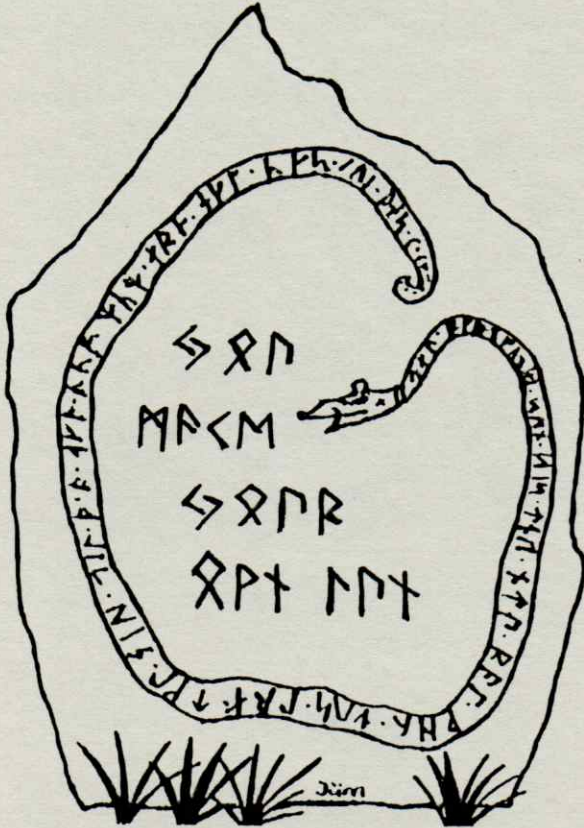


THE RUNSTONE



FALL 1993 NUMBER 5



**THE RUNESTONE** is a journal of the ancient Northern European religion known as Asatru. It is dedicated to our Gods and Goddesses, to the people of the North, and to the values of courage, freedom, and individuality within the context of kinship.

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The opinions in this publication, unless otherwise noted, are those of the editor. We read all correspondence carefully, but the press of other commitments may prevent replies. For our mailing address, please see the back cover.

## CALENDAR

**SEPTEMBER 21** - This is the Fall Equinox, or Winter Finding, when day and night are of equal length. Today is a harvest festival, and you can celebrate it with a meal at which you express thanks to the Gods for the bounty of the soil. Raise a toast of your favorite drink to the Goddess Freya, and to her brother Frey.

**OCTOBER 8** - Today is a Day of Remembrance for Erik the Red, father of Leif Erikson. Erik was a stalwart fan of Thor, strongest (and, luckily, friendliest) of the Gods. Honor Leif's father with a toast, by praising Thor for such robust vikings. Do something for a friend, in imitation of Thor.

**OCTOBER 17** - Winter Nights is in honor of the disir. These are female fertility spirits, ruled over by Freya. The female ancestors are sometimes counted among them, so recall some outstanding women in your family line. Do you have photos of them you can look at? The mood is one of conservation of resources in preparation for the

## UP FRONT

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...And it's a good thing we have the space, because we have a lot to say. I've always been partial to Winter Nights (because I'm partial to Freya, I suppose) and I hope my enthusiasm shines through in our lead article. Blessings of the beautiful Goddess to you all!

Maddy's written three articles/poems for this issue, and they're woven in and out, from page to page, between our other offerings. She starts off by challenging us to revive the art of storytelling, then reports a delightfully ambiguous experience with Odin...and finishes up with some even more delightful and very UNambiguous opinions on dirt, literal and otherwise. There's a lot of good thinking, and feeling, in all these pages and I'm sure you'll enjoy them as much as I did.

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word. What does this mean for our future? Lots. How can you find out more? Read my article, of course!

Finally, we've revived a **Runestone** institution - our letters column from days of yore, "Moot Point". Here's your chance to sound off. Why should Maddy and I have all the fun?

Have a great autumn. See you again in the middle of winter's chill!

Steve McNallen and  
Maddy Hutter

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# Winter Nights

By Stephen McNallen

At the moment of death, men are said to often call out to their mothers. It doesn't matter if they are elders dying of old age or youngsters expiring of battle wounds; the flight to the safety and security of the maternal bosom overrides age and circumstance.

Is it any wonder, then, that we turn to the solidity and comfort of the feminine when faced with an event even more extreme than our own deaths - the annual decline of the sun herself, and the onset of winter's hardships? Remember what the cold season is like in the Northlands. The earth lies blanketed in snow and ice. Life itself appears to have withdrawn, to have gone into hibernation. Food stocks dwindle day by day, and the wood pile shrinks as the weeks endlessly follow one after the other. There's Yule and Thorrablot to break the monotony, but spells of cabin fever creep in between bouts of winter sports and hunting. Nature is subdued almost to the point of death, and the near absence of the sun calls to mind Hel's frigid halls.

As October rolls around and the leaves fall before the rapidly cooling weather, we take deliberate measures to affirm life, to call upon the reserves of power and might in the ancestral line, and to touch the patient, mothering strength of the feminine. On the Saturday between October 11th and 17th, by ancient custom, we formalize these sentiments in the festival of Winter Nights.

There are three foundations to this celebration: the Goddess Freya, her retinue of female fertility spirits called the *disir*, and the honored female ancestors. To our folk in the old days, these overlapped and blurred into one another, yet each can be treated individually as we examine this holy day from our twentieth century

viewpoint.

Freya is good to begin with, how vivid individual well known in the world around Asatru for more than a very long time. Goddess of love and fertility, that she is, and that she's tough (Half the women love her, and she's leader of the very ancient picture of Freya, think back to the Conan movie. A fighter, lithe and strong, Cimmerian companion...an enthusiastic of a protective influence that reaches the *fylgja*, or guardian spirit of those during the battle among the standing

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Now let's look at the *disir*. We know a lot. The word translates as "begin to tell the whole story. The *disir*



viewpoint.

Freya is good to begin with, because she's a clearly defined, vivid individual well known in the myths. Everyone who's been around Asatru for more than a very short time knows she is the Goddess of love and fertility, that she's extraordinarily beautiful, and that she's tough (Half the warriors slain in battle are claimed by her, and she's leader of the very un-sissy valkyries). For a quick picture of Freya, think back to the character of Valeria, in the first Conan movie. A fighter, lithe and strong, as daring as her muscular Cimmerian companion...an enthusiastic lovmaker...and possessed of a protective influence that reached beyond the grave, like that of the *fylgja*, or guardian spirit of Norse lore (Remember that scene during the battle among the standing stones, when she came back to save Conan's life?).

**Because of Freya's key importance at Winter Nights, a ritual in her honor is always suitable.**

Freya, rather than the disir or the female ancestors themselves, is in charge of Winter Nights because she's more lively, more active, more thoroughly in the here-and-now. As we shall see, Freya is much more in the present than are the ancestors,

who are bound up in the layers of history and precedent that make up the past. The spirits we call the disir are also present-oriented, but they are subordinate to Freya and they do not have the advantage of individual identities - we do not know their names or habitations, or anything about them on a one-by-one basis. Our lovely Goddess, then, has the role of directing the power from the past that is supplied by the ancestors, and she in turn delegates responsibilities to the disir.

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seem related to the valkyries and to the "fates" or nornir, and as we've indicated, they have no separate, individual identity. They're thought of as female and they have to do with fertility - but beyond that we have to dig into our intuition as well as what we know about Germanic concepts of the soul, if we'd find out more.

To our ancestors, the soul wasn't the simple thing it is in Christian belief. The non-material part of us consists of several different components, each of which has a unique function and an appropriate destination after the knot that we call the self unravels at death. The physical body, the mind, the spiritual breath of life, and other more mysterious parts that have to do with disembodied energy and even "luck" all go to make us the complex beings each one of us is. To me, the disir are a manifestation of those great foremothers' souls. They are the elemental energy, the portion of the ancestors residing in the past which can project itself into the present. The disir are more generalized, more archetypal, and less personalized than the ancestors themselves. They are Goddesshood made generic...but never bland or common!

**To our ancestors, the soul wasn't the simple thing it is in Christian belief.**

The disir help things happen. Does the corn need to grow higher? Is the new calf a little sickly? Sounds like a job for Freya's special assistants. As an

ex-science teacher, I think of them doing all sorts of other things, like boosting photosynthesis or helping in cell division, but that may be just my rational mind working on overtime. Whatever their specific chores, the disir need honoring. One excellent way to do this is by setting out offerings of ale, mead, or milk. Talk to them, befriend them, invoke their aid in the name of their wondrous Mistress.

Finally, we get to the noble women of the clan line, as we know them from geneology and lore. The spirit of Winter Nights shines strongly through them because they are, after all, human and we can connect emotionally with them. We have only to think of the mothers and grandmothers of our own acquaintance, as they were or as they should have been. Strong, conserving, patient, stable, wise - mothering. Freya aside for the moment, there is a powerful dose of Frigga here. As Odin's wife and mother of the Gods, she is all these

characteristics carried to their human forms. The living are more patient than the dead. Influences are, just as Frigga is half of the Odin, belonging in one sense to the past, to shape it. They live on in us, and the mystery of the amazing beings that

One woman from the sagas who has great clarity and vigor is Unn the Deaf, who lived in the Faroe Islands to Iceland, she was known for selecting suitable mates for her children, her wealth, and granting them the grace of her ancestor. Unn worked her will here and there, departed for her next adventures, and was buried in a ship burial. Fortunate indeed are those who know her!

Winter Nights is a rich festival, and the ways because the three aspects of the year are so distinct and open to your ideas, or make up your own, consistent with

This year, when the leaves have fallen, the breeze has a new and surprising character, the gilded trees be a gift from Freya, and a kiss from the foremothers. The disir are strong, and soft bosoms and strong arms. Hail the Disir! Hail the Great Women!

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characteristics carried to their harmonious ultimate. Patient? None are more patient than the dead. Influential? They are half of all we are, just as Frigga is half of the Odin-Frigga partnership. Though belonging in one sense to the past, to Urth, they reach into the present to shape it. They live on in us, and in a sense they ARE us. Such is the mystery of the amazing beings that we are!

One woman from the sagas who expresses this spirit with great clarity and vigor is Unn the Deep-Minded. From the Orkney and Faroe Islands to Iceland, she established strong family lines by selecting suitable mates for her children, bestowing her wisdom and wealth, and granting them the greatest gift of all - herself as an ancestor. Unn worked her will here in the world of humanfolk, then departed for her next adventures in the Beyond with a marvelous ship burial. Fortunate indeed are those who can count descent from her!

Winter Nights is a rich festival, one you can celebrate in many ways because the three aspects of the feminine we honor at this time of year are so distinct and open to praise. Consult Living Asatru for ideas, or make up your own, consistent with the spirit of the occasion.

This year, when the leaves turn golden and the evening breeze has a new and surprising bite to it, welcome the changes. Let the gilded trees be a gift from Freya, and the icy touch on your face a kiss from the foremothers. The days grow shorter, but the clan is strong, and soft bosoms and strong arms will keep us. Hail Freya! Hail the Disir! Hail the Great Women of Old!

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# Storytelling in the 1990's

By Maddy Hutter

As we all know, the stirrings of the Gods and Goddesses are reaching mainstream America. Recently, I attended a Storytelling Festival close to my home, and I'd like to describe my very mixed reactions.

First, the good. The festival was held at a small site containing an old country schoolhouse and a few acres of grass and trees. Behind the schoolhouse is a picnic area and beyond that, a simple amphitheatre with a wooden stage and rough benches in a sloping semi-circle. Pine trees surround the area, offering protection from wind and sun and giving a woodsy ambiance. It was an ideal setting.

Although there were thousands of tickets sold, and cars spilled out of the tiny parking lot and down the rural road, the size of the festival was well controlled. It stopped short of being either a hippy nightmare or a garish, over-organized commercial event. The tone was rustic, but comfortable.

The stories were, for the most part, well-told, entertaining and instructive. I heard a heart-stopping version of the Greek legend describing Atalanta and the apples, and a take-with-me-to-the-

grave-scary Bluebeard story. A teller from Minnesota brought the traditional farm to life with his kindly understanding and genial reminiscences.

But there were the negatives. The audience was solidly a left wing, Birkenstocks and pink T-shirt crowd, and several storytellers played to the political assumptions of this group, thereby limiting the significance of the myth, legend or story being told.

The program was, of course, carefully multicultural, with Chinese, Jewish and Hispanic women, and black and Native American men, alongside the European farmer and storytelling master of ceremonies. Actually, apart from the silliness of such a contrived lesson in ethnicity, I enjoyed the comparison of stories and styles. While my spirit resounded to the Greek myths and the Minnesota farmer, I admired the steadfast authenticity of the Native American. His animal stories, laced with tribal language and accompanied by graphic hand gestures, were touchingly profound, and performed with perfect timing and expression. The Chinese woman was less memorable, but inoffensive; her place on the program looked like tokenism to me. What was interesting were the stories and delivery of the Jewish and African-American tellers. Both were slick, highly theatrical and very polished. It was almost television

right there under the evening stars. While I laughed and clapped with everyone at the conclusion of their glitzy efforts, I felt I had just seen a skit from Saturday Night Live rather than heard an ancient, psyche-driven story.

I ended up feeling glad that European stories are not media news; our tales, though forgotten by many, have, at least, not been co-opted by the hollowness of



By Maddy Hutter

**Tonight I looked in Odessa  
On Tyrnsday, called his name  
With blood I begged  
did he?**

**One eye was black and  
The other closed, still green  
I thought I saw a friend  
wondered.**

**There are no deals with  
Who know your deepest  
If you want luck to come  
make it.**

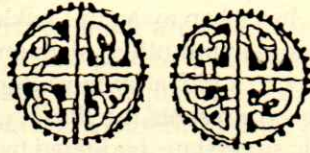
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public approval. I vote for a grand telling of Asa-stories by us and for us in a similar outdoors spot, but without politics, without propaganda, and without self-conscious universalism. When shall we meet? And what tale will you tell?



By Maddy Hutter

**Tonight I looked in Odin's eye,  
On Tyr's day, called his name.  
With blood I begged him notice me;  
did he?**

**One eye was black and round and clear  
The other closed, slit-grim.  
I thought I saw a friend, and then  
wondered.**

**There are no deals with woeful Gods  
Who know your deepest secrets  
If you want luck to come from them,  
make it.**

**Tonight I looked in Odin's eye  
I thought I saw him wink.  
It caught me by surprise, for a  
moment.**



# THE Folk, Asafolk, and Native Peoples

By Stephen McNallen

Our culture is being dismantled, our numbers are shrinking, and we as a people are being marginalized out of existence. The television has taken away our folklore, and replaced the traditional values of our people with other, alien ones. More and more, the essential "us" gives way to a global monoculture, a grey uniformity of thought which nevertheless presents the illusion of color and variety. Plugged into the electronic superstate, badgered by the advertisements of the produce-and-consume mentality, we become just another set of interchangeable units in the multinational, multicultural mix.

## QUESTION: Who's talking?

Well, it could be Steve McNallen, of course. He's been known to make statements like that. But it might not be Steve, or even a follower of Asatru...and it might not even be anyone of European ancestry. The truth is, we Eurofolk have lots of company when it comes to anxiety about preserving our ancestral heritage, both cultural and biological. All around the world, native peoples are threatened with the extinction of their folkways, the occupation of their traditional lands by outsiders, and even their eradication as a people. It seems we have something in common. What are the implications of this? What can we learn from their crises? Can we be sympathetic to the plight of these tribes and communities while still keeping a vigilant eye on our own interests?

We'll be coming back to these questions and others. For now, let's start with the crucial distinction between a nation and a state. According to international law, a nation is a group of people who share a common heritage, language, geography, culture, political system, and a desire to associate with each other. The Sioux, the Karen, and the Frisians are examples of nations. States, on the other hand, are unifying political systems which may include many nations (as defined above) within their borders. Another word for nation could be "people", and for state, "country". The U.S. is a *state* claiming sovereignty over some two hundred Indian *nations*. There are fifty-some nations within the Chinese state, a dozen or so in Burma, and so forth.

For years we've heard the terms "native" and "indigenous" used to describe people who live in nations of the kind we're talking about. This is commonly understood to mean tribes of Indians, Africans, Asians, as well

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as some other groups. It is assumed that Eurofolk are by definition non-native. We are the "solution" in politically correct eyes. The Frisians and other folk groups are the only exceptions granted Eurofolk as oppressors.

One of the main reasons for writing this is to challenge the convention. *Everyone is native to somewhere.*

Go back to those international groups that call themselves Eurofolk - People of the North, Caucasians, etc. - who choose to call ourselves - are much too diverse to be a single nation. We spring from a common source, but our original racialiation have given us a collection of distinct heritages. The Irish have much in common with the English, but their differences. Likewise, while our languages are related, we cannot understand Icelandic without special study. Our speech systems vary in their details, too.

But if Eurofolk in general do not constitute a distinct nation, do Hispanics in general, nor Blacks and Asians. These racial groupings are indeed significant. They are nations - not "a folk" but "the Folk". While they do not constitute a distinct nation, they do understand this, since it has a lot to do with their survival.

Let's talk about a hypothetical nation of people of American origin, living in any particular geographic area. They're interacting with each other on a common level in regards to nationhood?

**HERITAGE** - Unless they're all from the same area, the details of their heritage will differ. All have a common history and traditions of Europe. Underneath, they have a virtually identical genetic endowment. They are a nation, Americans (whatever that means anyone with a common bond.

**LANGUAGE** - Their native language is essentially Germanic language with borrowings from other languages. In addition, Asafolk have a special relationship to our religion and the culture from which our language, metagenetics, blot, disir, the names of the gods, etc. words that set our language apart from that of other nations.

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as some other groups. It is assumed that Eurofolk are not part of this picture; we are by definition non-native. We are "part of the problem, not the solution" in politically correct eyes. The Frisians, the Sami, and a few other folk groups are the only exceptions grudgingly allowed to this idea of Eurofolk as oppressors.

One of the main reasons for writing this article is to dispute this convention. *Everyone is native to somewhere*, and that includes us!

Go back to those international criteria defining a nation. True, Eurofolk - People of the North, Caucasians, White people, whatever we choose to call ourselves - are much too diverse a group to qualify as a single nation. We spring from a common source, but our wanderings since that original raciation have given us a collection of related-but-not-identical heritages. The Irish have much in common with the Swedes, yet there are differences. Likewise, while our languages are distant cousins, an American cannot understand Icelandic without special instruction. Our political systems vary in their details, too.

But if Eurofolk in general do not comprise a single nation, neither do Hispanics in general, nor Blacks and Asians for that matter. These larger racial groupings are indeed significant. They are more like collections of nations - not "a folk" but "the Folk". While all White people taken together do not constitute a distinct nation, subgroupings of us do. We need to understand this, since it has a lot to do with us as Asafolk.

Let's talk about a hypothetical collection of Asafolk, all of European-American origin, living in any particular geographical region. Assume they're interacting with each other on a continual basis. How do they stand in regards to nationhood?

**HERITAGE** - Unless they're all Scottish or English or whatever, the details of their heritage will differ. All, however, are heir to the general history and traditions of Europe. Underlying the national differences is a virtually identical genetic endowment. Their more recent experience as Americans (whatever that means anymore) gives them still one more common bond.

**LANGUAGE** - Their native tongue is American English, an essentially Germanic language with borrowings from other Indo-European speech. In addition, Asafolk have a specialized vocabulary relating directly to our religion and the culture from which it derives. Asafolk, kindred, metagenetics, blot, disir, the names of the runes - these add up to scores of words that set our language apart from that of the society around us.



# A SAMPLE OF EURO-NATIONS

## The Sami

The Sami, or Lapps, are a Caucasian folk spread throughout the Arctic regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. For thousands of years, they have survived in their harsh climate by herding their reindeer across the tundra. They were well known to our viking ancestors, and had a reputation for being mighty in magic.

In recent times, the demand for cheap energy has prompted the invasion of Samiland by the modern states - principally Norway, which wants to develop the hydroelectric potential of the area. Sami culture has been disrupted as a result, and the people have been alienated from the land which is the basis of their sustenance.

Among Sami political demands are: laws to protect their traditional Sami lifestyle, recognition of the Sami tongue as an official language, legislation to guarantee their rights to land and water, and the halting of a major hydroelectric project on the Alta-Kautokemo River.

"If we are to have a future at all," says activist Ande Gaup, "we must first gain control over our own lives and our land. But the colonizers have been standing on our toes for so long that they get angry when we try to lift our feet."

## The Frisians

Stretching from the northern part of the Netherlands eastward along the coast as far as the German state of Schleswig-Holstein, and including a number of islands in the North Sea, as well, Friesland was once a stronghold of Asatru. Christianity is in power at the moment, but the old heathen spirit of independence still remains.

The Frisian struggle today revolves around language rights. An overwhelming majority of the people in the western part of Friesland speak their native tongue, with lesser numbers in the eastern reaches able to communicate well. Interestingly, the Frisian language may be the closest linguistic cousin to our own English.

Frisians lived in a "Free Farmers' Republic" until 1796, practicing a rugged democracy inherited ultimately from their heathen forebears. The tradition runs deep: their ancestors worshipped Friagabi, a God whose name means "giver of freedom".

The Frisian National Party was formed in 1962. It won some small parliamentary success, but the FNP has since lost its positions adopted by other parties in self-defense.

## The Boers

The Boers, or Afrikaners, are proof that a nation does not have to be in Europe to be of Europe. Dutch settlers landed in South Africa in 1652. Since that time, they have maintained their identity despite buffeting by the British (with whom they fought a war), confrontations with various tribes that migrated into their lands, and, more recently, the indignation of world opinion.

They are united by a common Dutch-derived language, and by a severe Protestantism. Another unifying factor is their minority status. Afrikaner culture and ethnic identity would be quickly submerged in the vast Black population surrounding them. This realization has prompted the Boers to seek an independent homeland within the boundaries of the present Republic of South Africa. An African National Congress government will not allow this to come peacefully, however. The greatest challenge facing the Afrikaner nation, then, is military rather than linguistic or cultural, as in the other Euro-nations highlighted in this article.



# AMPLE O-NATIONS

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## The Calasans

The Calasans were unknown until very recently...about two minutes ago, in fact! Made up of CALifornian ASAfolk, they are distinguished by their religion, by their language - a variant of modern American English - and by their governmental system, which is based on a loose network of families and clans.

Three challenges face the Calasa: They are dispersed widely over their geographical range, they are small in numbers (though larger than some recognized Native American tribes), and their territory is being invaded by other ethnic groups. Calasan hopes for growth depend largely on recruitment from the general population of European-descended people in the region. These latter, however, are rapidly becoming a minority in their own land. Such demographic disaster is common among nations at the whim of states; China's colonization of Tibet is a similar case.

Currently, Asafolk everywhere are trying to bring their kindred Eurofolk back to their native religion. The long-term result will hopefully be a confederation of nations tied together by a common European ancestry and by Asatru, yet differentiated according to regional needs and inclinations. These nations, of which the Calasans would be one, will then be able to interact positively and strongly in dealings with other folk nations.



**GEOGRAPHY** - As suggested above, our hypothetical Asafolk live in a specific place - Wisconsin, for example, or the plains of west Texas. It's an area small enough to relate to. Our Asafolk know the sacred power spots of the land, and they feel an identification with the soil and the landscape. Along with this comes an awareness of the local ecology, and a desire to help maintain its harmony.

**CULTURE** - European-American culture, and the specialized ways of Asatru, will be a unifying factor among members of the group. In some ways this will resemble the popular culture around them, but in other aspects it will be quite distinct. Our Asafolk may, for example, spend less time in front of the television and more time making mead or visiting each other.

**POLITICAL SYSTEM** - Relations with the exterior society will be determined by traditional American institutions but Asafolk have their own system of moots, things, and Althings which form an alternate or parallel government. Added to this are informal systems of networking and mutual support which will continue to evolve over the years.

**DESIRE FOR COMMON ASSOCIATION** - Let's assume that our imaginary Asafolk want to be connected with each other and to participate in the systems and relationships mentioned in the above paragraphs.

It seems to me that there are a number of Asa-nations taking shape within the borders of the United States and elsewhere around the world. The same could be said for all sorts of non-Asatru groupings, of course.

So far, we've been talking about more or less local phenomena - groupings of Asafolk concentrated in a specific bioregion, or within the borders of a political subdivision such as California or Texas. These tribes or nations can be called a folk, or people united by common heritage, history, worldview, and aspirations. What about the bigger picture? I can hear the arguments: "Aren't you selling Eurofolk short? Western man has shown a remarkable talent for building large and complex civilizations. Why fragment our people? Breaking us down into ever smaller functional units only weakens us and makes us more vulnerable to conquest - cultural or physical - by outside groups. We need to concentrate on European-descended people as a whole".

It's true, we have a demonstrated genius for high culture. There was a time when this was good, because the resulting societies were expressions of our ancient folk-soul. But what have we today? Time and Newsweek subvert our ancestral values. M.C. Hammer is not part of us. The multinational corporations that want to sell Coca-Cola and Madonna in every village from England to Nigeria have a vested interest in a uniform world economy and

culture; they can only be hostile to us. They are directed by people who are biologically European in spirit. Much of what passes for European culture is international in its reach, is actually an American byway.

Indeed, the preservation of the European culture is the whole. Since the emerging technology has abandoned us, we must preserve our culture in a thousand tribal lifeboats against the forces of conformity and homogenization. Let the new World Order. We will save the best of the West from sparks from the soul of our people!

This does not mean that we turn our backs on the European peoples. The ties to our ethnic roots are obvious and always relevant. They, too, are connected to the same cosmic frequencies. Just as we retain their identity but still consider themselves Native American peoples, so we have to remain true to the folk from which we spring. Our emerging culture (unlike the Iroquois Confederation) is based on cooperation.

The tribalist perspective puts a positive spin on culture and race. On the one hand it affirms the existence of folk nations. At the same time it points out our interest with other folk groups around the world. It points toward boring sameness engendered by a misinterpretation of human existence. Under the banner of "development", and spurred on by institutions like the World Bank and the World Bank, nations are being created that claim sovereignty over them. The forces of globalization will smash Eurofolk tomorrow. We must write. While stubbornly looking outwards, we must recognize that in other ways we must stand against a common foe.

The idea that Asafolk can evolve into a new folk is the criteria for "native peoples" will be the height of political incorrectness to suggest that we are other than First World oppressors. However, we are not. It is time to look outside the common world. It is time to look outside the common world in a new way - a way that can include all people yet related peoples forming part of the whole.



culture; they can only be hostile to us. "The System", though largely directed by people who are biologically Eurofolk, has little to do with our spirit. Much of what passes for European culture, particularly that which is international in its reach, is actually an abdication of our values and folkways.

Indeed, the preservation of the European spirit lies in the parts, not the whole. Since the emerging technological world civilization has abandoned us, we must preserve our cultural, religious, and biological essence in a thousand tribal lifeboats capable of surviving on the sea of conformity and homogenization. Let the monoculture promote the New World Order. We will save the best of the West from destruction; we will fan sparks from the soul of our people!

This does not mean that we turn our backs on the larger family of the European peoples. The ties to our ethnic kin around the planet are obvious and always relevant. They, too are part of our blood and bone; we resonate to the same cosmic frequencies. Just as the individual Indian tribes retain their identity but still consider themselves part of the larger family of Native American peoples, so we have to remember our bonds to the greater Folk from which we spring. Our emerging Asa-tribes will form alliances (not unlike the Iroquois Confederation) to preserve peace and to promote cooperation.

The tribalist perspective puts a positive light on the questions of culture and race. On the one hand it affirms the rights and uniqueness of the Eurofolk nations. At the same time it points out that we have a common interest with other folk groups around the world. Together we can stop the thrust toward boring sameness engendered by a solely economic interpretation of human existence. Under the guise of "national integration" and "development", and spurred on by institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, nations everywhere are under assault by the states that claim sovereignty over them. The powers that crush the Karen today will smash Eurofolk tomorrow - indeed, they are doing so even as I write. While stubbornly looking out for our own interests, we need to recognize that in other ways we must stand alongside other peoples against a common foe.

The idea that Asafolk can evolve into a collection of nations and meet the criteria for "native peoples" will be novel to some. Certainly it is the height of political incorrectness to suggest that Eurofolk can be anything other than First World oppressors. However, we have let others define us for too long. It is time to look outside the common paradigms and to see ourselves in a new way - a way that can lead us upward, as a collection of unique yet related peoples forming part of the cultural mosaic on this Earth.



# LAUGHTER of the GODS

By Stephen McAllen

**F**ierce, genocidal Yaweh, intolerant Allah, intense, fanatical Jesus - the gods and demigods of the Middle East glare down at us from frescoed ceilings and from our childhood memories. Add to these the pressures and frustrations of modern life, and is it any wonder we have so much trouble smiling? Even Asafolk succumb to the plague. There are deadlines to meet, letters to answer, meetings to attend...Whatever happened to the spontaneity, the wonder, the FUN that was supposed to come with spiritual liberation?

Every now and then the Gods crash in on our seriousness and put things back in perspective. It has happened to me twice recently.

I was bothered by a crisis of the sort that makes one call out to the Gods for wisdom and self-knowledge. As part of my endless wrangling over the issue at hand, I found myself doing runic divination on an almost daily basis - much more than is normally my style. I'd toss the runes, close my eyes, and let my hand wander until it touched one of the staves, then I'd pick it up and contemplate the chosen symbol. For several days in a row (four or five, at least) one and only one rune presented itself

- *perthro*, the dice cup. Clearly something extraordinary was going on; the chances of this happening were one in a few hundred thousands. I pondered all the associations of *perthro*. I thought on fate and chance and I meditated on the Well of Wyrd. I contemplated divination itself - but I wasn't getting anywhere. Something was wrong with the phrasing of my question itself.

Finally, it dawned on me what was going on. I had hit the cosmic default button. The Gods, or the runes or whatever, were sending me an accurate description of my current situation. "That's right, dummy! You're using divination!" The runes were confirming the fact that I was using the runes. Now, you can look at this as a default in the multiversal programming, or you can think of it as a belly laugh on the part of the Gods - I prefer the latter, because then I can laugh along with them. In any case, it was a hint to me that doing divination wasn't going to solve my problem for me, that there was no easy way out of my dilemma.

Day before yesterday I slipped once again into serious mode (I do that rather easily, as anyone who knows me can testify). It was dusk. Sunna had set, and

her glow was outlining the tall pines as the first stars began to glimmer in the west. All was quiet. I welcomed the feeling of holiness that descended over the landscape like night's soft blanket, for once again I had been wrestling with problems that left me tired.

Gazing at the crescent moon, my eyes were drawn to the only stars yet visible in the darkening dome. There were only five in that entire part of the sky, and they formed a near-perfect question mark, with the moon as the bottom point. The form was precise and unmistakable. Here was my answer from the Gods, written large across the sky itself: "Learn to live with ambiguity."

*Kind of books that limit the runes to mere scholarship? Want practical application you can put to work now, today?*

Fig...

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Steve! We're not letting you off easily! Figure it out for yourself!"

I laughed. Nor did I laugh alone; the powers beyond the stars chuckled with me. Yes, I had to work things out for myself, but the overall feeling was one of reassurance, of concern, of connection. Things would be all right - especially if I kept my sense of cosmic humor. In that way, if no other, the Gods would lend a helping hand. Odin, with his one eye, may appear fearsome - but sometimes I think he's the God of the Perpetual Wink!

(On a similar theme, see Maddy's poem, "Propitiation" on Page 7.)

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*Tired of books that limit the runes to magic or obscure scholarship? Want practical affirmations and uplifting thoughts you can put to work now, today?*

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# BITS & PIECES

Several of you have written with problems arising from the suspension of The Odinist - problems with orders and the like. Please be patient with us; we're trying to sort it all out!

Despite all the obstacles, we've produced **Thunder from the North: The Way of the Teutonic Warrior**. A collection of essays on Teutonic martial philosophy and practice, it will be available for shipping on October 1st. Advance orders are being taken; the cost is \$4.00 per copy.

## THUNDER FROM THE NORTH

*The Way of the Teutonic Warrior*  
By Stephen McNallen

For those who'd rather be wolves than sheep, this is an exploration of Western martial philosophy (and practical techniques) for today's warrior. Available from Steve McNallen & Maddy Hutter, P.O.Box 445, Nevada City, CA 95959. \$4.

THE RUNESTONE  
16

We recently got a letter from the editor of Romuva, a journal of Lithuanian heathendom. If you'd like to know more about them, you could write to P.O. Box 232, Station "D", Etobicoke, Ontario M9A 4X2, Canada. This meshes nicely with my interest in European folk groups, expounded upon elsewhere in this issue...I'm looking forward to seeing a copy of their work.

The wonderful craftsmen at Heritage and Tradition (C.P. 244, Succ. P.A.T., Montreal, Quebec, HiB 5K3, Canada) have completed their sunwheel rings - and they are beautiful. They're silver, and \$99 will get one sent to you postpaid.



**RUNE NAME:** Ansuz

**KEY CONCEPTS:** Odin's rune, symbolizing inspiration, spiritual energy and divine communication. In poetry, ecstasy and magic, the mysterious wisdom of the Gods is transformed and offered to humankind for re-expression in our lives.

**AFFIRMATION:** No problems confound me. Odin's wisdom and inspiration flood my being.



By Martin...

**D**irt. Yes, dirt. From the life-giving call of land, dirt has been...  
Springtime energy called...  
few weeks. I've been marking out paths...  
weed-entangled slopes and even digging...  
touch with the soil in a way I have...

I began this labor for reasons...  
Our place had looked like a field for...  
to me, and a spiritual pulse accompan...  
and dusty debris from the bases of trees...  
richness, I began to "see" my land. The...  
stood out, essential and secure. I felt...  
energy quivered in the sharp shoots...  
black background. And othalaz lay there...  
ancient and solid.

In any case, I knew something...  
my deck and felt a love for my piece...  
before. By working, getting my hands...  
myself with what used to be simply...

Dirt, it occurred to me, is a great...  
dreams, all get cluttered and overgrown...  
dwell on. Periodically, we must dig...  
jungle of conflicting desires to return...  
matters most to us. The cycle of life, death...  
in every realm, but nowhere is its truth...  
dirt by our back doors. Remember the...  
with clay? We too must use the regener...  
whenever we can.

One of the characteristics of nature...  
association with land. So often, rebels...  
who seem to be fighting political battles...  
simply struggling to stay on their particu...

THE RUNESTONE



# DIRT

By Maddy Hutter

**D**irt. Yes, dirt. From the life-giving soil of the present to the ancestral call of land, dirt has been on my mind as well as my hands.

Springtime energy called to me from my own acre of dirt in the last few weeks. I've been marking out paths with stones, raking and clearing weed-entangled slopes and even digging beds for roses, literally getting in touch with the soil in a way I haven't in years.

I began this labor for reasons of home improvement and esthetics. Our place had looked like a field for too long! But the power of dirt soon got to me, and a spiritual pulse accompanied my efforts. As I cleared the dry and dusty debris from the bases of trees, exposing a dark, moistly-scented richness, I began to "see" my land. The lines of slope and stem and trunk stood out, essential and secure. I felt the power of runes - fehu's fertile life energy quivered in the sharp shoots arrowing upward, green against their black background. And othalaz lay there too, in my family portion of turf, ancient and solid.

In any case, I knew something was happening when I looked over my deck and felt a love for my piece of earth that I hadn't experienced before. By working, getting my hands dirty, I had connected and involved myself with what used to be simply property.

Dirt, it occurred to me, is a great metaphor; our relationships, jobs, dreams, all get cluttered and overgrown in the same way as the land we dwell on. Periodically, we must dig down deep, clearing out the confusing jungle of conflicting desires to return to the sweet and simple truth of what matters most to us. The cycle of life, death, rebirth/life proceeds inevitably in every realm, but nowhere is its truth more readily apparent than in the dirt by our back doors. Remember the Norns nourishing the World Tree with clay? We too must use the regenerative powers of soil wherever and whenever we can.

One of the characteristics of native peoples is their deep-seated association with land. So often, rebels and insurgents all over the world who seem to be fighting political battles against various tyrannies are in fact simply struggling to stay on their particular piece of soil. The Tibetans high



in the Himalayas, the Karen in the hills between Burma and Thailand, the American Indians are obvious examples. All are fighting to the death for their right to live and work on "their" land. Many of these peoples do not live in our sanitized, processed and dirt-abhorrent world. Their daily lives are involved with the earth; they have kept their connection with it in ways that we have lost. It is true that we spend time "landscaping" or "gardening", but often, our too-busy, too-mobile lives make a true rootedness in the land very difficult.

And so we lose touch with a wildness, an instinctive, ancient part of ourselves that is a good deal of what Asatru is all about. When I moved rocks from hillside to path, I offered my efforts to the spirits of the land; setting my roses into their new bed, I called on Frigga to protect and nurture them; last Odin's Day I made my offering to the High One among the trees instead of in his usual candlelit spot inside the house. Working with the dirt has reawakened my soul/soil identity. The musty depths of the earth renew my spirit just as they shelter and feed the bulbs I have planted.

So, as we work to revive the customs of Asatru, let's not forget the closer-to-the-earth ways of our ancestors. Dig in the soil and get your fingernails dirty once in a while. It could be that one day you'll need to love your acres enough to fight for them.

### BOOKS AND MORE!

**The Runestone** is proud to offer the following items. Make checks payable to *Stephen McNallen, P.O. Box 445, Nevada City, CA 95959*

**The House of the Wulfings** by William Morris. A tale of Teutons resisting Roman expansion. \$5.95

**Gods and Myths of Northern Europe** by H.R. Ellis Davidson. The classic overview of Asatru's mythology. \$6.95

**Wisdom from the Edda** - Distilled insights and musings from the world of the Norsemen. \$1.00

**Selections from the Havamal** - The "Words of the High One", Odin's advice to his folk. Illustrated. \$5.00

**The Call of Our Ancient Religion** by A. Rud Mills. The revival of Norse religion by the father of modern Odinism. \$3.00

**Pictures (8 1/2 x 11) ready for framing: Odin, Thor, The Gotland Runestone.** Any three for \$1.00

**Sunwheel lapel pins, silver with red enamel.** \$12.00



Once upon a time, there was a magazine that had a letters column called "Mail Train". In the 1990's, it still seems like a good idea to promise to print a particular letter, because you have to edit your letter to get it to fit. Without editing, you give you a forum for discussion and commentary.

Here we go...

Brother Steve,

My name is Jay Britton. I'm with A.P.C.I. We were informed by the Giallarhorn Book Service of Else's situation, and that THE RUNESTONE was available from the Giallarhorn Book Service.

I am already receiving THE RUNESTONE and it is very informative for our Fellowship meetings. Else is no longer with us. She was our Elder for two weeks as our Elder of the Fellowship. We need a sponsor. Do you know of anyone who can sponsor our group? We have eight brothers here and we can meet legally. Without a sponsor, we are not legal in here...

Thank you for your time.

Heilsa, Jay!

One of the biggest difficulties in getting a group to do about Else's vigorous prison outreach is the emphasis on it that she did, but on the other hand, the need for any project that can be of benefit to Asatru. Readers, a volunteer is clearly needed. Can you periodically and act as their sponsor? The larger burden of a prison outreach is on the shoulders of the larger burden of a prison outreach.

For what it's worth (and I think it's worth), the mailing list are all paying subscribers.



# MOOT POINT

*Once upon a time, there was a magazine called THE RUNESTONE and it had a letters column called "Moot Point". That was back in the 1980's. Now, in the 1990's, it still seems like a good idea - so here it is! Basic guidelines: We can't promise to print a particular letter, because there just isn't space. We may also have to edit your letter to get it to fit. Within those ground rules, we will do our best to give you a forum for discussion and comment in the pages of THE RUNESTONE.*

Here we go...

Brother Steve,

My name is Jay Britton. I'm with the Odinist Fellowship here at A.P.C.I. We were informed by the Odinist Fellowship in Crystal River of Else's situation, and that THE RUNESTONE is to be handling the material from the Giallarhorn Book Service.

I am already receiving THE RUNESTONE from you. It is very informative for our Fellowship meetings. We are having problems now that Else is no longer with us. She was our sponsor; she came up to see us every two weeks as our Elder of the Fellowship meetings. Now we are in need of a sponsor. Do you know of anyone who could possibly be one for our group? We have eight brothers here now in D.O.C. We need a sponsor so we can meet legally. Without a sponsor they don't want to do anything for us in here...

Thank you for your time.

In Troth,  
Jay Britton

Heilsa, Jay!

*One of the biggest difficulties in picking up the torch from the O.F. is what to do about Else's vigorous prison outreach. We just aren't in a position to put the emphasis on it that she did, but on the other hand we are not about to casually write off any project that can be of benefit to Asatru and the Folk. We want to help, if we can. Readers, a volunteer is clearly needed. Can any Florida Asafolk visit these guys periodically and act as their sponsor? For that matter, do any of you want to shoulder the larger burden of a prison ministry?*

*For what it's worth (and I think it's worth quite a lot), the prisoners on our mailing list are all paying subscribers; we don't do free subscriptions. This policy*



*eliminates many people who just want to get something in the mail and makes for greater sincerity than one might otherwise expect. Any takers? Drop us a letter!*

Hail Odin!  
Steve

Dear Runestone:

We enjoyed the article on the sauna and the accompanying invocation to Berkano very much. As to the question of whether or not our folk used sauna for bathing or ritual, I would think it very likely. How else would people bathe during the ice age or in northern climates in the winter? Most likely in some sort of sauna or sweat tent. The sweat lodge of the Amerindian was no doubt an integral custom of those tribes living in the northern latitudes, and probably for the same reason.

As a practitioner of sauna over the past several years I thought there were several additional things that it might be well to mention on the subject. (1) In a northern climate there are no birch leaves left on the bough during the winter. It would be necessary to collect, dry, and preserve them for the cold winter months. Loose leaves of the birch can also be employed by placing them on the coals (in a conventional sauna) or heating elements (if an electric sauna is used). A very pleasant, almost mint vapor is created in this way. (2) You failed to mention that most invigorating custom of rolling in fresh snow when you can't take any more sauna! Sounds harrowing to those uninitiated - but in fact it is comparable to laying down on cool bed sheets on a hundred-degree day. This is usually done several times. When you return to the sauna after a roll in the snow, your pores are open wide and it only takes five or ten minutes until you're steamed up and ready for another roll. The initial time to work up a sweat usually takes twenty minutes or more. (3) It should be noted that sauna is not advisable for children under about twelve years old, as their pulmonary systems have not developed the ability to regulate the necessary adjustments, and it can cause heart attacks and even death! It is also inadvisable to use alcohol or any medications before using a sauna. This holds true for hot tubs as well as steam baths.

Keep up the thought-provoking articles you have been doing on "living Asatru".

Hail Berkano!  
Robert.

Heilsa, Robert!

*Thanks for your practical pointers! I heartily recommend sauna to all our readers. The last time I did the sauna-and-snow routine was about twenty five years ago in Wichita Falls, Texas...Unforgettable!*

*Hail our Gods and Goddesses!*

Steve



scarcities of winter. A libation of ale, milk, or mead is traditionally poured onto the earth as an offering to the disir.

**NOVEMBER 11** - The Einherjar are the chosen heroes who sit in Odin's hall, and this day, the Feast of the Einherjar, is for them. On it we honor those dead kin who gave their lives for family and Folk. Celebrate Veteran's Day. If you have friends or relatives who died in battle, visit their graves. If that is not possible, offer a toast in their memory.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

---

### What about these Gods and Goddesses? Are they real?

Yes, Odin, Thor, Frigga, Skadi and all the rest do exist. They're not "made up" products of someone's overactive imagination. On the other hand, it's a mistake to confuse them with the popular images presented in the fascinating tales of Norse mythology. Most Christians don't believe their God is really a bearded figure sitting on a golden chair in a cloudy and angel-swarmed heaven. Likewise, we don't believe that Thor, for example, is truly a muscular, man-shaped being with a red beard and a big hammer. There IS a real Thor, but the mental and mythological picture we have of him is just something to help us approach an understanding of the reality behind the image.

### Do followers of Asatru pray to their Gods and Goddesses?

Yes, but prayer doesn't mean quite the same thing to us as it does to most non-Asafolk. We never surrender our will to the Gods or humble ourselves before them, because we see ourselves as their kin rather than as their property or slaves. We don't beg for favors or whine about our problems to them. Why should they want to hear all that? Besides, we want to elevate ourselves and rise toward the level of the Gods - and our trials can aid that evolutionary process.

We do, though, commune with them and honor them. Asafolk seek the blessings of the Gods through formal rites and informal meditations. Of course, living a full and virtuous life is a kind of prayer in itself. Religion should affect all parts of a person's life, not just some fragments we choose to call "religious".

- adapted from *What is Asatru?*  
(Available from Worldtree Publications)