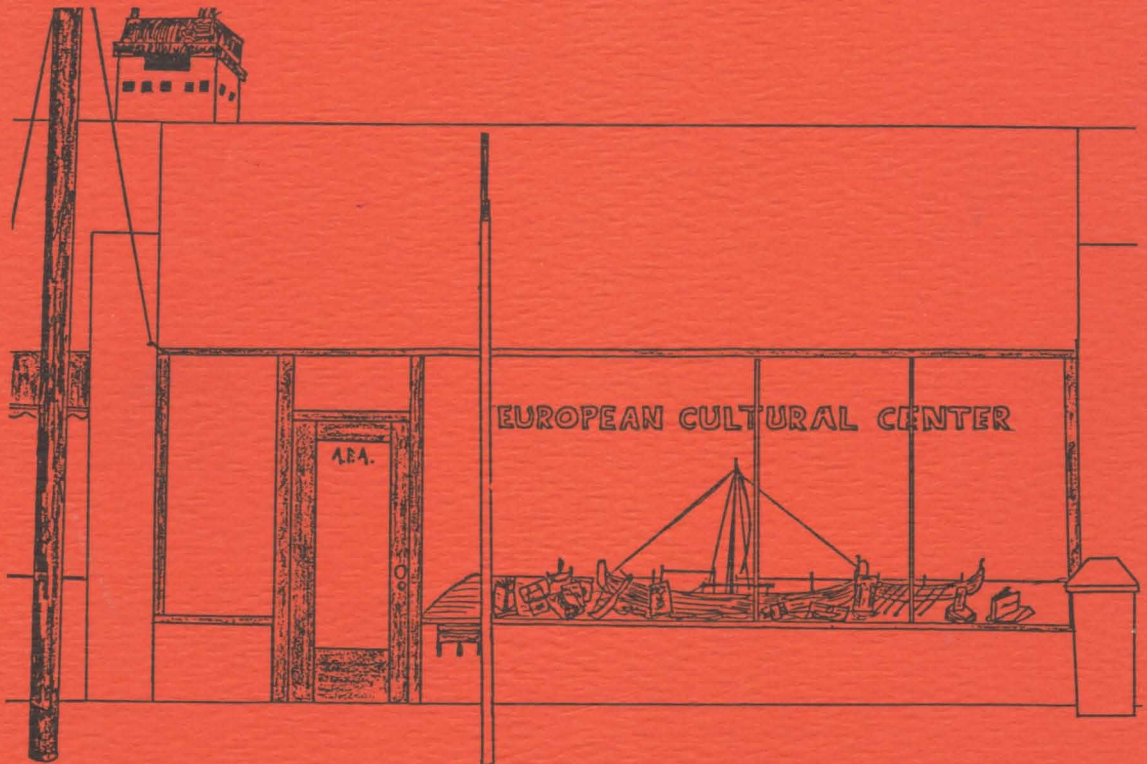


THE



RUNSTONE



FALL ISSUE

(c) 1986

NUMBER 57

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

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CALLIGRAPHY: Mari Funai ILLUSTRATIONS: Bob Stine

CALENDAR

September 23 - WINTER FINDING. The Autumn Equinox; summer and winter balance for a moment and the cold, old man wins - for now. Brace yourself for longer nights and the onset, eventually, of cold. Call on Odin for inspiration to get through your personal lean times, whenever they may strike.

October 8 - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ERIK THE RED. Praise the stalwart father of Leif, who found America! He was loyal to Thor even when his wife left our Gods and refused to sleep with her heathen husband. Pause in memory of Erik today, and drink a toast in his honor. No doubt he gets enough warmth in Thor's Hall to make up for his wife's coldness!

October 9 - LEIF ERIKSON DAY. This is the day that even the U.S. Government admits we should dedicate to the man who beat Columbus by half a millenium. But don't let it slide by quietly - write your local newspapers and share the word with your neighbors! And don't forget to make your personal remembrances to this particular viking.

October 11 - WINTER NIGHTS. In the old Icelandic calendar, winter begins on the Saturday between October 11th and 17th. Winter Nights celebrates the bounty of the harvest and honors Freya and the fertility spirits called disir that she leads (sometimes these beings are thought of as one's female ancestors). So you don't plow the fields! Someone does, or you wouldn't eat. Give glory to Freya and pour a libation of ale, milk, or mead onto the earth as an offering to the disir and to make you mindful of your dependence on the earth.

November 11 - FEAST OF THE EINHERJAR. The chosen heroes who sit in Odin's Hall are the Eiherjar. Today we honor those dead kin who gave their lives for family and Folk. If you have friends or relatives who died in battle, you could visit their graves today. If that is not possible, you could offer a libation to their memory.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

IF YOU SAW A GOD OR A GODDESS by C. Dean Andersson	2
PROJECT LEIF ERIKSON by Stephen A. McNallen	3
ANNOUNCEMENTS	5
A RUNE SONG by Gunnora	6
WHILE THE ASATRU ONLY GROWS by Jeff Redmond.	8
THE POETIC EDDA - A REVIEW by Stephen A. McNallen.	9
TRIADS by R.N. Taylor	11
ODIN AND THE N.D.E. - PART TWO by Brian Regan	14
GUILDS	17
JARL HAKON AND THE HEALING OF NORWAY by C. Manes.	18
WHY WE NEED ASATRUMEN (AND WOMEN) IN THE HELPING PROFESSIONS by George Saunders	20
MOOT POINT:	21



There aren't a lot of us Asafolk yet; in fact, it may be quite a while before there are stacks and hoards following the raido-banner. Because of this, we have to do everything we can to magnify our influence out of proportion to our numbers.

For example, take the world of books. Looking through a pile of catalogs from university presses and other publishers, Maddy and I were struck by a consistent phenomenon: There might be no listing at all under Norse or Germanic or Anglo-Saxon studies, but numerous works on Chinese, Latin American, or African history and archeology. Often, having located a volume that did pertain to our culture, we inquired only to be told that the title was out of print. In fact, the more specialized, in-depth works are becoming extinct. The result? Germanic studies as an academic field will suffer, and fewer people in general are going to be exposed to our religion and our overall heritage.

Clearly, getting the Poetic Edda reprinted was only the beginning. In future months you will see us reviving as many of these books as we can and making them available to you and to others as well. We can accomplish something really major by doing this - and it won't take ten thousand of us to do it.

This is just one instance, of course. Each of us must look at our own life experience and ask ourselves just what we personally can accomplish with limited means to further our Gods and our ancestral ways. We all have different opportunities and resources - so let's get out there and find an appropriate challenge!

If you saw

a God or a Goddess...

In the interests of considering some contemporary feelings associated with our ancestral Gods and Goddesses, I suggest we play a sort of game. I'll get it started, then you can carry it on, and on, and on.

First question: If you saw a God or a Goddess driving next to you in traffic, what would they be driving? Here are some suggestions: Thor's driving a roaring, monstrous, bright red 4x4 of some kind; Frey's in the biggest, most wealth-symbolic Cadillac you've ever seen; Freya's in a low-slung purring Jaguar; Heimdall's in a traffic helicopter reporting on the situation below; Frigg's probably in a station wagon; Odin -- you won't see him in traffic, because he's piloting a starship in search of new knowledge where no God has gone before.

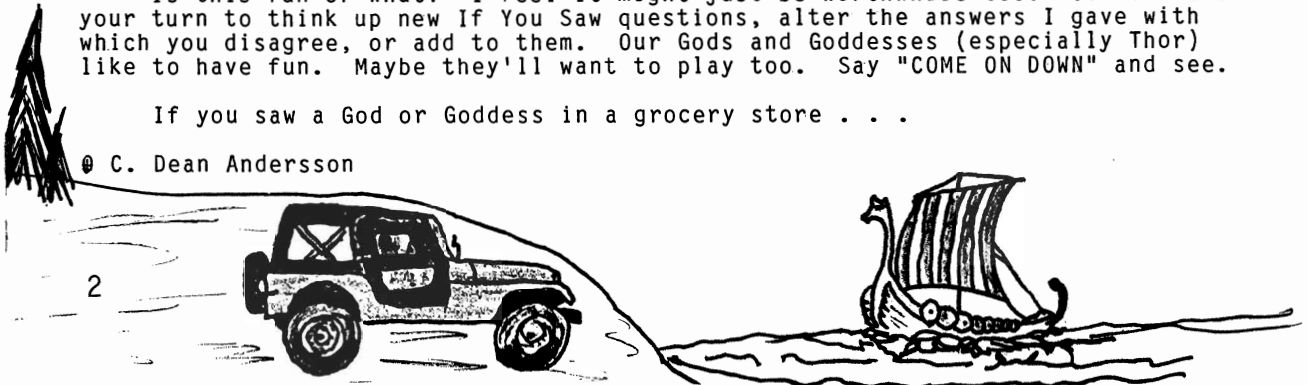
Second question: If you saw a God or Goddess walking on the sidewalk, what would they be wearing? Thor's in either a well-used, sweat-stained red jogging suit or cammo fatigues; Frey's probably in a very expensive three-piece suit weighted down with gold rings and a massive gold Rolex (could Frey be the natural patron God of yuppiedom?); Freya is either wearing Valkyrie battle fatigues or in jail for wearing nothing but her necklace. And Odin is in some outfit so nondescript and deceptively "normal" that we don't even notice him walking by at all.

Third question: If you saw a God or Goddess on TV (supposing for a moment that you have access to one), what would they be doing? Loki is the grinning and downright cute host of a rigged game show; Frey is a contestant on that show who has just beaten all the odds to win big bucks; Freya is either the star of the first prime-time female mercenary action adventure show (Rambett? Sorry, Freya -- couldn't resist), or she's the heart throb of millions on some prime-time soap opera. Heimdall is of course a world-news reporting TV journalist. And Odin's a whisperer of mysteries in the snow realm between channels.

Is this fun or what? I feel it might just be worthwhile too. So now it's your turn to think up new If You Saw questions, alter the answers I gave with which you disagree, or add to them. Our Gods and Goddesses (especially Thor) like to have fun. Maybe they'll want to play too. Say "COME ON DOWN" and see.

If you saw a God or Goddess in a grocery store . . .

© C. Dean Andersson





PROJECT LEIF ERIKSON

Okay, so you know who Leif Erikson was. After all, you read The Runestone so it can be presumed that you have some sort of interest in things Norse. But what about the fellow down the street? And just how many Leif Erikson Day parades have you seen lately?

It's become plain to us over the past year or so that any widespread revival of Asatru hinges on a resurgence of interest in all of our native culture, not just those parts that are obviously religious. In other words, we have a heck of a lot of educating to do - and maybe Leif can bring us some luck in this regard!

Specifically, we want to reach several million people this October with a message about our culture and our Gods. We're asking for your help to do this.

WHAT WE NEED YOU TO DO:

- 1) Commit, right now, to writing a letter to all the newspapers in your area.
- 2) Write your letter (see our samples below). In it, promote our culture and briefly mention our Gods by name.
- 3) Mail it on October 1st, 1986 so it will appear on or just before Leif Erikson Day, October 9th.
- 4) When your letter appears, clip it and mail a copy to the AFA. Note the name of the newspaper and the circulation, if known.
- 5) If any readers contact you as a result of the letter, refer them to the AFA.
- 6) Watch the next Runestone for a report!

REMEMBER: Keep your letter positive. Make it reasonably short. Follow any guidelines given by the newspaper. (Type it, doublespaced, if possible.)

Dear Editor:

October 9 is Leif Erikson Day. A hero not much noticed these days, Leif led a band of freedom-loving Vikings to the shores of America five hundred years before Columbus set sail upon the Atlantic and he deserves to be honored for his achievements.

Every grade school child knows of Columbus but too many think he discovered America. Let's set the matter straight. With his Gods, Odin, Thor, and Frey, Leif, son of Erik the Red, arrived in about the year 1000 to establish the first settlement in a land he and his men called Vinland. His hardy followers made their mark on a country which to this day remains predominantly Northern European. Let's honor our pioneering ancestor!

Sincerely,

Dear Editor:

Back in the 1960's, President Johnson declared October 9 to be Leif Erikson Day. Yet, in 1984, this hero of old Europe is little regarded even here in the country he found.

America was not discovered by Christopher Columbus, first grade history to the contrary. Five hundred years before the Mayflower put out to sea, Leif Erikson and his hardy Viking followers established a settlement in a new land called Vinland.

Today, the freedom-loving Vikings, like their Gods, Odin, Thor, and Frey, are out of favor, but let's not forget our history. Salute Leif Erikson, explorer and pioneer - a tribute to the folk who peopled our land.

Sincerely,

As you can see, this is a concerted, coordinated endeavor, not just a spasm. With all these letters arriving within a period of a few days, we will create an effect much more powerful than could any dissipated or uncontrolled effort. Considering the geographical distribution of Runestone readers we can reach millions of people - even tens of millions - with the word that it's okay to be proud of our ancestors . . . and that, by the way, those ancestors did have certain Gods.

We need your cooperation, in the form of a few minutes work that will make such a difference. Won't you join us in standing tall for our Folk and for Asatru?

@ Stephen A. McNallen

Thanks to those who donated to the AFA LAND FUND this past season.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

AFA OFFICES are now a reality, and will be expanding into a reading room and cultural center serving both AFAers and local residents. Rune-stoners are invited to drop by when in the area. Meanwhile, we can use books, office furnishings and other things you may want to donate. Write us for details. We think this is an experiment of great portent, and downright exciting too.

VIKING SHIPS? Yes, some of us got together recently and decided we ought to build one. That's what happens when you get AFAers together on a lake shore and start discussing boats, I guess. . . Anyway, we're investigating means and methods now. This could be a LOT of fun!

THE NEXT TEXAS GATHERING is set for the weekend of September 20-21st. Any of you in the area are invited, so drop us a line. Oil prices may be depressed, but WE'RE not!

AFA COLORING BOOK

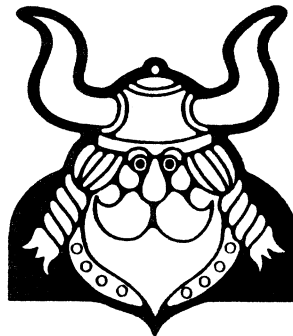
Educate and entertain those children at the same time! Sigurd, slayer of dragons, is the hero of this brand new AFA coloring book. 24 dramatic scenes will capture any child's attention and introduce him or her to one of the greatest of Germanic legends.

\$2.75 plus 10% p. & h. from the AFA.

OUR NEWEST KINDRED in the AFA is The Ancient Tribe, hailing from Anchorage, Alaska. Welcome to the AFA, Kinfolks! May your tribe indeed increase and prosper.

AN EDDA UPDATE: A call to the University of Texas Press a few weeks ago revealed that a thousand copies of Hollander's Poetic Edda have been sold. Keep 'em moving, folks. Remember, they wouldn't be selling a single one if you hadn't stirred them up with that letter-writing campaign a while back and got this volume re-printed. We CAN make a difference when we try.

THE LAND FUND is at about \$3000 and gradually growing. Our initial spurt has settled down to a sustaining trickle, helped by an interest-bearing account, and donations are welcome. We're getting there, bit at a time.



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A RUNE SONG

This song has been traced to the end of the twelfth century and almost certainly dates to much earlier yet, although it is hard to say how old it really is. The text now existant includes several references in the rhymes which reflect later (Christian) Scandinavian culture and speech.

The first version is the Icelandic text. The second is the literal translation, rendered from the Icelandic by Thordis Hakonardottir, and the third is a more poetic rendering of the translation, which has made it easier for us to memorize and work with.

I. Original

- ∨ Fe veldr frenda rogi; foetisk ulfr i skogi.
- ∩ Ur es af illu jarni; opt hleypr hreinn a hjarni.
- ∨ (Th)urs veldr kvenna kvilln; katr vertu far af illu.
- ∩ Oss es flestra ferta for; en skalpr er sverta.
- R Reit kveta hrossum versta; Reginn slo svertit bezta.
- ∨ Kaun es beygja barna; bol gorir mann folvan.
- X Hagall es kaldastr korna; Kristr skop heim inn forna.
- † Naut gour hneppa kosti; noktan kelr i frosti.
- | Is kollum bru breita; bleindan tharf at leita.
- † Ar es gumma goti; geth at orr vas Froti.
- ∨ Sol es landa ljomi; lutik helgum domi.
- ↑ Tyr es einhandr Asa; opt vertr smitr at blasa.
- B Bjurkan es laufgroenstr lima; Loki bar flaertar tima.
- ∨ Matr es moldar auki; mikil es greip a hauki.
- ∩ Logr es fellr or fjalli; foss en gull eru hnossir.
- † Yr es vetrgroenstr vita; vantí es brenner at svita.

II. Literal Translation

- (Cattle, money, possessions) Cattle are the cause of contention among kinsmen; The wolf grows up in the forest.
- (Drizzle, flakes of metal) Fine rain comes off bad iron; The reindeer often gallop upon the hard snow.
- (Giant, ogre) The ogre is the cause of women's distress; the cheerful deserve little from evil.
- (Estuary, river mouth) The estuary is the way of most journeys; the scabbard is the same as the sword.
- (Riding, chariot) Riding reveals the worst of horses; Regin forged the best sword.
- (Sore, boil) Sores are the affliction of children; sorrow causes one to be pale
- (Hail) Hail freezes the grain; Christ put in order the ancient home.

- (Distress, poverty, harm) Poverty is the cause of distress; The ill-clad freeze in the frost.
- (Ice) Ice sounds upon the broad bridge; the blind need the road most of all.
- (Season) The season gives profit to men; in this Froti was generous.
- (Sun) The sun gives radiance to the land; bow to the sacred relic.
- (Tyr) Tyr is the one-handed god; the builder (ie, smith) must blow (the fire) often.
- (Birch) The birch has leaf-green branches; Loki brought the luck of guile (ie, brought trouble through his trickery).
- (Man) Man is increased from the earth; the space between the hawk's talons is great.

III. Poetic Translation

Cattle among kinsmen contention do cause;
 Wolf is weaned in the wild woodland halls.
 Fine rain does fall from iron ill-made;
 Running through hard snow go the reindeer at play.
 The Jotun does cause young women's distress;
 The cheerful deserve none of evilness.
 Through river's mouth most journeys do ride;
 Sword and the scabbard the same at your side.
Riding the rede that rude horses reveal;
 Reginn forged sword that is best for the kill.
 An affliction for children, sores are a bane;
 Many grow pale from strong sorrow's pain.
Hail from rain freezes, beats down the grain;
 Christ came after old gods who will come again.
Poverty's daughter is dire distress;
 Ill-clad in frost may a man freeze to death.
 On the broad bridge sounds ice, brittle and bright;
 He most needs the road who has not his sight.
 The turn of the seasons gives profit to man;
 A generous gift from fair Freyr's hand.
 The light of the land shines down from the sun;
 To revere what is sacred is always well done.
Tyr is the god who has but one hand;
 The bellows must blow while the smith strikes the brand.
 On branches of birch the green leaves do grow;
 Loki brings trouble wherever he goes.
Man is first made from the mold of the land;
 The claws of the hawk spread wide as your hand.
Water cascades from the cliff with great force;
 Gold, it is costly, riches' bright source.
Yew does grow green in cold winter woods;
 Glows bright the fire, but burns the food.

...While the Asatru only grows

Editor - It's not often that we get news of Asatru overseas, with the exception of occasional articles describing Sveinbjorn Beinteinsson's efforts in Iceland. We were pleasantly surprised, then, when Jeff Redmond produced this translation from the Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet dated December 16, 1985 telling of organizations in Sweden dedicated to our Gods and Goddesses!

A tendency throughout the world is for mankind to seek alternatives to established religions. There are some hundred souls who believe in the old gods to be found in Sweden.

The roksinger Pugh Rogefeldt has taught himself runic writing and has made an L.P. about the Aesir gods, "Hammarhjarta".

Around the neck he always wears an amulet with Thor's hammers, to give him strength and protect him against evil.

In an interview in Aftonbladet he related:

"I feel, myself, like the lost son. For my entire upbringing here I was exposed to Christian propoganda. We are born into the Swedish Church (the Lutheran State Church) whether we wish it or not. During school we get lessons on Christianity time and again. Then I was never interested in either religion or history. Christianity was of course the Jewish history. It was when I first read about the Viking Age and Asatru that I became interested."

Jonas Almquist in the rock group Ladernunnan is a leader for the Asatru Guild, an association which wishes to get Asatru officially recognized as a religion.

One night he sat on an Uppsala mound, cut himself in the hand with a razor blade, and raised a cup of juice for Odin, Njord, and Bragi.

That was 1972, when four Icelanders got together and blew life into Asatru in Iceland. The year after, the government there acknowledged Asatru as a legitimate religion, soon uniting the cultures in Norway, Sweden, England, West Germany and the U.S.A.

Arne Sjoberg is the chairman of the Asatru association, Breidarblikk Guild, which was established in 1975 and has 80 members.

In Harjedalen, Goteborg, and Vaxjo there are also established Asatru organizations.

"In the last millennium we have been indoctrinated in a strange western Asiatic religion and culture, Christianity. Everyone has the right to his original religion," says Sjoberg, who wishes that schoolchildren would get more lessons about the old Norse mythology in the schools.

In the autumn, Sjoberg officiated at his first old Nordic marriage in an ancient castle. With a ritual using Thor's hammers, Sjoberg read some stanzas from the "Havamal" and "Skirnismal".

In Uppsala the Commune (county governmental body) plans to build a Viking settlement, including a heathen temple as a tourist attraction, something which gladdens the Asatruar who hope to get loan of the temple when they meet.

Lester Wikstrom of the committee tying together the Swedish Church and the Ecumenical Council says:

"The Church's principle agreement is that every man has freedom of choice regarding which faith he will have. But the freedom has its limits. When they take up such features in Asatru as that of sacrificing children and the old, all have reason to protest".

Asatruar themselves say that they do not show any such tendencies.

Bosse Schon

Ⓢ Translated by Jeff Redmond

• The Poetic Edda •

The Poetic Edda, translated by Lee M. Hollander, is a book with a special meaning for many readers of these pages - for it was your efforts that brought this treasure back into print. For those of you who have subscribed since that time, though, and for others who have perhaps mentally laid the matter aside, a short review is in order.

How important is the Edda? In his introduction, Hollander states that "What the Vedas are for India, and the Homeric poems for the Greek world, that the Edda signifies for the Teutonic". True enough, but the situation is all the more poignant because this literature has been so neglected of late. The University of Texas Press has helped remedy this, by making The Poetic Edda available again.

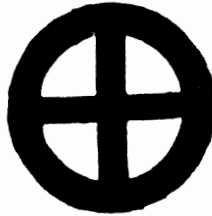
You'll find it all in this edition - the familiar lays and some not so familiar, stories of Gods and of heroes like Sigurd, Helgi, and Svipdag. A glossary and copious footnotes aid a fuller understanding of the tales.

But don't buy it just because it's important from a literary standpoint, or because doing so constitutes a cultural "good deed". Buy it because it's a meticulous translation of evocative stories, because it retains the poetic form and feel of the original, and because you'll learn a lot about the myth and culture of the old Northlands.

This is a hefty volume of 343 pages. It's a bargain of which we hope you'll avail yourself!

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THE RELIGION OF ODIN

— by Slauson —

The story of the ancient faith of northern Europe and its rebirth in modern times. This book details the beliefs, 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 are experts on the history and customs of their religion, including some who played important roles in its re-emergence. The old Teutonic values of life are discussed as well as the concepts of the Sky God and the life force in the context of the religion. 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 illustrations, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ X 11", 2nd Printing, Incorporates the 'Foundations of Odinism'.

Books in Brief

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King Harold's Saga.....	\$2.75	Hrafnkel's Saga	\$ 3.75
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TRIADS

FORM AND CONTENT

The triad is a loose Celtic poetic form. A strict version consists of three groups of tercets (three line poems) each bearing some relationship to the other two tercets, and the composite whole of the three tercets interpretable as a single poem consisting of a total of nine lines. Much like other forms of Celtic poetry, the triad may end with the first syllable, word, or line with which it began.

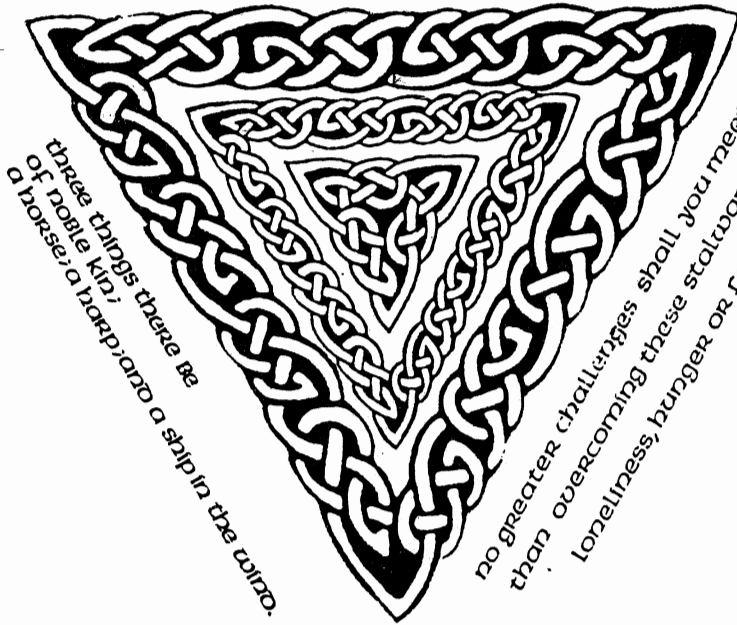
The subject matter of the Celtic triad closely parallels that of Tuetonic gnomic verse; the transmission of succinct and pithy folk wisdom, in a form intended to facilitate easy memorization or recall. Triadic poetry appears to emerge at the dawn of Indo-European culture, and thereafter to appear in various modified forms at a later date.

For a fuller understanding of the significance of the number three as a symbolic concept among Indo-European peoples, see "Gods of the Northmen" by Georges Dumézil: University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 94720 - \$8.95 paperback.

© R.N. Taylor



life and love and death,
these be the full scope
of the poets quest.



three things there be
of noble kind;
a horse; a hawk; and a ship in the wind.

no greater challenges shall you meet
than overcoming these stalwart three;
loneliness, hunger or fatigue.

the masks she dons are three,
the goddess of the triple face,
of birth and life and death they be.



TRIA

R. Nicholas

no sharper than
perceive, than
a laser and a



no softer thing than these three,
a kitten's purr, a mother's breast,
the golden pector of the bee.

RIATU
BY
DOLAS TAYLOR

three things shall you
cherish a razor,
and a Arctic breeze.

three people there be
of ill-repute;
a begger-a pimp and a prostitute.



three men there be of ill-repute
a hangman, an undertaker
and a prison guard.

never trust in these three,
a politician's word, a bureaucrat's
promise, or a judge before his final
decree.

Odin and the near death experience .. part two

In the last issue we talked about the near death experience, or NDE, as related to the God Odin. Materialism was dismissed as a false notion inhibiting an analysis of our subject.

But there is still another idea which should be dispelled, and it deals with the nature of what we might call the World Soul.

.

Some materialists will say that our belief in a universal life force and cosmic soul -- a universal consciousness -- is the same as the belief in a Christian God. Putting words in our mouths, they might maintain that we think this God controls everything that happens, and that therefore everything that is, is best -- including the modern destruction of the world and of our kin.

However, we do not believe this at all. The World Soul does not control all conscious minds in all details, even though it is the basis and context for these minds. Just as an individual can commit suicide, so also can the human race as a whole commit suicide, destroying the earth forever. But the capability, or even the act, of suicide does not mean the individual has no soul or that the person is doing what is best. Neither does the present attack on the earth by its creatures (humans) mean that the earth as a whole has no soul or that its most intelligent species is doing what is best.

To counter another erroneous concept: the human soul is not "captured" or imprisoned in the body as if the body and the soul were foreign to one another but somehow mistakenly entangled. (This was the view of the "Gnostics" of the Roman Empire, a view not openly admitted but remaining as a strong undercurrent in Christianity. It sees the body as evil, especially sex and the pleasures of the body.) Rather, the soul is the memory of the body and of its evolution, a memory which organizes the body more or less in the manner that a magnetic field organizes iron filings along its field lines on a piece of paper held above the source of the field. Although this memory can exist apart from its individual body and brain (like TV waves can exist apart from the TV set), it can grow only through the body. Without the body the soul vegetates -- often in a happy, united state, perhaps, but still vegetates. (This may be why not only our ancestors, but all peoples have had reports of possession. The dead want to grow in knowledge and individuality, and for this they need a body, so they try to invade someone else's.)

In the Winter 1984 issue of The Runestone (pages 15-18) was given a short list of some of the more important aspects of the bodily self, together with their religious expressions, the symbols and rituals of our ancestors. Let us consider here only one of these symbols: the world tree, Yggdrasill.

Yggdrasill is the symbol for the central nervous system (CNS) as the tree of life. It is gigantic, spreading its branches over the whole world, as a symbol of the fact that the CNS encompasses a human's entire life and world. Without the CNS a soul can perceive nothing; it has no world. The branches of Yggdrasill house, among other animals, a wise eagle. As a master of powerful flight, the eagle is the symbol of the power of the intellect and the flight of consciousness.

Yggdrasill has three taproots, each one reaching far down beneath the earth (underground, where the dead are buried and abide, and from which all living things come). Actually, however, all three roots are but different aspects of this one fact of life's rootedness in the World Soul.

The first root reaches down into the Well of Weird in the midst of Asgard, the home of the Aesir.

The second root extends far beneath Midgard (our world) into the Well of Mimir in the midst of Jotunheim, the land of the giants.

The third root penetrates to the horrifying Well of Hvergelmir, the realm of some of the dead, also called Hell (Hel).

In this way our shamanism-practicing ancestors described the physical life of the body (the world tree) as rooted in a fluid state (the wellsprings). It should be mentioned here that water is the symbol quite often used to describe the depths of the World Soul and the unconscious generally, because this liquid is formless and yet powerful in many ways.

The realities expressed by all of these symbols are precisely those which are experienced by modern-day "involuntary shamans" -- those who have had a near death experience. These facts are:

1. Physical life depends on a different power or aspect of the universe than the powers or aspects we can see; it takes hidden sustenance from the World Soul
2. The World Soul is alive with all kinds of consciousness, as represented by Gods and other spiritual beings whose realms surround the wellsprings beneath the taproots of physical life.
3. The lifegiving power of the World Soul is an overarching, controlling force which coordinates the lives of living beings and the alternatives available to them. The manifestation called the Well of Weird is especially important. Here dwell the destiny-controlling norns, of whom the chief are Urd, Verdandi and Skuld (meaning roughly, Past, Present, and Probable Future). This well symbolizes the World Soul as the designer and implementer of the master plan which establishes the "parameters" for human and other lives, the scheme within which the living exercise their freedom for good or ill. Our ancestors called this master plan itself Weird or Ørlog. It was the ultimate power and was normally impersonal. Its action depended on the accumulated memories of the species, the race, the bloodline, the family, and on the unconscious and conscious decisions of the individual. Effectively, Weird or Ørlog is the same thing as the principle known by the Sanskrit word karma. That is to say, it is the transpersonal, "foreordaining", "predestining" aspect of the planet's evolutionary growth plan, as experienced from the viewpoint of the personal human soul. An analogy would be the growth plan of the ordinary human body as seen from the perspective of the single body cell. Each cell has a certain mobility within limits, but those limits are established in advance by the growth program of the body as a whole. Likewise, the growth plan of the World Soul forces human existence to conform to global ecology and evolution or suffer dire consequences (often seen as "bad luck"). It limits human freedom by establishing

consequences and is therefore sometimes felt as an inexorable "fate" or "destiny". But it still has a certain amount of freedom. And on the by and large, the more intelligent the individual, the greater is that freedom.

Many people who have had an NDE have experienced this firsthand. They have learned that a cosmic power and "karmic" law holds mortals accountable for what they do in their physical, psychic and intellectual lives, in the sense that it carries deeds and thoughts through to their logical consequences. A goal or mindset firmly held will bear its own fruit, and the psychic idea will become physical fact.

NDE'ers have also discovered that there is a hierarchy of values in the universe, and it is not a hierarchy of money and political power. It is a hierarchy of evolution, in which love and knowledge are important. "Love", however, does not mean sentimental emotionality as portrayed in soap operas or romantic novels. It means, instead, the practice of the understanding that all creatures (and even non-living things) are the outward forms of the World Soul, and that we are connected to them "under the surface". Living beings are its sense organs, enlarging its knowledge and memory. The second thing which the "love" means is that we are most closely obligated to those who are related to us by blood, as even the animals know. But this love also means acknowledging that both life and death have to be, and that there must be differences between living creatures, between eater and eaten, and between human individuals and types. And finally, it means that certain acts which are harmful out of proportion to any benefit from them (e.g. physical torture) have no place in evolution.

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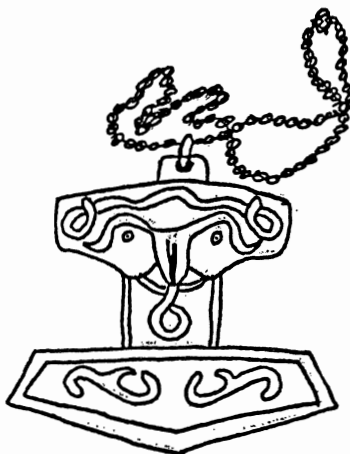
We've looked at the fundamental nature of the World Soul with which the person undergoing a near death experience interacts. Next issue, we will examine some of the other NDE phenomena as they pertain to Asatru - "beings of light" and all!

© Brian Regan

HAMMERS!

On our recent trip to England, we picked up a limited number of Thor's Hammers from Peter Seymour, jeweler and armorer of London. These hammers are bulky, silver toned and cast with a bird-like design on the top and a serpentine coil on the base. (See illustration) Hammer comes with chain.

\$15.00 plus 10% p. & h. from the AFA.



• GUILDS •

THE BREWING GUILD

Jace Crouch, c/o the AFA, P.O. Box 1754, Breckenridge, TX 76024

THE WARRIOR GUILD

Frank Ciampa, 180 Market St., #306 Lynn, MA 01902

THE COMPUTER/SHAMANISM GUILD

Richard Simmons, 884 S. Lewis St., Lakewood, CO 80226

THE AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY GUILD

Stephen McNallen, P.O.Box 1754 Breckenridge, TX 76024

THE WRITERS GUILD

Matt Phipps, 78 Flagg St., West Hartford, CT 06107

THE CONTINUING CLAN

Cheryl Follette, P.O.Box 1182, New Haven, CT 06515

SKALDIC GUILD/WORDSMITHS

P.O.Box 56374, Harwood Heights, IL 60656

THE SEWING GUILD

Caroline Webber, 3501 Bernard St. #2A, Bakersfield, CA 93306

THE NORSE CULTURE AND SAGA GUILD

Thorsteinn Thorarinnsson, 5411 N. 63rd Drive, Glendale, AZ 85301

THE ARTISTS GUILD

Skjold Skull, c/o S. Bernard, 101 Hyde St., Burlington, VT 05401

THE ROMANCE GUILD, we're sorry to say, didn't take off as hoped. We had plenty of response from our men-folk, but the ladies showed no interest. That's too bad - the idea is sound enough, but we're obviously not ready to put it into practice.

THE SOCIAL SERVICE GUILD is proposed and can be reached through the AFA. See the relevant article in this issue for more information on this prospective guild's orientation and function, and be sure to write if you want to be involved.

A GARDENING GUILD? Why not? Asafolk talk about caring for the earth and living in harmony with nature. The Back to Basics Guild will promote organic gardening, natural preserving of food, alternate energy and housing as well as the spiritual aspects of working with nature. For further information write to: The Back to Basics Guild, P.O.Box 961, Payson, AZ 85547

Heredity

I am the family face;
Flesh perishes, I live on,
Projecting trait and trace
Through time to times anon,
And leaping from place to place
Over oblivion

The year-heired feature that can
In curve and voice and eye
Despise the human span
Of durance-that is I;
The eternal thing in man
That heeds no call to die.

© Thomas Hardy

Jarl Hakon and the Healing of Norway

There are many Hakons in Scandinavian history, some good, some bad -- some called good or bad who were just the opposite, such being the moral inversion of Christian historiography. One of these was Jarl Hakon "The Bad" (d. 995). A devout pagan, he defended the traditions of his ancestors against the chaos brought on by Harald Fairhair and his violent progeny.

Hakon experienced this violence firsthand. His father, Sigurd, Jarl of Kladir, was burned to death inside his hall by Harald's grandsons. Their leader Harald Graycoat, was something of a momma's boy, and his court was dominated by his mother, Gunnhild, who appears in all her nymphomaniacal splendor in the opening chapters of Njal's Saga. At her instigation, Harald and his brothers destroyed pagan temples, murdered chieftains and levied exorbitant taxes. It was said that their desecrations resulted in the bad weather and crop failures of the time.

Hakon vowed revenge. But his attempt to raise an army was discovered, and he had to flee to Denmark. There, by means of a complex intrigue, he played the king of Denmark, his ambitious nephew and Harald Graycoat one against the other until the latter two lay dead. Hakon and the Danish king -- also named Harald -- then sailed to Norway with 600 warships and easily defeated Gunnhild and her unpopular sons. King Harald placed Hakon over western Norway, and in return the Jarl paid tribute and vowed to assist the king in war -- a promise that would later prove troublesome.

During his reign Hakon reaffirmed the ancestral rights of chieftains and farmers which had eroded under the lawless rule of Harald Fairhair and his clan. He rebuilt temples and honored the Gods, so that, according to the skald Einar Helgason in his poem Vellekla, the Northlands became fruitful again:

Earth bestows bounty as before
Since the generous chieftain cheers
The folk to fare
To worship without fear.

When war broke out between King Harald and the German Emperor Otto II, Hakon's fealty was put to the test. And true to his word he supported Harald, fighting bravely along the Danavirki, the fortified southern border of Denmark. But Otto triumphed. What happened next has become garbled in the historical records. Snorri says Otto forced Harald to become a Christian, but other sources indicate that Harald had been baptized years before. At any rate, Otto convinced or bullied the Danish king to get serious about converting Norway, starting with Hakon, who was compelled to undergo baptism and ordered to convey a number of priests to his homeland.

At this point Hakon washed his hands of his Christian overlord. He put to sea, discharging his priestly cargo at the mouth of the fjord. After sack- ing Harald's dominions in Skania, he sailed to the east coast of Sweden and per- formed a great sacrifice to Odin on the Gautasker. "Then two ravens came fly- ing and croaked loudly, and the earl thought it certain that Odin had accepted the sacrifice, and that he would have success in fighting" (Heimskringla).

He was right. Although King Harald tried to reconquer Norway, Hakon fought him off and never paid tribute again. Later, Harald's son, Svein Forkbeard, enlisted the help of the Jomsborg Vikings in an attempt to ambush Hakon. But the Jarl learned of the plot and met Svein with a fleet of 180 ships. The battle that ensued -- at Hjorungavag -- was one of the most famous in Norse his- tory. At first the fighting was inconclusive, but then a fierce storm struck, blowing hailstones into the faces of Hakon's adversaries until they were routed. The Victory-God had repaid the loyalty of his friend.

Hakon was a typical Norseman: bold, moody, honorable, robust. In Njal's Saga he is described as having second sight, and it is implied the Gods helped him discover hidden enemies. In Flateyjarbok Thorgerda and Irpa, sister deities particularly revered by Hakon, hovered over a battlefield, raining ar- rows on the Jarl's foes. Medieval historians claim that in old age Hakon became domineering and lecherous, meeting a bad end in a pigsty at the point of a slave's knife. This may be fact or mere anti-pagan propaganda. Whatever the case, Jarl Hakon must be respected for upholding Teutonic values in a world sliding toward ecclesiastical bondage. By tending the sputtering fires of Odin- ism in 10th century Norway, he may have ensured the survival of religious trad- itions in Iceland which have become the spark of modern-day Asatru -- a spark which has begun to kindle in the hearts of Northmen once again.

© C. Manes

1987 AFA CALENDAR

Our calendar this year honors some little-known Goddesses. Twelve fe- male deities mentioned in the Prose Edda are brought to life using Snorri Sturleson's words, Mari's fine cal- ligraphy and Raven's imaginative artwork.

Available October 15.
Order now from the AFA.
\$6.00 plus 60¢ p. & h.

Thor's Hammer T-Shirt \$7.95

License Plates "Odin" "Thor" "Pagan Power"

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P.W., P.O. BOX 709
PRUDENVILLE, MI 48651

Why we need Asatruarwomen (& women) in the Helping Professions

My original title for this article was: "Why Asatruarwomen Need Allies in the Helping Professions." My thinking has undergone a slight change on this issue, though - for indeed why can't Asatruarwomen (and women) themselves be engaged in helping professions like social work, psychology, sociology or counseling? When you think about the characteristics which go into making a good therapist it makes a lot of sense to have Odinists occupy that position. Ideally, a therapist should be non-judgemental, fair but firm, empathetic and understanding, yet have the grit to go the distance if necessary as an advocate in court for a victim of child sexual abuse.

The popular stereotype of people in such careers is that they are bleeding hearts, radical feminists, and left-wing extremists. By and large that opinion is still valid but there are those of us in the helping professions who emphatically don't fall into those categories.

Asafolk who have the special skills and knowledge required to function at a professional level in these callings are an asset to us all. Such persons can perform vital functions within the Asatru Free Assembly. They can foster group process; trouble shoot an organization; offer information and referral services to members in crisis; serve as an in-house resource person familiar with civil commitments, child custody fights and related issues; testify as an "expert witness" in court for things like in-home education, or for the defense against frivolous civil or criminal proceedings, and accumulate research data into human behavior to support Asatru in many ways.

The judicial system in the U.S. is a place where non-traditional views frequently find themselves. Whether as a result of marital breakup and child custody proceedings, or a prosecution attempt to slander an AFAer as a "kook" or a "nut" just because he or she values weapons and their possession, there will be a time when the AFA itself (as well as any particular member in trouble) will be the focus of court scrutiny. When the time comes, we will have a need for a logical, rational exposition of the AFA's position from a member of the social services community-at-large. The AFA will need people credentialed to practice in the social services (whether as social workers, psychologists, or psychiatrists) to explain as expert witnesses why the court cannot confound or ignore the therapeutic values of Asatru.

For this reason it is most urgent that another guild be proposed in the Asatru Free Assembly -- a Social Service Guild. Members would be limited to those who have a degree in, or who are interested in the following fields: social work, mental health, psychology, sociology, social welfare, psychiatry, counseling and guidance, social studies, development psychology and dynamics, therapeutic recreation, child development, testing, psychodrama, family therapy, education, social service research methods, and many others.

The input of such people is urgently needed to help contribute to this vital effort on behalf of the Asatru Free Assembly. Write your thoughts or suggestion: to me care of The Runestone, or, if you are a member, to my address. They will receive careful study and a reply. It's time to begin preparing for future needs!

© George Saunders



MOOT POINT



Dear Steve:

I could not be more supportive of the triune cornerstones of the AFA: Heritage, Freedom, and Truth. I think I have no need to apologize to anyone for my appreciation -- and efforts on behalf of our ancient Norsk heritage. The AFA obviously does not need to either, so that is not where our paths diverge. The problem I perceive (and I don't really think I am being hypersensitive) has to do with spiritual Truth and the Freedom to pursue it wherever it may lead. In several places I ran across what seemed to me to be rather sarcastic, denigrating references to Christianity, a tone I also found to be a disturbing feature in Edred Thorsson's otherwise excellent Futhark (which I do realize is not an official AFA publication). I am afraid that I fail to see the point of these inclusions. The bloody "persuasion" of the worshippers of the Aesir by such Christians as St. Olaf took place a long time ago and, for that matter, pagan Vikings were none too gentle with Christians on occasion, either. Lindisfarne was not an isolated occurrence. Personally, I abhor cruelty and senseless violence no matter who is perpetrating it.

At any rate, those of us of Norsk descent undoubtedly had both Christian and non-Christian kinfolk. In my own case, according to Snorri Sturleson's Heimskringla, I am a direct descendant of St. Olaf on the one hand and of Frey and Gerd through the Ynglings, on the other. There is also a more ephemeral connection with Odin and Skadi through Ragnar Hairy-Britches. You can't get your feet much more firmly planted in both camps than that! What my 101 year-old Norwegian grandmother likes to tell me has a bearing here, I think. She says "It doesn't matter so much who you come from, as who you are," which has helped to keep my heritage in perspective for me. I try to learn from the lives of all my ancestors, both from their positive attributes -- which I seek to emulate -- and from their negative ones -- which I try to avoid.

Anyway, despite the Christian coercion in Norway, Iceland voted it in as the state religion in 1000 A.D., and for the most part the Christians and non-Christians generally seemed to avoid slaughtering each other, at least for religious reasons. Some individuals even worshipped both the White Christ and Thor. Finally, we owe much of what we know about the Norse mythos to Snorri Sturleson -- who was a Christian with a respect and love for his heritage. I know that AFA members know all of this; I am not trying to insult anyone's intelligence, just using some examples to stress that since our ancestors included both Christians and non-Christians, I see no need for the AFA to be hostile to Christians now.

Why should this matter to me? Well, I am a Christian by upbringing and by adult choice. Members of the AFA have chosen to affirm what they perceive to be different spiritual truths than the ones to which I adhere. While I may not personally agree with their choice, I do firmly believe it is their choice to make. I, in turn, would appreciate the same courtesy from the AFA, but snide remarks about Christianity only "puts down" my faith, it does nothing to promote theirs.

I think there is much we could learn from each other about our common Norse heritage, and I would hate to see these opportunities squandered through religious intolerance. There is far too much of that abroad in the world as it is.

A fellow truthseeker,

"D"

Just as an aside to Runestone readers, your work in promoting the ancient Norse heritage has been exceptional and admirable. You've written a superb dictionary of our mythology and have instituted an educational program that has undoubtedly given many hundreds, even thousands, of young people an appreciation for their Viking heritage. I frankly applaud these achievements.

Certainly neither I nor anyone else writing in The Runestone mean to insult you, personally, as a Christian. On the other hand, Christian and Asafolk generally believe very differently, and it seems unrealistic to think that we shouldn't criticize each other. Communists and capitalists openly condemn their opposites, and so do Republicans and Democrats. Bible belt preachers lambaste Satan and secular humanists alike. I'm not sure there's anything wrong with that; it seems to me it's fair competition in the ideological marketplace.

Yes, it would be better to define and promote Asatru on its merits rather than on Christianity's faults. Unfortunately, Christianity is (consciously or not) the accepted frame of reference in our society and we often have to be quite forcible in expressing our differences from it.

Of course St. Olaf committed his crimes a long time ago - but active Christian repression against our religion continues even today. Asafolk in Sweden are having to struggle for legal recognition. Monuments to the heathen Saxons slaughtered by Charlemagne have been turned over to the Lutheran church in Germany; the church had verses from the Bible carved all over them. In this country there have been two recent attempts to remove tax exemptions for pagan religious groups.

I know you don't have anything to do with any of this - and we aren't attacking you personally. I'm sure there are many other Christians who would be horrified at these deeds, too. But the juggernaut keeps on rolling, and in self defense we often have to say unkind things about Christianity. That makes things awkward for us all, of course, but the world's an imperfect place and we have to do the best we can, while trying to make it better.

Dear Mr. McNallen:

I just received the materials you sent me. Great reading! I really looked forward to getting them, and I am glad to see that someone has taken the time to put such valuable information down for our use.

Just yesterday I went to the library on campus looking for a copy of the Prose Edda. I found a book which had both the Poetic and Prose in one volume. This very elaborately printed book belongs to a series of volumes containing various Norse sagas and epics called Anglo-Saxon Classics. It was apparently published by a group called "Norroena" for its members in 1905 as part of a lim-

ited set. I would be very curious to know if anyone else has heard of this group. Perhaps you or the other members of the AFA have some ideas on it.

I just thought I'd pass this info on since it's a related topic.

Sincerely,

M.A.

Yes, we've heard of "Norroena", and occasionally seen volumes from that set in various libraries. Like so many of the books boosting our cause that were written early in this century, they have disappeared - along with our pride in ourselves as a people. A look, for example, through the various university presses will reveal almost nothing on our theme, but a veritable Gutenberg Galaxy of books on other peoples and cultures. Having been made aware of all this, we plan to do something about it. Our revival of the Poetic Edda was just the beginning - stay tuned!

Dear Mr. McNallen,

I thank you for your letter I just received, and for "The Runestone". I didn't know the Asatru-movement also existed in the U.S.A.. I have connections with the Asatru of Iceland, and otherwise with many other pagan groups in Europe.

I will tell you something about our own group. The Order of Eternal Return is a pagan movement in Flandres that has the following aims:

- * Rehabilitating the old European religion and tradition.
- * Stopping the egalitarian and decadent forces in Western Society.
- * Researching for the esoteric means of our old beliefs and philosophy (not like Theosophists, but in the style of Dumézil, Guenon, Evola. . .)
- * Seeking for an international network of all pagans.

I would like to get The Runestone frequently. Is that possible?

Many thanks in advance, and heathen greetings.

Alaf Sal Fena!

Logghe Koenraad
Order of Eternal Return
Cellenbroederstr. 20
2000 Antwerp
Flandres Belgium

Dear Steve,

. . . Your "Thoughts on an Asatru Community" was a good article. I'd like to add some comments. I believe that one of the communities should be as close as possible to the ways of old, as you say, a sort of "living museum". The first one, however, and others to follow, should be a blend of high and low tech. The Vikings were not a backwards people; they were inventive, resourceful, and willing to use something if it improved on a job. I also feel that at least in the beginning, it is advisable that some of the members keep working outside of the community while giving a fair portion of time to the group. This will help pay for the land, building materials, and other items that would require outside

resources. This flow of money would help us through the hard times as well. It also will keep us in contact with the rest of the world.

Have you considered buying federal land? There are some good deals out there and usually the land is in a natural state.

Hail our Gods,

M.T.

Thanks for your suggestions! Although we're not making much noise about it right now, the land project is still very much on - and input from our readers is welcome indeed. No doubt the next decade or so will see not one but several experiments aimed at creating a viable Asatru community. Each such venture gives us another shot at finding the "winning combination" or, better yet, a number of workable systems for different conditions. It will be an exciting process!

Dear Stephen and Maddy,

Enclosed are three letters that I received from people who are interested in our religion. I have sent them some information and a personal letter, and I told them I would send them a copy of The Runestone. I have enclosed a check to cover some of the costs.

I wrote a letter to the comic book "King Conan" stating that I was an Odinist and how Conan expresses many of the values that we believe in. I also said anyone interested in Odinism could contact me. I have gotten a pretty good response from their printing of the letter in the back of the comic book. They sell half a million of them a month. I hope to send you more letters as they come in.

You may think that a comic book is not a good place to get new members. I think the "King Conan" comic is of high quality in art, story and message to its readers. I think that this is a whole untouched market for Odinism. There are not many publications that express our values. Moreover, it seems a very good way to get to the young and old alike.

All the best to you and your family.

Odin Lives!

J.T.

That's certainly the way to take the initiative - well done! It is personal commitment like yours that makes Asafolk effective out of all proportion to our numbers. Each of us must do what we can to get the word out about our Gods, using whatever opportunities present themselves. Keep up the good work!



