hearth at this time? This is purely informative and for the Hearth's benefit, and shall have no actual bearing on the applicant's petition, so long as the answer is honest and in no way offensive.
- The applicant shall inform the Court of what kindred or other organized heathen body they had previously been a member, and the reason they are no longer so.
- The applicant shall provide the Court with some means of contacting their prior affiliation, or someone able to represent them.
- If the Court elects to deny the petition for Karldom by Transfer, the applicant shall be informed and excused. Such denial shall have no bearing on any proceedings regarding a future petition for Thralldom by the same applicant. The applicant may not submit a new petition for Karldom by Transfer until after a period of at least six months.
- If the Court elects to reject the petition with prejudice, the identity of the applicant shall be recorded, such records persisting for a period of ten years, and in that time no further petition on their part shall be ever entertained by the Court unless specifically ordered to do so by an act of the Thing. The applicant shall then be informed and excused.
- If the Court elects to entertain the petition, the applicant shall be informed and excused. Then the Court shall appoint one of its members to contact the applicant's previous affiliation, to these purposes:
 - To corroborate the applicant's claims.
 - To ascertain in what standing the applicant withdrew their membership.
 - To obtain a recommendation with regard to the character of the applicant, for consideration for potential membership with the Hearth.
- The appointee shall work to contact the prior affiliation until no later than two weeks prior to the next fixed meeting of the Court. If the appointee finds difficulty in contacting the prior affiliation, they shall work with the applicant to resolve any such difficulties.
- Having contacted the prior affiliation, the appointee shall make a recommendation to the Court:
 - If the applicant's claims have been corroborated, their standing with the prior affiliation established as good, and recommendation received from the prior affiliation regarding the worth of the applicant, then the appointee shall report these findings to the Court and recommend further entertainment of the petition.

- If the applicant's claims have been found dubious, or their standing with the prior affiliation found wanting, or their prior affiliation has denied to recommend them, then the appointee shall give their best good faith judgment as to the value of the prior affiliation's claims regarding the applicant. If they believe the prior affiliation to be speaking truthfully and honorably, they shall report their findings to the Court and recommend denial of the petition. If they believe the prior affiliation to be doing a disservice to the applicant, they shall likewise report all their findings to the Court, but recommend further entertainment of the petition.
- Having received the report and recommendation of the appointee, the Court shall proceed to consider the petition.
 - If the Court elects to deny the petition, it is as stated before.
 - If the Court elects to reject the petition with prejudice, it is as stated before.
 - If the Court elects to subject the petition to new conditions, they shall arrange for the fulfillment of all such conditions, and set an appointment at the next fixed meeting for reconsideration.
 - If the Court elects to grant the petition, the Karl who vouches for the applicant shall be addressed and given the Court's spoken approval, upon which the Karl shall instigate the Rite of Recognition.

3. Karldom For Those Raised Heathen

Special consideration ought to be provided for those who have been raised by one or more parents who are themselves Karl(ar) of the Hearth.

- If the applicant's parent(s) joined through Thralldom, and have been Karl(ar) for fewer than five years, then the applicant must themselves join through Thralldom and not before the age of eighteen.
- If the applicant's parent(s) joined through Transfer, and have been members of both the Hearth and their prior affiliation for a combined period of fewer than five years, then the applicant must themselves join through Thralldom and not before the age of eighteen.
- In any other case:
 - The applicant must be at least fifteen years of age.
 - If under the age of eighteen, the applicant must obtain written approval of their parent(s) who are themselves Karl(ar).
 - The applicant must have been Fostered no less than six months prior to petitioning the Court.

- The applicant and their Foster-parent shall petition the Court.
- If the Court elects to deny the petition, the applicant is informed and excused. The applicant may not submit a new petition for Karldom until after a period of at least six months.
- If the Court elects to reject the petition with prejudice, the identity of the applicant shall be recorded, such records persisting for a period of five years, and in that time no further petition on their part shall be ever entertained by the Court unless specifically ordered to do so by an act of the Thing. The applicant shall then be informed and excused.
- If the Court elects to subject the petition to new conditions, they shall arrange for the fulfillment of all such conditions, and set an appointment at the next fixed meeting for reconsideration.
- If the Court elects to grant the petition, the Foster-parent shall be addressed and given the Court's spoken approval, upon which the Foster-parent shall instigate the Rite of Recognition.

The general intent is that those individuals who have had five or more years of their upbringing in a heathen context, having been prepared for a heathen life, need not be subject to the same process of integration as is necessary for those who have not. This is also the sole means by which an individual may be recognized as Karl before the age of eighteen.

Rejection With Prejudice

Note the durations of the prohibitions against further petition when various petitions are rejected with prejudice, meaning the Court has seen fit to consider the applicant dramatically unfit:

- Petition for Thralldom: 10 years
- Petition for Karldom after a period of Thralldom: 5 years
- Petition for Karldom by Transfer: 10 years
- Petition for Karldom for children of Karlar: 5 years

Further Considerations on Karldom and Thralldom

Having learned through hard experience that we must provide solid means of resolving disputes and satisfying all parties, in order to suppress the development of resentment and spite between members, such as that which thrust the Hearth in its previous iteration into a state of disarray and disillusionment, I make the following suggestions.

Let us consider Karldom to be fundamentally permanent. Unless a member withdraws their membership voluntarily – for whatever reason – or is tried and convicted of Niðingsverk and thereby “excommunicated” from our community, they are Karl for life. It is not proper that we should consider Karldom dependent on any particular social enterprise, or any other thing which is subject to whims of the heart and high degrees of subjectivity. We are not dictators of who is or is not heathen; we may only choose either to recognize, or not, any particular individual as a Karl of Fincastali. Having done so, we must resolve ourselves to live with the choice we have made. To do otherwise is to invite ourselves to basic mistakes; and to overlook one of the most essential significances of Frith – loyalty unconditional to one’s community. Our ancestors did not drum someone out of the hamlet simply because they had difficulties in getting on with their neighbors; neither should we.

Let us consider Thralldom a fitting tool to be used in the punishment of minor “crimes” within the community of Fincastali, when there is no more suitable means for the guilty to address the grievances against them. Determining the particulars of this practice will be a standing question for the current membership to address as we move forward.

Rite of Recognition

- This is the means by which an individual is first recognized as a Karl.
- It is performed in the presence of a legitimately convened Court.
- There is also an extant Karl who “instigates” the Rite.
- First, the instigator shares the handshake of brethren-hood with the person they intend to recognize, thereby establishing them as equals and kin. This is the same handshake rite as previously established by Fincastali.
- Second, the Court Officers likewise share the handshake with the new Karl.
- Third, any other Karlar present may share the handshake if they so wish. This is neither mandatory, nor necessary.
- Fourth, when all this has been done, the Lawspeaker addresses the new Karl by title and name, and welcomes them to the Hearth.
- Any other emblem(s) of Karldom would then be presented, according to whatever has been established by Thew.

Concerning Chieftains and More

It may be noteworthy that I have not included the term 'Chieftain' in any of my proposals, which may be surprising given that I was the first to suggest openly that we should have such an office, was the first to briefly hold it, and have stood by my recommendation even through the subsequent events. This is not an oversight – rather it is my recommendation that the concept previously described as a Chieftain should be embodied by either the Lawspeaker or, in later times, the Deacon. Ultimately, I leave it to the Thing to make the final determination on the matter. There is no particular reason why the structural evolution I have detailed here should be absolute and authoritative; the Thing is always empowered to do what it thinks best for the present and future of the Hearth.

Likewise I have made no specific proposal regarding what my own role may be, going forward. Whether there is any specific recognition or consideration for founders is at the discretion of the Thing; and whether I am nominated and subsequently elected to any Office is the Thing's prerogative.

Concerning the Calendar

Taking into account all the things in these proposals, and adding further recommendations based on an assessment of what has worked in the past, and what is most historic and traditional, I offer this initial seed of general calendar guidelines:

- Late January: social gathering
- Late February: social gathering
- Very early March: Court (midsummer, nominations), and a simple offering of choice to influence the wyrd of the next quarter
- Late March: social gathering
- Very early April: Sigrblot, a major blot, given to Frey, Freyja, and others, in honor of prosperity and bounty, of those forces which shape our lives and environs, and for success and victory of our kin in whatever they undertake
- Late April: social gathering
- Very early May: Thing, opened with a minor blot to Tyr, Forseti, and the hamingja of Fincastali
- Late May: social gathering
- Very early June: Court (budget), and a simple offering of choice to influence the wyrd of the next quarter
- June 19-22: Midsummer retreat, and a minor blot in celebration of our founding day, and wishing our own blessings upon the land and its denizens, including each other
- Late July: social gathering
- Late August: social gathering
- Very early September: Court (budget, calendar, yule), and a simple offering of choice to influence the wyrd of the next quarter
- Mid to late September: Alfablót, a minor blot, held primarily in private in and around members' homes, in honor of the spirits with whom they share their living and working spaces, and to establish further Frith and communication with them
- Late September: social gathering
- Very early October: Disablót, major blot, given to Frigg, the Disir, the Norns, and to the special women of our lives, whether mothers or lovers
- Late October: social gathering

- As near to Nov 11 as possible: Helblot og Valblot, a minor blot in honor of Hel and our beloved dead, honorable veterans past and present, and lost but goodly causes
- Late November: social gathering
- Very early December: Court (calendar, yule, midsummer), and a simple offering of choice to influence the wyrd of the next quarter
- December 20/21: Yule or Jolablot, a major blot, given first to Odin and Thor, and celebrating family and fellowship, the turning of seasons, and deeper spirituality