

AFA UPDATE

A PROJECT OF THE ASATRU FOLK ASSEMBLY

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ENVIRONMENTALISTS I HAVE KNOWN

There is a misconception among some folks that anyone concerned with pollution, endangered species, the ozone layer, or the rainforest must necessarily be a latte-drinking, Birkenstock wearing, sexually ambivalent left-winger. This stereotype is commonly promoted by conservatives of the talk-radio variety, and it comes easily to the lips when one needs an instant put-down or a way to dismiss the opposition.

The only problem is, the stereotype isn't necessarily true. There are environmentalists...and then there are environmentalists.

One of the first fellows I met who was both an environmentalist and an Asatruar was from Arizona. Adamant in defense of the Earth, he was also a gun owner and an outdoorsman. Hardly a designer-coffee kind of guy; just your basic rural male with an affection for the desert.

I know another Asatruar who is also a genuine environmental activist. He's got a PhD. in biology and, except for the devotion to Nature, will never be mistaken for a globalist or a liberal. He eats meat, owns an automobile, and keeps his hair clipped short - but his devotion to endangered species and their habitats is unwavering.

The third environmentalist who comes to mind is a medical doctor living in Wyoming. He is not part of our spiritual community, but he's someone we'd like to have with us: When not treating patients, he rafts down wild rivers in obscure parts of the world. Sometimes he's the first Westerner to do so. Quite, tall, and rangy, he cares enough about animals on the verge of extinction that he hired a former South African soldier to organize an armed anti-poaching militia.

All three of these men are living proof that environmentalists are often not soft, dewy-eyed dreamers, nor do they necessarily buy into a leftist worldview. A lot of them are folks like us.

Best of all, though, was the iconoclastic Edward Abbey. I never met him, but I wish I had.

I don't imagine Ed Abbey ever called himself an environmentalist. He'd most likely say he was just a man. True enough - but a man of a most remarkable sort.

Abbey seems to have been a standard leftist in his youth, but he soon outgrew that or any other label. (He wouldn't be a rightist, either.) By the time of his death in 1989 he was notorious as a man who thought for himself and who spoke the truth as he saw it. He was vocally non-Christian, anti-authoritarian, pro-freedom, and profoundly skeptical of government. Ed Abbey urged us to oppose the Pentagon, but join the National Rifle Association. Want to be free? Don't seek your freedom in books, he'd say - go build your own house and live your life as you want.

That's not to say he was a budding Asatruar; Abbey was more like the "godless men" of the sagas, who "trusted in their own might and main." Arguments for the existence of God left him cold, and he had nothing but scorn for the Biblical religions. For Ed Abbey, the world was full of mystery - only the stupid have an answer for every question.

Toward the end of his life, Abbey drew the wrath of the liberal-minority coalition. He had already fallen out of grace with the left for attacking both capitalism and communism with equal fervor. However, it was his unkind comments about Mexican culture, and his strong stand against immigration, that put him beyond the pale of acceptable writers. Abbey's suggestion that the border between Mexico and the US be sealed and patrolled by the military was too much for the establishment's intellectuals, though it is obvious to any thinking person that an endlessly-swelling population causes ecological stress.

Abbey hated fakery of any sort, left or right, liberal or conservative, communist or capitalist, Republican or Democrat. He made a lot of enemies, but he influenced a lot of people, too.

WILLY DIED FOR OUR (ECOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL) SINS

If Ed Abbey was still around, he might find the following story a matter of interest and anger.

Thorgrun is an Asatru stalwart - a follower of the Holy Powers for many years, true to the ancestors and to the folk. Willy was Thorgrun's dog. Socially inept, occasionally embarrassing (Willy was an incorrigible crotch-sniffer), he nevertheless protected Thorgrun's home, guarded his truck and toolbox, and gave us a lot of laughs with his antics. He was a good companion and a good dog. And now he's dead.

Willy ingested a chunk of meat soaked in a powerful herbicide called paraquat. He died after several days of increasing pain as his organs shut down from the poison. Willy had found the meat along the edge of a strawberry field next to his home, and swallowed some of it before Thorgrun could shake it out of his mouth.

Willy's death caused Thorgrun to reflect that he hadn't heard the coyotes howling lately. The hawks that used to soar overhead were gone, too. Now the poisoned meat had claimed another victim, a trusting dog that had never harmed anyone.

Let me tell you about this strawberry field: Ed Abbey would hate it. It is one of those intensive mega-operations requiring lots of chemical fertilizers, tons of bug killer and loads of questionable herbicide - paraquat, to be exact. The owner spends much of his time in Mexico, and from looking at the fields, he brings half the population back with him. Mexican flags adorn the tractors and Mexican music wafts over the neat rows of plowed dirt. Immigration agents would be very unwelcome here.

Wildlife of any sort is unwelcome, too, since it might eat some of the strawberries or crap in the field...so of course the wildlife has to be poisoned. And if someone's dog gets in the way, well, that's too bad. It's only a dog, after all.

Thorgrun, as you might expect, sees it differently. He is grim and motivated to seek justice for the death of his friend. But since the local political system more and more reflects the corrupt values imported from across the border, it remains to be seen how much can be done. Thorgrun is one of the handful of "white, non-Hispanics" remaining in his town and the power shift of the recent years will not work to his advantage.

This little tragedy has it all - poisoned animals, polluted soil, a water table stressed from overuse, ethnic politics, runaway population fed by immigration, dollars over principle. It's the perfect Edward Abbey story. While it captures present-day California in microcosm, its lessons apply to us all and they're about the environment, values, and ultimately religion.

Fundamental truths are at stake here: If we have no regard for wild animals, we will lose our own sense of wildness. If pets are disposable, we turn our back on the values of loyalty and kindness. If we poison the soil, we poison our own bodies and souls. If we exploit illegal aliens to make a buck, artificially depressing wages for our own kin and crowding the land in which our grandchildren will live, we are traitors.

Our Folkway is inextricably tied up with the question of the environment. But our attitude toward the environment is in turn linked to a whole constellation of ideas and values. The battle for the Earth, for a world in which we can be free from oppressive government, for a life of dignity and meaning - all these are part of the same thing and they are all fundamentally spiritual.

We have a duty to protect the natural world, to oppose those who would destroy it, and to pass it on unsullied to our progeny. Remember Willy and the countless other victims of the Earth-rapers.

Ed Abbey would be involved, and so should we.

UPDATE ON "ODIN LIVES!" RADIO

Chris, the driving force behind the "Odin Lives!" radio show, called us the other day to share the latest news. Thanks to help from Dave Haxton, this radio outreach is getting ready to broadcast online seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day! We'll provide more information as it becomes available.

For information on programs, times, and how to listen in, go to <http://www.odinlives.org/index.html>.

THE ODIN BROTHERHOOD IS NOW AVAILABLE!

We have a stock of Dr. Mark Mirabello's book, The Odin Brotherhood. They're available for \$20 plus \$3.95 postage and handling (California residents, add 7.25% sales tax). Information on this and other new products will be up on the web site shortly.

IMPORTANT DATES

April 15 - Sumarsdag/Sigrblot. This was the first day of summer in the Icelandic calendar. It falls on the Thursday between the 9th and 15th of April, about the same time of year as the annual sacrifice to Odin for success in the upcoming raiding season. Welcome the warm months, and make an offering to the Father of Victory for triumph in your personal struggles!

April 30 - Walburg. This Germanic Goddess safeguards the dead heroes who sleep in the burial mound, and harbors deeds yet to bear fruit. Pour a libation to the bold ones awaiting rebirth, and think on how your own acts will live after you.

May 1 - From the gloom of Walburg we enter the sunshine of May Day. Think on Freya, take a walk in the forest or send flowers to a friend. Make love outdoors!

Hail the Holy Ones!

Hail the AFA!

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Next update April 21st!