

THE



RUNESTONE



THE RUNESTONE is a journal of the ancient, yet ever new, religion known as Odinism or Ásatrú. It is dedicated to that religion and to the values of courage, freedom, and vitality which are associated with it.

THE RUNESTONE is the official journal of the Ásatrú Free Assembly and is published quarterly. Subscriptions are \$5 per year in the U.S. and Canada, and \$6 per year overseas (airmail). Write to Ásatrú Free Assembly, 3400 Village Avenue, Denair, CA 95316. Please make checks payable to the Ásatrú Free Assembly.

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November 17 is the DEADLINE for the Winter issue.

Calendar

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

September 22 - This is the festival day of Winter Finding, celebrated at the Autumnal Equinox. Day and night are of equal length now and we continue the chilling path to Júl, or the Winter Solstice. In our tradition it is in honor of Freya. The actual Equinox is at 10:05 pm EST, this year.

October 8 - Today is a Day of Remembrance in honor of Erik the Red. Everyone remembers his son Leif, who discovered America, but the old sire himself is much neglected. Erik clung to the religion of his ancestors despite the defection of his son and the conversion of his wife, who then refused to live with her heathen husband. Nevertheless, he allowed her to build a small church in the Greenland colony—as long as it was so situated that he could not see it from the house! Praise Thor for such men!

October 9 - Leif Erikson Day, a secular holiday in the United States declared by President Johnson in the mid 1960's. Some cities have celebrations on Scandinavian themes on this day, in which Odinists are encouraged to participate.

October 11 - Winter Nights marked the beginning of winter in the old Icelandic calendar, and always falls on the Saturday between October 11-17. Winter Nights celebrates the bounty of the harvest and is held in honor of the goddess Freya and her subsidiary spirits called, collectively, the *dfsir*. These beings are responsible for fertility and growth of living things.

October 13 - Variouslly called Samhain or Halloween, this is an ancient harvest festival with overtones of somberness, of an awareness of the departed dead. As Nature slips deeper into winter, the chill in the air rubs off on our souls while we await the joy of Júl and conserve our resources, spiritual and physical, awaiting renewal. In the revived Vanir-faith, we call this festival *Vanadis*, after the goddess Freya, upon whose conserving and preserving aspect we call.

November 11 - Feast of the Einherjar, when we honor those dead kinsmen who sacrificed their lives for their family and tribe. The Einherjar, the "chosen ones," are the heroes who feast in Odin's Hall, having been carried there by the valkyries.

Winter Nights Festival

Rituals • Feast

Brew • Music

(Musicians welcome)

Honoring the Goddess
Freya & the Disir

(Norse fertility spirits)

Saturday, October 10

10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at

Willow Camp

Tilden Regional Park

(South Park Drive between Shasta Rd. & Grizzly Peak Blvd.)

Advance Tickets ~ \$7 per person. On-site admission ~ \$10.

(Children under 12 FREE)

Sponsored by:

Asatru Free Assembly, 3400 Village Ave., Denair, CA 95316



Althing 1981

The second Althing of the Ásatrú Free Assembly was held on the feast of Freyfaxi, August 28-31. Participants came from as far away as Canada, Texas, Montana, and Connecticut to be with us - a compliment of the highest order! One of our brothers provided an iron spit on which we roasted a whole pig. The same kinsman brought a hot tub which, for all his best efforts, leaked. Next time we'll be ready! Another brother put in many hours on our Viking tent, complete with elaborately carved poles and dragon heads. As this was a trial run, there were technical problems, but we'll get them ironed out. The brilliant red, white, and black cover, complete with ravens sewn on the sides, will add lots of color to our future endeavors.

Last Althing saw few rituals. Things were different this time, with blots in honor of Odin and the Einherjar, and in praise to Frey, whose feast this was. Tyr was invoked as Thing-God. David and Prudence did a new moon ritual that inspired us all and gave us further insight into ritual possibilities.

Discussions were held on the role of Wicca and the Vanir, and on the runes. Guilds were organized - see elsewhere in this issue for more on that - and women's and men's mysteries met to serve their respective interests.

A Declaration of Purpose for the Ásatrú Free Assembly was adopted, with the help of an innovative idea from David James. Last but far from least, a dozen new members were sworn into the Assembly and received a special certificate commemorating the event.

We did a lot. We learned a lot. And next year we're going to apply all that learning and momentum to Althing Three. Let's see YOU there!

SPECIAL NEWS

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE — Despite a busy Althing, one matter which didn't get successfully resolved was the selection of a constitution for the Ásatrú Free Assembly. Therefore, any *bona fide* AFA members who would like to take part in the drafting of such a constitution are invited to contact Sigi "Professor" Harbard, Box 1308, 2000 Center Street, Berkeley CA 94704. Deadline for first contact is November 11th.

ARTS AND CRAFTS? — Our readers who have skills in arts or crafts, and who would like to put those skills to work for their financial benefit and that of the AFA, are invited to contact us. The reason? We are planning to market Odinist-oriented products both by mail and by sale in shops or at street-vending tables. You'd be paid for your products, and the AFA would get a share for marketing it. If you're interested, write a letter telling us about your Ásatrú-related product and send it to *The Runestone*, ATTN: Arts & Crafts.

WOTAN'S WARRIORS — This new group is "committed to the serious task of promoting and supporting the revival of Ásatrú in America." Dedicated to Wotan and Freya, Wotan's Warriors stresses Ásatrú as a way of life — one that they believe is best represented in the world today by the biker lifestyle (although non-bikers are also welcome as members). Having spent some time with the founder of this group, Sigi "Professor" Harbard, we can highly recommend them to our readers — and, in fact, we suspect they may form a unifying link with other Odinist groups. Their address is Box 1308, 2000 Center St., Berkeley, CA 94704.

Martial Arts Guild

Dedicated to the cause of vitalizing and strengthening our people, a new guild is being formed. This guild is based on the idea that in order for us to live in the Teutonic spirit and defend ourselves from those that wish us harm, we must learn those ways that strengthen our bodies and wills and that teach us how to fight and win.

The means the new guild will use to accomplish these things are systems of fighting and exercise that will develop the Odinst into a swift, fierce and efficient warrior, well able to protect himself and those he loves. The style itself will be highly individualized; men differ in temperament and physical type and because of this each warrior will adopt those methods which suit him best. Nevertheless, because of the exuberance of our people, many of the training methods will be of an athletic but fun nature, founded on the warrior-games of our fathers. Our less-strong and aged will find something in the style for them, as they can learn the methods that require less physical power to execute.

A main focus of the guild will be to develop the uses of common weapons such as the knife and club into an art. As the guild develops and grows, it will also explore the realm of group combat, both unarmed and with weapons, as one day this type of confrontation may be commonplace. The emphasis, then, is on functionality. For spiritual reasons, however, we will learn the methods of combat with sword, spear, and ax; training with these weapons is fine exercise also.

The real value of this project is actually of a deeper nature. Our history is filled with tales of mighty and courageous heroes that possessed the strength of giants and wills of iron. With time and effort we may well learn to tap the inner forces that enable one to perform heroic deeds. This power cannot be gone; it rather lies dormant.

This guild has tremendous potential in more than one area. You are invited to join. Send inquiries to:

Gregory Steiner
1120 Doreen #1
Waterloo, Iowa 50701

NOTICE!

In order to discover more about the many realities of fighting, I would like to ask for descriptions of close-combat situations that have been witnessed or experienced. The information I seek concerns the setting, cause, numbers of combatants and relative sizes, weapons used if any, "styles" of the fighters, a description of any verbal or non-verbal intimidation, which of the combatants emerged victorious, and descriptions of any particularly useful techniques. Feel free to add any other information. If you can spare some time, please write! Answers to these questions will be valuable!



Skaldic Guild

I, would be skald Thunarr,
while it docks in Thor's rage -
Spittle the gods did send,
my mouth-sword's edge sharpness

The elder skills I lack,
which the great skalds possessed -
Kenning strewn these verses,
with their wordcraft flood me -

the dwarfs' fair ship do greet
its hoard will be my treat.
verses I must not waste -
when Kvasir's brew I taste.

though fine mead is my drink,
from kings they would not shrink.
spittle the gods did send,
high tide will not soon end.

Fellow poets in the AFA:

The above verses are samples of my attempts at skaldic verse. As you can see, they are far from perfection. At present I am concentrating my efforts on how to develop proper kennings. Kennings are very much like metaphors, but are not used as mere description. Kennings are used as substitutions for nouns and basic words.

Perhaps someone with greater knowledge of skaldic verse would find errors in my statement about kennings. I welcome any and all comments and corrections.

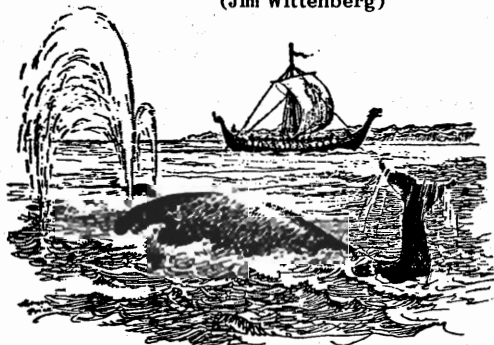
I invite all poets in the AFA, both those who have training in skald-craft and those who want to learn, to join me in forming a guild dedicated to reviving and revitalizing this ancient Norse art form.

GOALS - Besides bringing skaldic verse into the sphere of twentieth century poets, we need to educate a potential audience among the non-poets in the AFA. This would be greatly aided by encouraging study of Norse myths and folklore.

Skaldcraft was an art form admired by both common folk and kings. Throughout the Northlands skalds were given audience and respect around campfires and in banquet halls.

Again I call all poets in the AFA to join me in forming a guild of skalds. Our endeavor will be both artistic and spiritual.

Odin Lives!
Thunarr Radbodsson
(Jim Wittenberg)



(For further information, write to *The Runestone*, ATTN: Skaldic Guild.)

GUILD NEWS

Our recent decision to form guilds within the AFA has been a fruitful one. In this issue we have letters from the leaders of the skaldic guild and the martial arts guild, describing their function and asking for the participation of interested people. There are several other guilds, though, which we'd like to bring to your attention —

Women's Guild - One of the best things happening right now in the AFA is the increasing involvement of women. To keep this trend going, we've formed a guild to serve the special interests of women in Ásatrú. Interested women may write *The Runestone*, ATTN: Women's Guild, for information.

Brewing Guild - The making of mead and other fine potables has both mundane and spiritual implications. If you'd like to brew your own or to follow the exploits of those who do, you'd like this guild. Contact *The Runestone*, ATTN: Brewing Guild, for details.

Drama Guild - A fledgling guild dedicated to the dramatic arts as applied to our religion. Possible fields of investigation include the production of mythological skits, historic plays dealing with the Viking Age, and the eventual production of original works. Send inquiries to *The Runestone*, ATTN: Drama Guild.

Guilds are urged to have some sort of written communication between their members to allow the sharing of ideas. This may be as simple as a Xeroxed 3-page newsletter mailed out a few times a year, or as sophisticated as members wish. The guild master may assess modest dues to cover this expense.

For example, the brewing guild might publish recipes for mead and other drinks, discuss the results of their experiments, and muse upon the religious and philosophical aspects of the art. Also, they'd brew a lot of mead to enhance our rituals and our gatherings —

The guilds mentioned above are just the beginning. The possibilities, if not endless, are certainly great. How about a survivalist guild, or a sky-diving guild, or a science fiction or music or nudist or space exploration guild? What guild would YOU like to start?

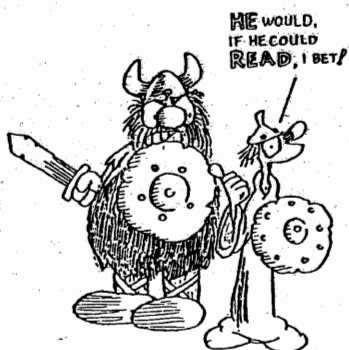


What's Happening In....

the East Bay — Ostviken, the AFA kindred in the East San Francisco Bay Area, met on September 19th and initiated a new member. Allsherjargodi McNallen presented Ostviken with a new banner and films of the Althing were shown. Gerald, who just returned from a trip to Sweden, gave a report on Odinst contacts there. Plans were made to attend the Leif Erikson Day celebration in San Francisco and the Highland Games in Santa Rosa, and plans were finalized for the Winter Nights festival in October, in honor of Freya (see elsewhere in this issue for details!)

WHAT KIND OF MAN READS *Vikingstaff*?

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Japman, with apologies to Dik Browne

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Queen Sigrith

Translated and edited by Jeffrey R. Redmond from *The Saga of Olaf Trygvason in Heimskringla*, by Snorri Sturluson. (Icelandic, c.1230)

This is a story of the fierce and independent Viking woman, Sigrith. As Queen of Sweden she was often visited by kings from other lands, who wanted to marry her, and so gain control of her domain. This tale reflects the true spirit of Germanic woman, and her shrewdness in dealing with outside intervention.

QUEEN SIGRITH (c.995)

Harald of Grenland was the King of the Westfold district. He married Asta, the daughter of Guthbrand Knob. One summer, when Harald of Grenland had gone on a raiding voyage in the east to gain lands, he came to Sweden. At that time Olaf the Swede was the King there. He was the son of King Eirik the Victorious and Sigrith, a daughter of Forest Tosti. Sigrith was a widow then, and she owned many large estates in Sweden. Now when she heard that Harald of Grenland, her foster brother, had come ashore not far off, she sent out messengers to him, and invited him to a feast. He did not delay, and he came with a large group of men.

They were well entertained there. The King and the Queen sat in the high seat and drank together in the evening, and all of his men were well entertained. In the evening, when the King looked for his bed, he found it covered with blankets of costly material and made up with sheets of valuable cloth. There were few men in those rooms. And when the King had undressed and was in bed, the Queen came to him. She herself poured out a cup for him, and wanted him to drink much, and was very gracious to him. The King was very drunk, and so was she, and the Queen also laid down with him.

Sigrith was a very clever woman, and she was prophetic about many things. Again in the next morning, there was entertainment. But then it was as it usually is when men have drunk too much, that on the day after most of them go slowly in the drinking. But the Queen was happy, and she and the King talked with one another.

She said, "I value my possessions and the domain that I have here in Sweden no less than you do your kingdom and your possessions in Norway." The King became unhappy with her words. He became unfriendly about everything, and made ready to depart in a very angry mood. But the Queen was in a very happy mood, and she said farewell to him and gave him fine parting gifts.

In the next autumn, Harald went back to Norway, and he was still unhappy. When summer came, he again sailed into the Baltic Sea with his ships. He sailed to Sweden, and he sent out a message to Queen Sigrith that he once again wanted to see her. She rode down to the coast to meet with him, and they spoke together. He soon spoke his real purpose.

He asked her, "Will you marry me?"

She replied, "You are not sincere in proposing that, because you are well married and you should be well satisfied!"

Harald said, "Asta is certainly a good and worthy woman, but she is not as highborn as I am!"

Sigrith said, "It may be that you are more noble born than she is, but I think that both of your good fortunes are because of her!"

Not many other words were spoken between them before the Queen rode away. King Harald stayed behind in an unhappy mood. He prepared to ride inland to meet with Queen Sigrith one more time. Many of his men counseled against doing that, but he went on anyways, along with a large group of men, and came to the estate of the Queen.

That same evening another king came there. He was Vissavald, from Russia in the east. He came also to ask for her in marriage. Both kings and their men were housed in an old and large hall, which was furnished in the same way. A large amount of drink was served there in the evening. It was strong and everyone became very drunk, and both the bodyguards and the watchmen outside fell asleep. Then Queen Sigrith had them attacked in the night with fire and sword. The hall was burned down, along with the men inside, and those who escaped were killed.

Sigrith said, "In this way I am going to end these little kings' habits of visiting me to ask for me in marriage!"

In later times she was called Sigrith the Haughty.

Despite this, a few years later the Christian King Olaf Tryggvason of all of Norway decided to try to woo Sigrith.

Queen Sigrith lived at her estates. That winter messengers went out between King Olaf and Queen Sigrith, and by them King Olaf asked for the hand of Queen Sigrith. She took the suit well, and the marriage was agreed upon. Then King Olaf sent Queen Sigrith the large gold ring bracelet that he had taken from the temple gate at Hlathir (in western Norway). It was thought to be a great possession. Their meeting to plan for the wedding was to be in the next spring, at the Gautelf river border.

Now, the ring bracelet that King Olaf had sent to Queen Sigrith was greatly prized by everyone. There were two smiths with the Queen who were brothers. And they both held the ring bracelet in their hands, and weighed it, and spoke together in secret. The Queen had them sent to her.

She asked them, "Why do you laugh in your sleeves about the ring bracelet?" They would not tell her.

Then she commanded, "You will surely tell me what you have noticed!"

They said, "The ring bracelet is a fake!"

Then she had the ring bracelet broken in half, and there was copper to be seen inside of it. Then the Queen was very angry.

She exclaimed, "Olaf would trick me in more things than this!"

Early in the spring, King Olaf went east to Konungahella for the meeting with Queen Sigrith. And when they met they talked of what had been begun in the winter, that they were to marry. And the matter went along very well.

Then King Olaf said, "Sigrith should become baptized and accept the true faith!"

She replied, "I do not wish to abandon the religion that I have had, and my kinsmen before me. But I will not object to your belief in the god that you prefer."

Then King Olaf became greatly angered, and he spoke in haste.

He said, "Why should I desire you, heathen bitch?!" And he slapped her across the face with the glove that he held in his hand. At this he got up, and she did also.

Then Sigrith said, "This might very well be your death!"

On that they parted. The King went back north to Vik, and the Queen went back east to Sweden.

Sigrith was the widow of King Eirik the Victorious, and the mother of King Olaf of Sweden. She killed King Harald the Fox of Norway, in the year 995,

when he visited her for a similar proposal. King Olaf of Norway was defeated in a great naval battle in Denmark, in the year 1000, by the combined forces of King Olaf of Sweden and Earl Eirik, the son of Earl Hakon of Norway, and of King Sveinn of Denmark. Sveinn had finally been the one who married Sigrith, and Eirik had married Svein's daughter, Gytha, in the year 997, to formalize an alliance. The war upon Olaf of Norway was mainly Sigrith's idea. Olaf of Norway killed himself by jumping overboard, after all the men on his ships had been killed, and Queen Sigrith got her revenge. Olaf was eventually succeeded in 1015 by his cousin, Olaf Haraldsson, called the Holy, who was another descendant of King Harald Fairhaired. He continued the Christianization program of his predecessor, until his death at the battle of Stiklestath on July 29, 1030. He was an unpopular ruler, and was ousted and killed by his own people, but after his death he became a saint and a national hero through a continued Church propagandea campaign. Both Norway and Denmark remained Christian nations. King Olaf of Sweden, unlike his fierce mother, became a Christian, but didn't have the forcible conversion programs as in Norway and Denmark.

Editor's note — As this article was being prepared for publication, the newspaper carried a story about a woman in Richardson, Texas, who routed two armed would-be rapists from her motel room. The woman was wounded and her attackers had already badly knifed her husband, but she fought back with — of all things — an ice bucket. Queen Sigrith would be proud.

THOR'S HAMMER



THOR'S HAMMER

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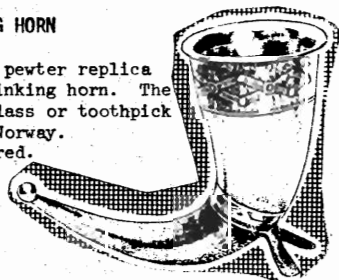
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BOOKS

THE RESURRECTION OF ARISTOCRACY

by R. C. Evans

Those who feel that modern industrial society is a rotten hulk that deserves to fall in order that it may be replaced by a more vital, more aristocratic system, have a friend in R. C. Evans.

This is not the work of a polished author; his style requires studied attention in many places and his habit of writing frequently incomplete sentences will rapidly drive a strict grammarian mad — but this does not obscure the fact that he has written an important book about an important (and highly unpopular) idea, namely, the superiority of aristocracy.

In reading this volume I found myself in cheering agreement with Mr. Evans' criticism of modern society. He exposes the current system as one that is materialistic, rootless, and devoid of the passions which typify an age of greatness. Our lack of contact with nature is a gross error which may lead to planetary suicide, and the two "opposing" systems of communism and liberal-democratic "capitalism" are resolved into nothing more than alternative ways of managing a centralized industrial nation-state.

Evans calls for, and predicts, a return to aristocracy, even to feudalism, when the present monster collapses from its own poisons. Such a scenario is not unbelievable, and the author makes some powerful points in favor of a social system of Nietzschean flavor, based on the natural superiority of a vigorous, powerful elite over the common herd. Many Odinists would support him thus far.

His error, in my estimation, lies in the fact that he neglects the history of the Northern peoples before the coming of Christianity, and takes as his models only 1) Mediterranean aristocracies such as Athens, Rome, and Sparta and 2) medieval Europe under the influence of Christianity. Had he examined the native genius of our people, free from external control, he would have found an example of a Folk-community which combined the best features of democracy and aristocracy. This indigenous system was successful for thousands of years and cannot be lightly brushed aside.

Despite this criticism, *The Resurrection of Aristocracy* is a thought-provoking volume with much to offer those concerned about future social forms. It is 311 pages long and can be had for \$12.50 from Theo Gaus, LTD, Brooklyn, NY.

SONGS OF SAXON WITCHCRAFT

by Raymond Buckland

Anyone interested in Seax-Wica, in Wicca generally, or in the problem of developing a musical culture for a Pagan religion will find this slim volume valuable. In it, Mr. Buckland has assembled twenty songs, all directly related to Seax-Wica. This material cannot help but inspire those of us who honor Woden and Freya with other rites, and it will certainly help us to emulate the Seax-Wicans by composing equivalent works of our own.

So what is Seax-Wica? For those who don't follow such things, Seax-Wica is a Saxon form of Wicca, or "witchcraft" (a term that evokes varied responses from people, and which has helped hobble Wiccan progress in general).

Songs of Saxon Witchcraft (18 pages) sells for \$4.95, and is published by Bell, Book and Candle of the Old Dominion, P.O. Box 5149, Virginia Beach, VA 23455.

The Changing of the (Varangian) Guard

When we started the Varangian Guard almost two years ago, that group was to be a brotherhood expressing the spiritual aspect of the warrior's life. Especially urged to join were veterans, men still on active duty, or those interested in the way of the warrior from a practicing standpoint.

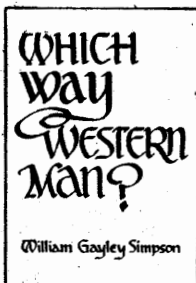
All these people are STILL urged to join the Varangian Guard. But the passage of time and the gaining of wisdom have broadened our perspective, and now we wish to attract men of still another sort — the man who has no military training, and who has no plan of joining the military, but who is determined to defend his loved ones and himself to the death should the need arise. Do not these too need the skills and attitudes of the warrior? Do not they too have need of the camaraderie of the war band, of the hunt, of the mysteries of the male lodge?

Ex-paratroopers and Rangers, despair not! By no means will the standards of the Varangian Guard be lowered. In fact, our ranks have always been open to those who guard home and kin, though many of them seem not to have realized it. We summon them to us now — all those of warrior spirit, who feel their vitality being sapped by a modern world which would weaken them with meekness and androgeny.

I suppose this is as good a place as any to reiterate that the Varangian Guard is NOT a paramilitary group. We have no caches of illegal weaponry, no hit lists for terror purposes. Far from glorifying in indiscriminate violence, we seek to explore the purified spirituality of the warrior. That this spirituality should not perish is one of the aims of the Varangian Guard.

* * * * *

In penning the words above, the thought has come to me — will there be a women's warrior sisterhood, built on the mystique of the shield-may, of the valkyrie? Sisters of Brynhild, are you there? We welcome the formation of your ranks...



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— Irv Stauson —

The story of the ancient faith of northern Europe and its re-birth in modern times. The book explains the customs and attitudes of the worshippers of Thor and Odin from ancient times to the present. Many of the topics were written by Odinists who were experts on the history and customs of their religion. Considered are the various legends of origin of Odin, Thor, and the whole pantheon of northern gods. The old Teutonic values of life are also discussed as well as the concept of the Sky God and the Life Force. Thoroughly researched and documented, it takes up where 'The Hammer of the North', by 'Magnusson, or 'Pagan Scandinavia', by Davidson, leaves off. 180 pages, 17 illus. 8½"x11", 2nd printing, incorp. 'Foundations of Odinism'

Books In Brief

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Mead Making

by Jace Crouch

The making and drinking of mead is one of the oldest pleasures of our Indo-European ancestors. Fermented or otherwise, mead has been a drink of these people since time immemorial. It was not only a beverage of the Teutons, but also of the Greeks, the Russians, and the Aryas. Mead is most often associated with the Teutons, however, particularly with the Scandinavians of the Viking Age. For this reason, as well as for the pleasures of the drink itself, mead is a fitting throat-wetter for the modern-day Odinist.

There is a debate these days as to whether or not we Odinists should use alcohol. Although I am firmly on the side of those who toss down a jar now and then, I recognize that those who abstain do so out of firm, sober conviction. They ought not be deprived of the healthful pleasures of Kvasir's Blood, however, and it is hoped that this writing will tend to their interests, as well as those of we "juicers." Accordingly, I will discuss the making of meads that are non-alcoholic, as well as those that are moderate and strong in their alcohol content.

Mead is perhaps the simplest beverage of any to prepare save water itself. The only essential ingredients are honey and water. The honey used can be of any sort: clover, buckwheat, wildflower, tupelo, orange blossom, what have you. All of these honeys make fine meads, and are worth trying at one time or another. Variety may well be a spice of life, but it is not the substance: I remain convinced that the best mead-making honeys are clover or tupelo, preferably from a bee-keeper near your home. A mead made from these honeys will not only be more pleasing over the long run, but also will be more healthful. Honey that comes from nearby contains many of the same local elements that we live and breathe in every day. Using it, we come closer to nature in a very immediate way.

Water should also be paid attention to. Any water will do, certainly, but some are better than others. I prefer a heavy, non-sparkling mineral water from a local spring. This is easy to obtain in central Michigan, where I live, but I have also brewed mead from both well water and city tap water. If you do use city water, let it set a couple of days for the chlorine to bubble out, and for the dreck to settle to the bottom. If you must use a name-brand bottled water, do so, but be prepared to join the ranks of the terminally mellow.

non-alcoholic mead

The basic recipe for any mead is to use 3-4 pounds of honey (to taste), and enough water to make one gallon of liquid. Bring the mixture to a boil on the stove (otherwise you will be stirring it every day for a century or so), skim off the top of the mead, let it cool, and then drink it. Non-alcoholic mead must be kept in a cooler, otherwise it will ferment: honey mixed with water ferments naturally.

The mead may be drunk as is, or it may be lightly flavored. The most reliable way to flavor the mead is to include the berries, spices, or whatever in the boiling process. After cooling, strain the mead, thus removing any solid residue — or use a boiling bag. The Teutons usually flavored their mead with cranberries, although wormwood and woodruff were used in the later Middle Ages. Other flavorings include angelica, hops, orange peel, lemon peel, cinnamon, nutmeg, or cider. The flavorings should be somewhat bitter, so as to counteract the sweetness of the honey. I once made an excellent mead using the petals of spring cowslips (trillium): a handful or so to a gallon of mead.

fermented mead

For fermented mead, prepare the basic or flavored mead as described above, pour it into a crock, barrel, or plastic pail, cover it with cheese cloth, and set it in a warm place until it stops fermenting (about 30 days). Mead ferments naturally, and no yeast is really needed. I usually add yeast, however, as it increases both the fermentation rate and the alcohol content. Use about one teaspoon of yeast per gallon of mead. Bakers yeast will work, but it will give the mead a bread-like taste, and there will be a lot of sediment. Winemaking yeast is best; it adds little taste, makes for a higher alcohol content, and leaves a solid sediment that is easily removed.

Mead does not need to be placed under a fermentation lock, inasmuch as it does not oxidize like wine or cider (unless you add lots of cider to it, of course). Any open-mouthed non-metallic container will do, simply cover it with cheese cloth to keep out dust and bugs. The mead can be bottled after fermentation like wine or beer. I prefer to use beer bottles. They are easy to obtain, and it is a whole lot easier to cap them than to drive in corks (caps and cappers are available at most hardware stores). The mead is best when aged for a month or so, and served chilled.

fortified mead

When made as described above, fermented mead will have an alcohol content similar to wine. That will vary according to whether or not yeast was used, according to the kind of yeast, and according to the length of fermentation. There is nothing wrong with a mead of moderate alcohol content; it is the mead I drink the most of. The mead may be easily fortified, however, and the alcohol content doubled. The mead then becomes much richer, and more of a liqueur. This is accomplished through freezing, and it is here that we northern barbarians have the edge.

Put the finished mead outdoors, in a wide-mouthed container, on a very cold night. Much of the water will freeze, concentrating the good stuff. The ice will be soft comb ice, formed on the top, bottom, and sides of the vessel, leaving a small well of liquid in the middle. Dip this out, and strain it through a wire screen. The droplets caught in the ice can be recovered by straining that as well. The operation is best performed within one hour of sunrise on December 21st. To prevent interference by neighbors (such as fellow Odinists hankering for a taste of Yule mead), bare your head, face the risen sun, and reverently pronounce the following charm:

Medufaeder Starcaper	(Father of the Mead, Trader of Tales,
Helpe þinum sunu.	Help your son.
Waeter wanab,	The water lessened,
Gast godiaþ,	The spirit enriched,
Ceals cilliaþ,	Chilled by the cold,
Woden, hu wod is	Woden, as wild as the moon
Mon se þe medu wolde macian.	I would make the mead.)

(Since this is an Anglo-Saxon charm, and not a modern English one, I believe that it will only be valid if pronounced in Anglo-Saxon.)

Those of you in Florida, California, or other unfortunate places may use deep freezers, as I do in summer.

Mead is easily made, whether alcoholic or not, as is shown above. Mead is even easier drunk. When drunk to excess, mead will zap you just as badly as does any other alcoholic potable. When properly drunk, however, the "elevation" that mead imparts is fine indeed. Even in excess, mead is pleasant (aside from a burning desire to sack a local convent and rape the nuns). Yet

you should always keep the Havamal in mind:

Spurn not the mead horn, yet drink with good judgement:
Speak nobly or not at all;
Let no man rebuke you for being a fool,
The wise man wends to bed soon.

Odinism is certainly much more than mead-drinking, spell-chanting, and rapine; we all know that. Yet a jar of mead now and again, and perhaps a charm or two (without the rapine) to raise the level of the occasion is not amiss. Egil Skallagrimson would approve. Skoal!

Editor's note — This article is all the more relevant since we are forming a brewing guild to pursue such matters. See the special section on guilds in this issue for details.

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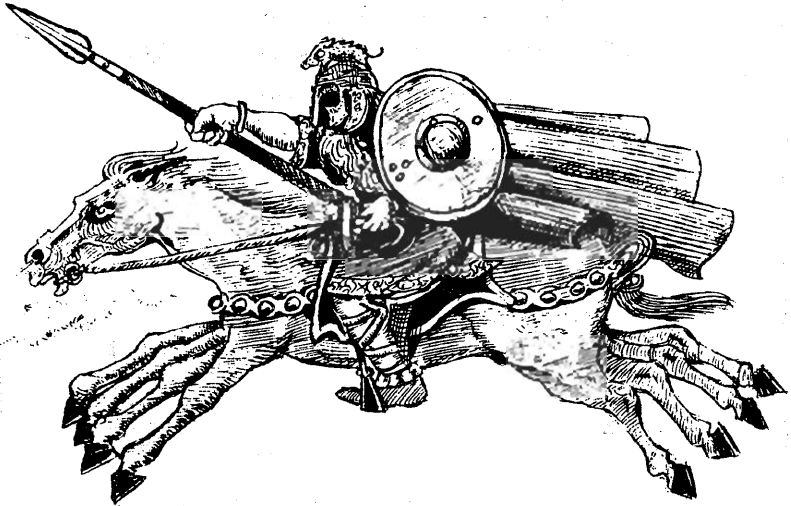
A God's Redemption

"Not in vain was I," whispered All-Father,
Holy blood mingling with crazed wolf's lather.

Odin sweating by the well of Mimir --
His famed steed stamps the fern, fear in its eyes,
World Tree trembles, sheds silver leaves dew-teared,
Cleft, the Rainbow Bridge -- Odin! beneath lies
Thy pain-pledged eye -- Is it for this thou hast
Sung? Hark! The warning blast still routes thy brain.
Wake! 'Tis come, the dread day that witch spells cast
Foretold -- aye, as thou art come. But what bane
Shall hail thee? Kneelest thou for this to seek --
Thy future? Or winning counsel to save
A world born of thy and thy brothers' bleak
Strokes? Thou smilest... What image stills the wave?
Thy lost son alive! Earth reborn! Both, fair....
Men prosper, Elf-Candle's child kissing air.

"I shall never die!" shouts fierce All-Father,
As battle-foes on the broad plain gather.

Mark Anderson
Partridge Hill Road
Charlton, MA 01507



Double Standard on Prejudice?

The Berkeley Area Interfaith Council, on which the AFA is represented, recently announced an on-going project designed to aid the victims of repression in American society—defined by BAIC as Blacks, Jews, and gays.

Seeing this as an ideal opportunity to make a statement about repression and racism directed at our people, the following letter was sent to the BAIC's director:

August 15, 1981

Dear Mr. Shive,

BAIC's decision to make the "Freedom to Be" rally an ongoing concern prompts us to make a novel proposal. Rather than limiting the scope of concern to groups more or less commonly defined as minorities, why not broaden it to include people of Northern European descent?

Unnecessary? Not at all. Bear with me while I enumerate a few examples:

Recently, a major paperback company published a book centered on the proposition that "...racism itself is a predisposition of but one race of mankind - the white race...Nuclear war, environmental pollution, resource rape...all are the result of peculiarly Caucasoid behavior, Caucasoid values, Caucasoid psychology. There is no way to avoid the truth. The problem with the world is white men."

Sepia magazine recently published an article proclaiming the genetic superiority of Blacks.

Consider the implications of popular songs with lyrics like "Play that funky music, white boy, play that funky music till you die." Or with titles like "Dirty White Boy."

I once was handed a flyer on the U. C. Berkeley campus which consistently capitalized the word Black, while always spelling White with lower case.

The list could go on and on (Need I even mention the Zebra killings, or other anti-White gangs, conveniently unreported in the national press?). When combined with the fact that Whites are a tiny minority worldwide, and that we will soon be a minority in California, the message is clear—racism can be directed, and often is directed, against those of us of Northern European ancestry.

I hasten to add that this letter is prompted not by any sort of totalitarian sympathies, nor by intent to attack any other racial group. Our motivation is the sincere belief, rooted in our faith, that we too have a right to existence, to self-determination, and to pride in our heritage.

Please consider our proposal. We will be only too happy to take part in future rallies and events so that we can speak in defense of our beleaguered and much maligned people.

Sincerely yours,

/s/Stephen A. McNallen
Allsherjargothi, AFA

To date, no reply has been received. The matter has been turned over to the Committee on Odinist Social Concerns, which will continue to seek a just resolution of the situation.



ÁSATRÚ FREE ASSEMBLY
DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

- The promotion, support, development, and dissemination of the religion of Ásatrú;
- The preservation of the cultural and biological integrity of the People of the North (typified by the Celtic, Germanic and Scandinavian peoples), and the furtherance of their continuing evolution;
- The issuance of a call to all of our brothers and sisters of the People of the North to return to this, their native religion and way of life;
- The restoration of community, the banishment of alienation, and the establishment of natural and just relations among our people;
- The pursuit of harmonious relations among our brothers and sisters of the People of the North, regardless of the nation of their birth, and the avoidance of fraternal wars whenever possible;
- The promotion of diversity among the peoples and cultures of Earth, in opposition to global monoculture;
- The fostering in our people of a deep love of freedom and a hatred of all forms of tyranny;
- The use of science and technology to promote the well-being of our people, but in conjunction with the protection of, and the harmonious working with, the natural environment in which we live;
- The exploration of the universe, in keeping with the adventurous imperatives of our kind;
- And the affirmation of the eternal struggle and strife of life, the welcoming of that strife as a challenge, the living of life wholly and with joy, and the facing of eternity with courage.

Letters

Dear Folks,

...I have a Norse and Germanic background. Recently I have moved to New York State. If you know of other pagans near N.Y. City, please tell me how I can meet them.

Respectfully,
Estar
180 The South Mountain Rd.
New City, NY 10956

Dear Friends at Ásatrú,

I have been reading *The Runestone* for the past year, and my interest in the ancient Norse religion and culture has greatly expanded. I enclose my \$5.00 for renewal. I feel somewhat compelled to return to the ways of my Germanic forefathers. Unfortunately, I am having some difficulty in understanding the religion of Ásatrú clearly. This is further compounded by the fact that I know of no one else who lives in my region who practices Ásatrú. Could you possibly help me to obtain some local or national correspondence with either someone or some group? I would greatly appreciate any help.

Sincerely,
Mike Shults
81 Carlisle Dr.
Jackson, TN 38301

EDITOR — Mike, I know we have several subscribers in your state; maybe some of them will contact you. If we can find several of you relatively close together, maybe we can even get a kindred going up your way!



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Dear Steve,

.....I'm enclosing a xerox that may be of interest from a little town I passed through over in Iowa. Superficially, it looked like any other little mid-west burg. But who knows... (There's also an Odin, Illinois, as you may know. An unusual incident occurred there back in '76, when a giant "big bird" was terrorizing the region. The last known appearance of the bird(s), which earlier had tried to fly off with a boy near Lincoln, was in Odin.)

All good wishes,

B.



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