

THE RINGS

Celebrating the Indigenous Religion of European Americans

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Thorgrun Odden
PO Box 1746
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FALL/WINTER 1996

ISSUE # 16/17



**SPECIAL
DOUBLE ISSUE!**

**KENNEWICK MAN --
Ancient Caucasians
in North America?**

**Keel Laid on AFA
Viking Ship!**

**THOR
God of Common
Sense**

Dealing with the Dead

**Listen to the
Ancestors!**

and much, much more!

ASATRU

AN OVERVIEW

Are you new to Asatru, or is this your first copy of The Runestone? If so, you might like a little background on what this is all about, so you can better understand the contents of our magazine.

Asatru is the original, pre-Christian religion of northwestern Europe. It was followed by the Germanic tribes that became today's Englishmen, Scandinavians, Dutch, and, of course, Germans. A related religion and way of life was practiced by the Celts - our modern Irish, Scottish, and Welsh. Because these two groups are so similar, it's fair to say that Asatru expresses the heritage of Northern European-descended people as a whole. In short, this is the faith of our ancestors! Because it is our native belief, we feel it best expresses our way of looking at the world. It helps us live lives of virtue and honor, in touch with the turning of the seasons and with all those who have gone before us. It is a spiritual path of wisdom and courage in a world that sorely needs these traits.

Our forebears believed in a number of Gods and Goddesses. Some of us think of them as real in the most literal sense, and others view them as symbols that help us understand the divine aspects of the universe. However you consider them, it is useful to know the names and roles of some of the main ones:

ODIN - father of the Gods, associated with wisdom, magic, and ecstasy
THOR - a God of strength and might, defender of Gods and humans
FRIGGA - mother of the Gods, wise, involved with family and children
TYR - renowned for valor, sacrifice, and warrior prowess
BALDER - most beautiful of the Gods, soft-spoken, brave, and good
SKADI - mountain-dwelling Goddess who hunts on skis
HEIMDAL - guardian of the Rainbow Bridge, leading to the realm of the Gods
IDUN - Goddess who keeps the magic apples that restore the Gods' youth
LOKI - mischievous trickster of the Gods who often works against their aims
FREYA - Goddess of love and fertility, but who also has a warrior aspect
FREY - a virile fertility God whose domain includes love, joy, and prosperity
NJORD - God connected with the sea as a source of food and wealth

What does our religion value? We preach and practice courage, honor, the importance of family and ancestral bonds, strength, freedom, and joyful, vigorous life.

The Runestone is published by the Asatru Folk Assembly, a modern European-American tribe honoring the spiritual path of our ancestors.

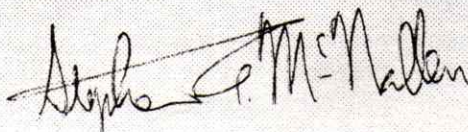
UP FRONT

This has been a difficult issue to put out, simply because things are changing so quickly that we never quite seem to catch up! Even today, just before taking this *Runestone* to the printers, I'm having to squeeze in essential updates so you'll have a fair picture of what's going on here.

An hour ago I got a call from a newspaper reporter in New York, wanting to know more about the AFA. Two days ago, it was a woman working for National Public Radio. Yesterday, we got a couple of paragraphs in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, in a news item that was picked up by the wire services and spread across the country. The reason for all this attention? The AFA filed in Federal court last week to prevent the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from turning over what may be an ancient Caucasian skeleton to a Native American tribe. You'll find the whole story in these pages - but suffice to say that some of our kinsmen, many thousands of years ago, may have made that long trek over the Bering land bridge.

On top of this excitement, the AFA may very well sue a major California newspaper for libel, in regard to a piece they did on "hate crimes." The Asatru Folk Assembly was listed as a "hate group" and the strong suggestion was given that we commit, encourage, or tolerate attacks on individuals because of their race. This is outrageous and, as you know, totally false. If an adequate retraction is not offered, we will go to court. Some financial help has already been promised, but we may be needing your help on this one!

These are tumultuous times for us AFAers, but with the stress and turmoil comes incredible opportunity. We are in a position to simultaneously bring Asatru to the forefront as a legitimate voice of ancestral European religion, and also to clear our name once and for all of the libel that some of our detractors would attach to us. Our attitude here is one of aggressive defense of the truth, and our morale is sky-high. Stand with us, and we can move on to great victories together!



FALL/WINTER 1996

THE RUNESTONE • A journal of evolutionary Asatru

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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.

THE RUNESTONE is published four times a year by the Asatru Folk Assembly at the equinoxes and the solstices. Subscriptions are \$12 per year in the U.S., \$15 per year in Canada, and \$18 per year overseas (\$24 Airmail), payable to the Asatru Folk Assembly, P.O. Box 445, Nevada City, CA 95959.

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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.

Submissions and articles are invited. Special thanks to Jon Eric Bengtsson and Stanley Nasuta for contributions to the issue.

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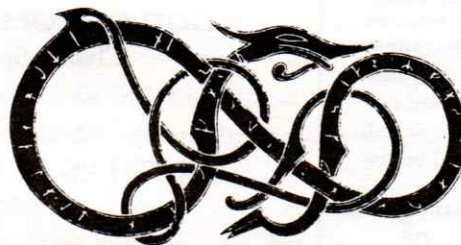
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Listen to the Mothers!

Wisdom from the Disir

STEPHEN A. McNALLEN

The disir are those ancient tribal mothers who have gone on from this life into the Otherworld. These powerful female ancestors, traditionally led by Freya, look on with loving interest in the affairs of their descendants. Nurturing, advising, helping out from time to time on the borders of perception, they remain an active, though normally hidden, part of the family.

The disir serve many functions, but one thing they do is to remind us that we are more than we appear to be. Like mountains jutting up from the sea floor, most of the essential "us" is hidden from view. Psychologists have long understood this idea; Freud and Jung alike told us that most of our mental processes are submerged below the threshold of awareness.

Most of us, however, have failed to see what this means to individual Asatruar. Beyond our immediate waking selves is the personal unconscious. It is laden with the mental "baggage" we acquire during our passage through life. Childhood memories, fears, traumatic events and impressions, superficial dreams that echo our daily lives, are all packed inside. Deeper still is the collective unconscious, the realm of deeper dreams and mythological motifs - where the ancestors speak to us, reminding us that we are part of something much older and larger, namely, our entire ancestral line. The disir, those mighty foremothers, talk to us in a whispering

that sounds like the fallen leaves, rustling in the chilling winds of autumn.

How arrogant it is, they tell us, to think that joining an organic religion is a matter of mere preference! To take up a tribal religion like Asatru, or Native American belief, or any other indigenous faith is to take up the ancestors themselves. Only those who are of their line can bear their weight. All real religion springs from the deepest recesses of the heart, not from the superficialities of logic and debate. The heart is tribal and ancestral, shaped by the forefathers and foremothers, and beating to the pulse they gave it.

But can ancestry really matter, in this age of Calvin Klein and Michael Jackson? The present popular culture is hostile to ancestors, because they imply something special, something that cannot be satisfied by good intentions. You can't buy ancestry, or use it to pretend that we are all blank slates at birth, ready to be programmed by the commercial state.

However, those who value the old ways, the true ways, have a weapon on their side in the theory known as "metagenetics." This theory flies in the face of contemporary, media-and-market-induced "culture." It states that beings who share a common ancestry are linked in many ways, some of which are obvious and others which are much more subtle, more spiritual. Metagenetics states that our biological, ancestral inheritance influences not only our obvious physical makeup,

but our behavior and spirituality as well. This worldview validates the voice of the disir.

Metagenetics may go against the current American materialist ethic, but, ironically, it is consistent with other very modern ideas. "Holistic" is a word we hear a lot these days. A holistic view of the human entity, for example, holds that body, mind, and spirit are not separate things, but represent a continuum. People are unitary organisms; all the different aspects of our beings work together to produce the sum of what we are.

Everyone understands that the body and the mind are linked. We all know that our mental processes and our moods are affected by everything from breakfast to booze to menstrual periods. Similarly, hypnosis, meditation, and biofeedback can alter our pulse rate and change the pattern of our brain waves.

Less apparent is the truth that the body - particularly the brain - and the spirit are just as surely connected. This wondrous lump of grey matter is the seat of logical thought - but it is much more than that. It is also the source of our deepest religious symbolism and our most profound spiritual longings. We think of the archetypes of Jungian psychology as "mental" or "psychic" things, but they correspond to specific physical structures. Briefly, they seem to originate in the deep areas we call the limbic system, but are modified and elaborated by

other portions of the brain, to include the cerebral cortex. [For an examination of archetypes and brain structure, see *Archetypes: A Natural History of the Unconscious*, by Anthony Stevens.]

It should not be surprising, then, that genetics, which shapes our cerebral cortex and the limbic system as surely as it influences the size of our ears, is also a factor in spiritual or psychic matters. The numinous, awe-inspiring patterns which inform our religious lives are, indirectly, products of the same forces of biological evolution that forged the rest of our organism. As Jung said, "Because the brain is the principle organ of the mind, the collective unconscious depends directly upon the evolution of the brain." The physical and the spiritual are ultimately one.

We of Asatru consider our religion to be an expression of the whole of what we are. Asatru is not something apart from our bodies, which were shaped by thousands of genera-

tions of evolution in the rugged winters of the Northlands. These bodies/minds/spirits were bequeathed to us by our ancestors, which is why ancestry is paramount in our religion. And that's where the disir, those wonderful female ancestors, enter the picture.

The Gods and Goddesses manifest in Midgard through our people, the Northfolk. They and we are part of each other. We live in them, and they live in us. If we became extinct, Asatru itself would cease to exist. As Native American activist Vine Deloria stated in his book, *God is Red*: "Most tribal religions make no pretense as to their universality...The idea that religion was conceived as originally designed for a specific people relating to a specific god falls well within the experience of the rest of mankind and may conceivably be considered a basic factor in the existence of religion."

Metagenetics says there is a special relationship between the

peoples of northern Europe and Asatru. But it goes beyond that - it announces that *all* biological/cultural groupings have a special relationship with their own Gods and Goddesses, and that this is natural and good. European-descended people are unique...and so are African people and Asian people and everyone else. We must approach each other with mutual respect, aware of our differences, and knowing that those differences are something to be honored and preserved.

The disir watch. They whisper in the wind and in our ears. We are more than we appear, they say; we are the latest manifestation of all our kin who have gone before us. Ancient and ever young, we spring from the soul of our people. Listen to the rustling of the autumn leaves, and to the heartbeat of the disir...

AFA

membership?

It's important because we need your help - and you, in turn, need the things the AFA can do for YOU!

We far-flung sons and daughters of Europe need a place of our own, where we can be acknowledged as kin, celebrate our heritage, promote our interests, and honor the mighty spiritual Powers as our ancestors did for thousands of years. We need a new tribe to replace the one that was stolen from us so many centuries ago. That's why we formed the AFA.

As an AFA member, you will receive our newsletter *Bear Claw*, and will be offered privileges such as inclusion in our emerging networking services and possible membership in the Warrior Guild.

Joining the AFA is easy. Send for our free membership information. Read the *Declaration of Purpose*. If you can commit to the goals outlined in it, fill out the one-page form and enclose your first year's dues of \$12. It's that simple.

Life is a battle, but you don't have to fight alone! You can stand shoulder to shoulder with your kinfolk. Together, we can not only survive, but thrive!

Join the ASATRU FOLK ASSEMBLY!

I wasn't born a pagan. But I'm sure I should have been - I guess it was just an oversight on the part of those women of Wyrd, the Norns. So for the last five years I've been making up for lost time.

RITUALS

Forging Links to the Gods

by CATHY CLINTON

I have been practicing ritual alone and with others, worshipping our Goddesses and Gods at regular seasonal festivals, and at personally significant times, and then on other occasions "just because." I find myself closer to the Gods, to my deeper self, and more often on my right path. I thought that I might share with readers the way I approach ritual, and discuss the various elements that make up ritual for me.

There are many reasons for ritual, but more often than not, one of the following will be the primary purpose: 1) to honor our Gods and Goddesses, communicating our devotion; 2) to honor the ancestors, our collective history and our future; 3) to connect with the patterns of the Earth (agriculture) and the reflected patterns within us; and 4) to direct the collective energy/will that is built up in the ritual towards a particular goal, for example, healing a kindred member suffering from an illness.

To do these things, we must speak to the subconscious mind in the symbolic language that it understands - the language of myth. Ritual is, by its very nature, symbol - myth enacted. We set the conscious mind aside so that the spirit soul, that part of ourselves most in touch with the Gods and the ancestors, can experience the ritual fully. The safekeeping and evolution of the



collective myth is imperative for the vitality of a people. Each time we access our collective myth, we strengthen the bond - to our people, our ancestors, and our Gods.

So let's start at the beginning. Meaningful ritual will always be enhanced by a good historical understanding of how our ancestors knew and honored the Gods and Goddesses in the times before their forced conversion to Christianity. With this foundation, we then trust our intuition and that special

guidance from the Gods themselves to help us to know what is appropriate and right in the present time. For we as a people have not stayed stagnant, and neither have our larger-than-life Gods. Each of us will explore this for himself or herself; and then, hopefully, share their discoveries with others in our religion, to help build a new awareness of the Gods' expression in the world today.

With this in mind, I would like to direct you to some helpful sources of information and inspiration. There is much to be found in the stories of our ancestors, particularly the sagas and Eddas; although it must be said that these require some real sorting out. They were recorded as seen through Judeo-Christian eyes, centuries after they were commonly told in the oral tradition of our ancestors. Another source of information, the field of archeology, helps us to make guesses about how sacred articles were used in ritual.

Then there are many good books covering the history, culture and religion of our ancestors. I would like to suggest books by several people whose work has been very helpful to me. First, Stephen McNallen's *Rituals of Asatru*, volumes I and II. I started doing ritual using the seasonal blots in these booklets. They are wonderful! As I gained a more personal knowledge

and understanding of our Gods and Goddesses by reading the lore and practicing ritual, I began to add my own words and personal touches to the rites. Then Kveldulf Gundarsson's *Teutonic Religion* introduced me to the idea of the seasonal drama. I obtained more books on the religion, including Freya Aswynn's wonderful *Leaves of Yggdrasil*. There's always more to learn.

There is nothing like that powerful energy created when a group of Asafolk assemble to honor the Gods and the season. When the Gods and ancestors are present, and our higher selves are participating, we are all strengthened, enlightened, and healed. So let's now look at those elements of ritual that add dimension and momentum to the group ritual experience.

SETTING. You may have a space in your living area set aside for ritual and libation. Elaborate arrangements can be very powerful and satisfying. Your *horg* (altar) may be a chest or table over which you throw cloths chosen especially for the season; there are many ways to create a sacred space for yourself and your Gods, with the thoughtful placement of symbolic objects and images. If space is limited, a dresser can double as an altar. I know of one altar made of a slice of a large tree, and another that was handmade by a craftsman to specifications, complete with a cleverly disguised side-access drawer for storage of ritual objects and tools. I enjoy having a small sacred space with an altar indoors where I can go at any time of day or night.

For the worship of our Goddesses and Gods, no place compares with the natural world. They seem more at home there (as are we). You decide if this is an option for you. If you have neighbors close by, consider how you feel about others being aware of your ritual practices, and how you will respond to queries if they come.

For our part, Wotan's Kindred has a large stone circle at one corner of the five acres owned by Reinhold and myself. When we built the circle we

were aware of the sort of tongue wagging that would go on in our new rural neighborhood, and there has been that. But the most our neighbors, some of whom have probably watched from the woods nearby, can honestly say of our nocturnal activities is that we go out at night with torches, talking and dancing in the circle of stones. We accept this. Decoration can be as lavish or simple as you choose. Wotan's Kindred has had many inspiring paintings and works of art displayed at all the gatherings. Included among these was a beautifully carved serpent. We have since made the decision to keep our outdoor ritual settings quite simple.

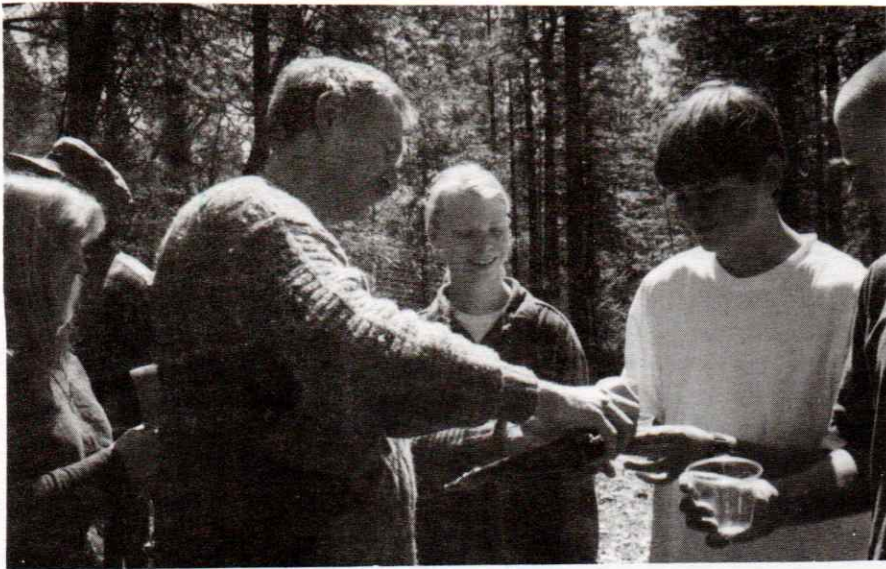
IMPLEMENTS The circle is illuminated by eight torches, with another two at the entrance stones. The large horg stone, situated in the north, is variously decorated with seasonal fruits such as wildflowers, nuts and gourds, or evergreen boughs. A drinking horn that would satisfy even the endless thirst of the great Thor sits in a wooden stand, alongside a libation bowl, a large hallowing hammer, and the gandr (wand). Other symbolic items take their places at the special seasons. All in all, we do keep it simple.

FIRE At festival gatherings, the bonfire is the center around which the folk offer blot to the Gods, share stories, feast, or observe the *sumbel*. The fire

or hearth has been a symbol of community and safety for millennia. Its meaning is definitely not lost on our subconscious. So I urge you, if it is at all possible, to make a central fire part of your ritual. Who can forget the thrill of jumping over the Midsummer Need Fire? A ritual conducted indoors can include altar candles as an expression of this symbol. If you feel adventurous, you can achieve a wonderful effect by pouring alcohol over the surface of a caldron of water, and then lighting it; this will burn steadily for a good while.

MUSIC Stirring the deep soul from its quietude, music adds a dimension that I would not do without. Upon hearing appropriate music, the emotions and subconscious are awakened and brought into participation. Carefully select music appropriate to the time of year and purpose of the ritual. In general, I prefer Northern European folk music. There is a great deal of wonderful Celtic music available in music stores and on radio programs. I find that classical music is perfect at times, and there are also a few operas that I like to use. Again, you will experiment with what is right for you. If a participant plays an instrument, consider including that in the ritual - the bagpipes or the harp are good. The resonance of pipes puts me into an altered state of consciousness in almost no time at all!





Recorded or live music enhances ritual, but singing and chanting can be even better. Write a song for the season, put praise of the Goddess to music, take an existing song that is close to what you want and alter the words to say just what you wish. You don't have to "reinvent the wheel" to have songs and chants for ritual. A chant is best when short and to the point. Rhyme and alliteration give it rhythm and movement. You'll be amazed at the results!

DRESS Ritual dress is of course another personal decision. I would encourage the godi/gydia to wear symbolic or period garments for ritual. Special clothing can serve as a sign to the subconscious that a special, set-apart-from-ordinary-life event is about

to take place. Like music, ritual dress sets a mood. This adds to the creation of a sacred space and time. If you find, however, that it interferes with your mood, by all means wear what feels comfortable and right! Do what seems best for the place and time.

FORMAT Putting it all together, our Kindred rituals usually go something like this: Torchlit procession to the circle - hallowing of the circle - seasonal drama - blot (calling of the Goddess/Gods, offering of the mead, blessing of the mead, pouring of the libation) - participatory activity (varies) - circle/spiral dance - closing of the circle. We finish up with a torchlit procession back to the house for the feast, which is then followed by the

traditional sumbel - that much-loved drinking ritual. Depending upon the time of year, I like to start the ritual as Sunna is setting. The ceremony usually follows a day of activities, which include seasonal pastimes, games, lectures, readings, workshops, and meditations.

Well, there it is! I think I've covered nearly everything. I should say, of course, that there are times when a simple connection with a particular Goddess, God or rune is *it*, and props, costumes and other enhancements may only serve to interfere with the purity of communion. But for larger gatherings of Asafolk, we want full involvement from the participants, and all of these elements add to their experience. Asatru ritual is holy, deserving of our planning and tender care.

I hope that what I've shared with you here will help bring you closer to the Gods and Goddesses, for they are with us. When we call on them and honor them, we give them more strength, making them more a part of this world, Middle Earth, where we reside. For thousands of years, the vital bridge between the folk of Middle Earth and the Gods of Asgard and Vanaheim was crossed but rarely. Now, here in our time, we have the privilege and responsibility to rebuild that bridge. With every call to the Gods, it grows stronger. What joy! Hail to the Holy Powers!

Full Time Nanny Wanted

We are currently seeking a full time nanny to relocate to the Pacific Northwest. The following requirements are needed for the position:

1. Applicant must be a female over the age of 18.
2. Applicant must be folkish and Asatru.
3. Applicant must have a loving, nurturing disposition toward children.
4. Applicant must not have a criminal history.
5. Applicant must be of good moral character

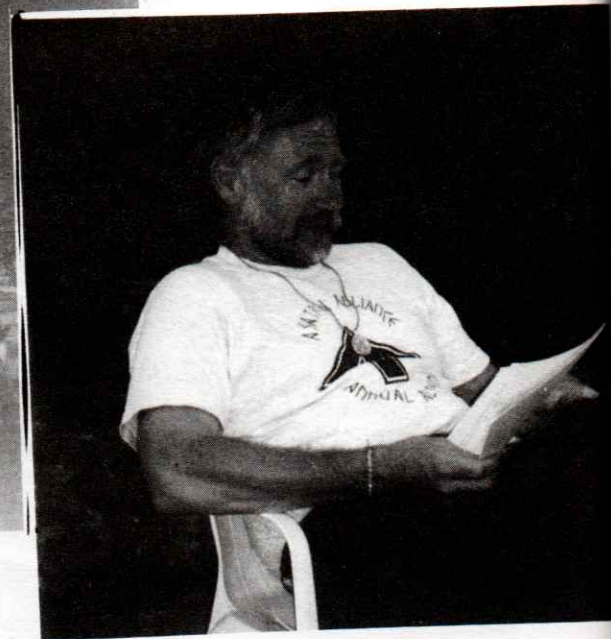
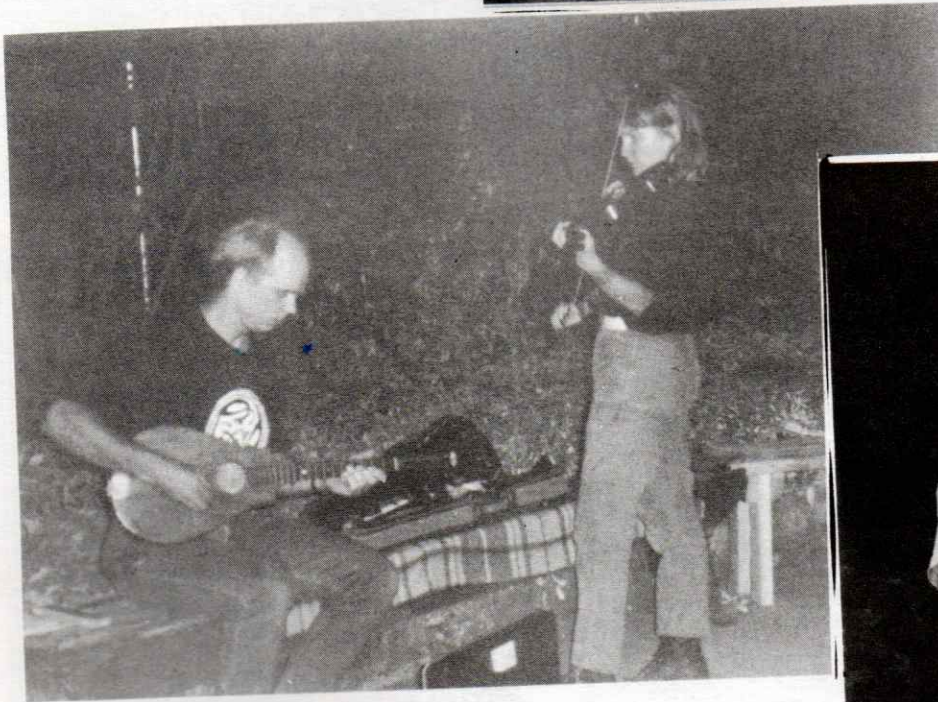
The position offers the following:

1. Competitive salary and benefits
2. Chance to live in one of the most beautiful areas of the United States
- 3) Chance to belong to a growing community of Asatruar

CONTACT:

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712 Skamania Landing Road
Skamania, WA 98648*

ASATRU FOLK... Assemble!



HOF

BUILDING A HOME FOR OUR GODS

STEPHEN A. MCNALLEN

For the most part, Asatru in these early years of the Reawakening has been something practiced in private homes, parks, and rented rooms. Occasionally an actual hof, or temple, has been erected, but these are the exceptions. Arizona Kindred built such a structure some years back, and more recently, Robert Taylor of Wulfgang fame erected a hof on his land - but the majority of Asatruar still honor the Mighty Powers either out-of-doors or in buildings designed for some other purpose.

This is not to say that a hof is absolutely necessary; indeed, our ancestors usually worshipped under the open sky, or under the branches of trees in sacred groves. In many times and places among our early folk, it was thought inappropriate to try to confine the Gods and Goddesses within walls of wood or stone. Sometimes, however, simple protective roofs were erected, and of course we have records of the much more elaborate temples built in places like Uppsala, in Sweden.

For our purposes today, a hof has some advantages. Most of these are psychological, but none the less real for that. A permanent structure dedicated to the Gods is a sign, to ourselves

and to others, that Asatru is here to stay. It sends a visible statement about our seriousness, our commitment, and our persistence.

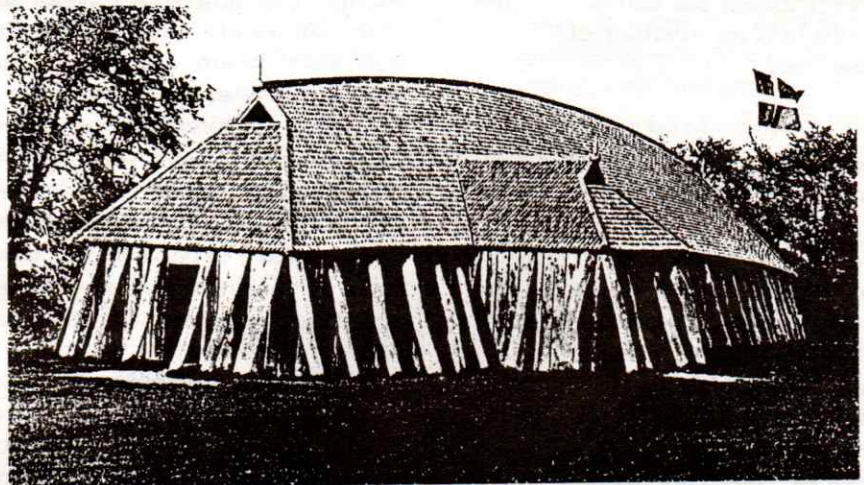
The Asatru Folk Assembly has begun constructing such a hof. It is located on private land along the Yuba River, in northern California. Sheltered under oak and pine, surrounded by hills and an intermittent stream, it is a place of refuge from the urban madness. The site will feature an outdoor ritual area and camping facilities, in addition to the hof itself.

Thorgrun, of Gullinbursti Kindred, is in charge of this project. We can be thankful to the owners of the land for their generous permission to use the location, and to several of our supporters for their liberal financial backing. Actual construction is being done, not by paid laborers, but by AFAers and their supporters who want to see their sweat trans-

formed into something of spiritual importance.

The completed structure will stand 27 feet long, 18 feet across at the widest point, and 12 feet high in the center. Walls will be of river rock, with a wooden, inverted-boat shaped roof. Thorgrun obtained construction details and information on traditional proportion from none other than Jormundr Ingi, successor to Alsherjargothi Sveinbjorn Beinteinsson of the Icelandic Asatruar.

When AFAers come together to honor the Gods next spring, they will do so in a structure worthy of our devotion and loyalty. This hof will be a solid reminder of what we can do when we try - and the next step toward even greater endeavors! Hail the hof-builders!



Kirby Wise, of Helga Ve Kindred, had called a "gathering of the gothar" at which Asatru priests and priestesses would meet at Odin's Hof, in Arizona - the first such event in a thousand years.

Men and women came from all over the United States, and one visitor came much farther: The Alsherjargothi of Iceland, Jormundr Ingi Hansen, made the journey to America for this historic meeting which included blots, sumbels, feasting, rune casting, dowsing, Kirlian photography... and 100 degree temperatures!

This gathering was prompted in part by concern for the future, and a desire to see what lies before the people of Asatru in the years to come. Hence, divination by runes was an important part of the agenda. Nine gothar ("priests") and gythjur ("priestesses") tossed the staves, and the results held the attention of all who were there.

We are in for great changes, and indeed we are now in the beginning of those changes.

The question of a homeland - a gathering place, a place to rest the dead, an Asatru community - was asked of the runes. Past influences were adjudged favorable, and that-which-should-be, the "future," indicated the support of the Gods for this idea. Some rune-workers stated

that, with struggle and hard work, this may be an auspicious time for the birth of an Asatru community.

Three runes predominated. *Nauthiz* told us to kindle the spark, to make heat and expend energy. This is the work! We have counseled long enough, and now it is time to act! *Uruz* shows our strength, raw energy, good health, and vital wholeness; it expresses the overall state of our spirit, nurtured by our ancient religion. *Elhaz* gave protection and guardianship. In order to have a successful Asatru community or homeland, we have to be willing to work hard, be steadfast to our ways, and guard the community which emerges.

These readings must enter the sphere of individual experience, of course. Carrying with me the joy and enthusiasm of this weekend, I have

my own personal assessment of our prospects:

By praising the land spirits, honoring the elves, and acknowledging the great forces of Nature, we can begin!

By honoring our ancestors, respecting our elders (who have done the work before us), uniting our kindreds, and raising our children with a knowledge of our great Northern Gods and Goddesses, we can begin!

With our hands, tools, the skill of our kinsmen, and the spirit of persevering pioneers, let us begin!

Kirby's longing for a spiritual gathering was a brilliant vision which bore great fruit for all of us, and for Asatru in general. I was honored to be present!

+

The GATHERING of

GOthAR

THORGRUN ODDEN
Gothi, Gullinbursti Kindred

STEPHEN A. MCNALLEN

Caring for THE DEAD

ASATRU AND THE GRAVES OF OUR ANCESTORS

In a museum in the American Southwest, the mummified remains of a Native American sit in a glass case under the gawking stare of camera-clad tourists. At the state capitol, lawmakers confer with Indian leaders to put an end to what the tribal representatives perceive as sacrilege...A bulldozer clearing a vacant lot for a shopping mall unearths an Indian burial ground. Within hours, Native activists are on the spot, insisting on a reverent handling of the remains and their reburial on a nearby reservation...In the state of Washington, a controversy arises between scientists who wish to study an ancient skeleton and local Indians who insist that such an examination would be a desecration of the dead.

Scenes like these have occurred literally hundreds of times in the last few years. Native Americans have made it clear that their dead are not going to be put on display before the casually curious, and that science must follow certain protocols when studying ancient graves. Federal legislation guarantees rights of repatriation and reburial for Native American ancestors. The spiritual question of reverence for the dead has become another way of demonstrating tribal muscle, and for underlining Native American sovereignty.

But what about us Asatruar? How do we feel about this issue, as it pertains to us? Bodies of our ancestors sit captive in museums and laboratories around the world, and not a single cry of complaint is heard. Denmark's bog people have no defenders, and the Ice Man of recent fame is subject to indignities as well as mere analysis. Is this okay? Or should we raise an uproar? Should European-descended people use the Native American experience as a guide, and what does our history and religion say about all this; anyway?

Our sagas hardly paint a picture of utter reverence for the bodies of the departed. One traditional theme features the hero breaking into a burial mound and stealing a magical weapon with which to perform his own great deeds. Typically he has to fight the reanimated corpse in the bargain. We can rationalize this as a symbolic sequence, in which ancestral might (represented by the buried sword) is gained by the hero who will, quite legitimately, use it to carry out acts of heroism. We can compare it to the archetypal underworld journey, as well. These psychological explanations contain much truth, and we can learn from them. Still, archeologists verify that many of our ancestors' graves were plundered - although we can only guess at the motives for such ancient crimes against the dead.

Entering barrows to acquire a magical weapon is, however, arguably different from grabbing a body out of its resting place and throwing it onto a laboratory table, to be picked over by men and women who feel no spiritual affinity with it. The goal is science, not heroism, and the technicians involved are not even likely to be kinsmen, in any close sense, of the person whose remains they are examining.

Even worse instances of abuse have been reported from England (and, one suspects, the problem is not limited to the British Isles). Bones of our Asatru ancestors have occasionally been unearthed in the course of construction or plowing - and Christian ministers have been brought in to baptise the remains and give them a Christian burial! This is completely intolerable, and must be fought with every means at our disposal. Extensive networking among Asatruar, people of other indigenous religions, and fair-minded men and women everywhere is needed to stop such outrages. When an incident like this occurs, the remains must be re-dedicated to our Gods and Goddesses, and placed back in the earth with due ritual. Making this happen will require alertness on the part of our kinsmen overseas, and rapid reporting - by phone, fax, or email - of such sacrilege to concerned people who will act immediately. Setting up such a watchdog system could easily be done by one or two dedicated people, and would go a long way toward protecting our ancestral heritage (Any AFAers out there want to volunteer?).

But now let's take a look at the whole question of science. After all, European people played a very large role in forging our scientific and technological culture, so it's not exactly something alien to us. We are naturally a curious, exploring people. Besides, anything that tells us more about our history and heritage - the way we lived, where we roamed, how we did the things we did, and what we thought about it all - serves us, as the descendants of these long-dead people, because it brings us closer to those forebears.

Let's take an extreme example: As these words are being written, there is great controversy over the skeleton of a man recovered in the state of Washington. His remains are dated at about 9,300 years old, and they appear to be Caucasian. This discovery flies in the face of what we were all taught in school, namely, that the Americas were peopled exclusively by the humans who became the American Indians. The idea that some of our own kin wandered across the Bering land bridge (perhaps later to be exterminated by the paleo-Indians!) upsets the whole accepted scheme of things. If these bits of bone can document the existence of Caucasoid people on this continent from very ancient times, the man whose bones they are will have done more for his folk than just about any of us can ever hope to do! Our debt to him will be immense - but his contribution will only happen if the remains are examined by science.

We can also justify scientific examination by another idea, one from our ancient pre-Christian beliefs. There is a modern saying, attributed somewhat whimsically to Odin himself: "Only the forgotten are dead." This echoes the traditional Asatru belief that one's fame - its brightness and endurance - are of great spiritual importance. The *Havamal* tells us that:

Cattle die, kinsmen die;
Every man is mortal;
But one thing I know that never dies,
The glory of the great dead.

In a sense, an ancestral corpse gets a chance to tell his tale, to renew the luster on his fame, by scientific study. True, we seldom know the dead person's name or lineage, and this is a bit of a problem - but the attractiveness of having one's fame spoken again in the world of humans may be a way of ritually appeasing the spirits of long-dead kin.

We Asatruar must consider protocols for handling the dead in these circumstances. If we agree that scientific study is permissible in principle, then we must turn our attention to the details. Rites before the remains are disturbed would be ideal, explaining to the deceased what was going on, and offering assurance. Does the spiritual essence, the soul, of the dead know when the grave is desecrated? Maybe or maybe not, but until we learn otherwise, it is best to offer reverence. Similarly, remains should be reburied after the needed information is obtained. Our dead relatives must not become subjects of idle curiosity, or end up in museum cases. Models can be made which are virtually indistinguishable from the original; it is not necessary to have a real body on display.

Once we assume these (or other) guidelines as a starting point, then obviously there is a lot of work to be done. How are the great museums of Europe treating our dead? Has anyone tried to do anything about this? What steps do we need to take, and how should we prioritize our tasks?

I propose the following as initial actions: First, let us poll well-informed Asatruar and consider just what is the right way to handle our dead, given what we know about the customs, lore, and spirituality of our forebears. Then, we need to set up an "action network" based in Europe which would alert us all to desecrations as they occur, and bring our collective pressure to enforce our protocol. Finally, we need to systematically evaluate the situation in museum collections, and force compliance by these institutions. The experience of Native American activists in this regard may prove very useful to us.

If any of our readers would like to undertake the hard work involved in this endeavor, we would be happy to provide guidance and coordination!

Asatru is still being reborn from its long sleep. We have yet to consider many of the situations that other religions, with the benefit of an uninterrupted existence, have long taken for granted. It is time we turned our minds to this whole question of how our dead are to be treated - and time for our ancestors to be given the respect they greatly deserve!

COLUMBIA RIVER

Man

STEPHEN A. MCNALLEN

Last summer, college students found a skeleton alongside the Columbia River, in Washington state. The local coroner described it as belonging to a "male Caucasian." The problem? The bones checked out to be 9,300 years old, according to carbon 14 tests administered at a university in California. The projectile point embedded in the pelvic bone, moreover, is in a style archeologists call "Cascade" - confirming the estimated age.

You'd think this find would be taken to a laboratory and subjected to further tests, but that's not likely to happen. Under provisions of a 1990 Federal law, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, which currently has the remains, is required to turn them over to local Indian tribes for reburial. This may be done despite a volume of testimony from archeologists and anthropologists stating that the skeleton is not related to these tribes, or to any other living Native American group for that matter.

This incredible discovery completely revises what we *thought* we knew about early man in North America. It is now considered possible that the earliest waves of humans coming across the Bering land bridge were not the ancestors of the people we now call Native Americans. Many of the traces these early trekkers left behind display markedly Caucasian features, and it is possible that they were victims of genocide perpetrated by the proto-Indians. The term "proto-Indian," by the way, is no longer used as a blanket description of the earliest inhabitants of this continent; now they are referred to as "proto-American" and, occasionally, as "proto-European."

Naturally, the Native Americans have everything to lose by letting the truth come out. The plan is simply, and

literally, to bury the evidence. After all, if the Native Americans aren't really the native Americans...well, it all gets very interesting!

The AFA supports legitimate Native American interests on a number of fronts, and will continue to do so. We, as European-Americans returning to our traditional ways, have much in common with Native Americans who choose to do likewise. We are both *nations*, in the sense of the Sioux nation, the six Celtic nations, and the Frisian nation. It would be best if we could work together, talking things over with each other rather than allowing the government to come between us. However, the Umatilla, the tribe which has claimed the Columbia River man, have rebuffed all our attempts to negotiate. In late October, the Asatru Folk Assembly went to court to prevent the government from giving the bones of our kinsman to the Native Americans.

This should not be taken as "Indian-bashing" on our part. Our position is simply that the remains should be studied to determine their ethnicity, and that they should be turned over to the "next of kin." If the Richland Man is more nearly related to the Native Americans, we will support the Umatilla claim. If he is our kin, on the other hand, the Indians have no right to him.

We would prefer to deal with the Umatilla "nation to nation" rather than legitimize "the system" by taking them to court. However, we will not let what could be a glorious chapter in our history be buried just because the thought of early Caucasians in North America is politically unacceptable.

Religious Group Outlines Plans for Skeleton

This is the text of a news release the AFA distributed on October 29th, in which we describe how we might deal with the remains of our far-roving kinsman, if we are given possession of them.

Nevada City, CA - A native European religious group laying claim to the controversial "Richland Man" has outlined what the organization will do if a federal court grants them the remains.

According to a number of scientists, the disputed skeleton has strongly Caucasian features and may be more closely related to Europeans than to Native Americans.

Stephen McNallen, leader of the Asatru Folk Assembly, indicated that three things would be done to satisfy the requirements of their religion. Rites would be performed over the remains before scientific study was resumed. Other rites would be done upon eventual burial, and a memorial stone would be erected.

"All of this is based on the premise that the person we are talking about was more closely related to us than to the Native Americans. If he is one of theirs, on the other hand, we will gladly relinquish all claim to his remains."

The first step would be a religious ritual to honor the dead person, which would involve giving him "a symbolic name and lineage." McNallen added that in early European society, fame and renown were very important. "Scientific study is, in a way, a means by which this long-dead kinsman of ours can tell his saga and renew his glory."

After the remains have been studied, they may be reburied in a special location from which, if absolutely necessary, they could be recovered. This would be in ground conse-

crated to the indigenous European religion of Asatru. The AFA would confer with scientists on soil type, compaction, and other factors affecting preservation of the remains, and they would be placed in some sort of casket or overall container.

A memorial stone honoring the dead would be erected, as well. It would not necessarily be located at the site of burial. Religious symbols from ancient Scandinavian rock carvings as well as symbols called "runes" would be suitable decoration, McNallen said.

Asatru is best known as the religion of the Vikings and of various European tribes. Its roots, however, extend far back into prehistory, and include the earliest expressions of religion in Europe, according to McNallen.

THUNDER FROM THE NORTH ***The Way of the Teutonic Warrior***

The way of the warrior is one of service to others. Learn how the warrior tradition of the ancient Northlands is practiced today! Find out what it really means to be a warrior, and what YOUR "warrior types" is. Discover how runes and meditation can be valuable tools for the warrior. This tape is of special interest to martial artists, policemen, soldiers, and all who seek to live the warrior's virtues; but it will help any seeker cut through the nonsense and find a fearless path of service!

Audio.....\$7.00

Booklet.....\$4.00

Please add \$1.50 for P&H. California residents must include 7.25 % sales tax. Make checks payable to the
Asatru Folk Assembly
P.O. Box 445 Nevada City, CA 95959





F•L•A•S•H•E•S from the Hammer

Obstacles to Thor's hammers in prisons have been battered down by the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, sitting in Chicago. Or maybe it was old Red Beard himself, acting through mortal agencies. (What was that judge's name again?)

The AFA continues to **fight for Else Christensen**. The "folkmother" of Odinism in the western hemisphere, 83-year old Else was falsely convicted on charges of drug smuggling several years ago. Now the Feds are considering deporting her to Canada when she finishes her sentence! The AFA has retained an attorney to represent her, at a cost of \$500 to date. The \$100 sent by the Arizona Kindred of the Asatru Alliance to help cover expenses was especially helpful, but our thanks goes out to ALL who have contributed to her defense. By the way, there's still time to send a check.

Tower Books, one of the larger magazine distributors in the nation, reports that *The Runestone* and *Wolf Age* are selling well - recent issues were 92% sold and 100% sold, respectively. This doesn't mean that we are satisfied! Rather than the piddling hundred copies we sold them last time, we want to aim for five hundred! Tell your friends to go to Tower and ask for these fine publications. After all, the very reason we put so much time and work into making them look professional is so that they will reach a much wider audience. Let's make it happen!

A hof - a real structure where the Gods and Goddesses of Asatru can be honored - is in the works for northern California. Use of land has been gratefully donated by a supporter, money has been found, and Thorgrun has drawn up the plans. A construction party worked hard through the weeked of October 5th and 6th, and we expect to have it in use by springtime. The site in question will give AFAers a place to practice our religion, not to mention a refuge from the clamor an confusion of city life.

The ruling specifically struck down Wisconsin state regulations barring inmates from wearing religious jewelry because the jewelry might be used as a weapon. The judges' decision was based on the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, passed by Congress in 1993 with support of the vast majority of America's religious communities.

Copies of the relevant newspaper article are available upon request from the AFA; please include a stamp to cover postage.

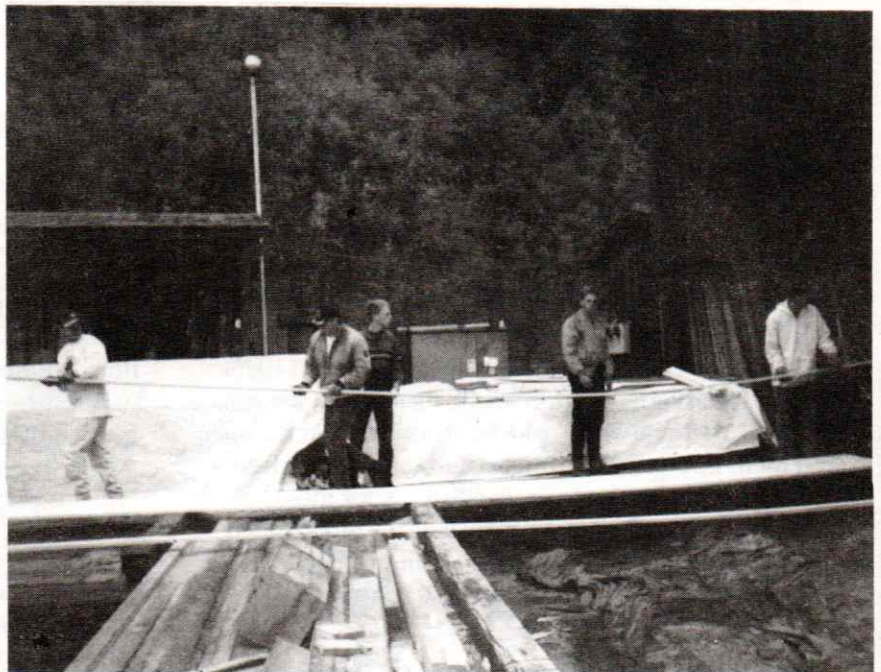
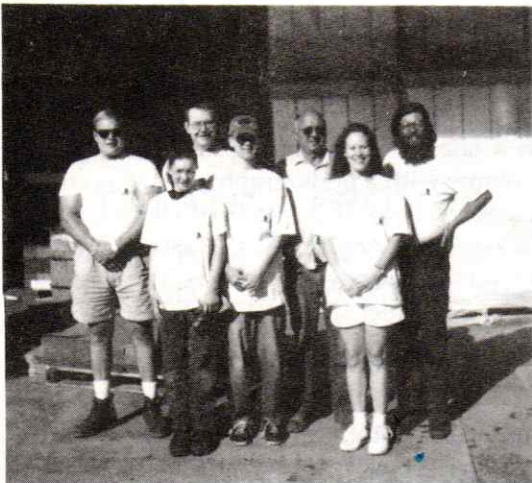
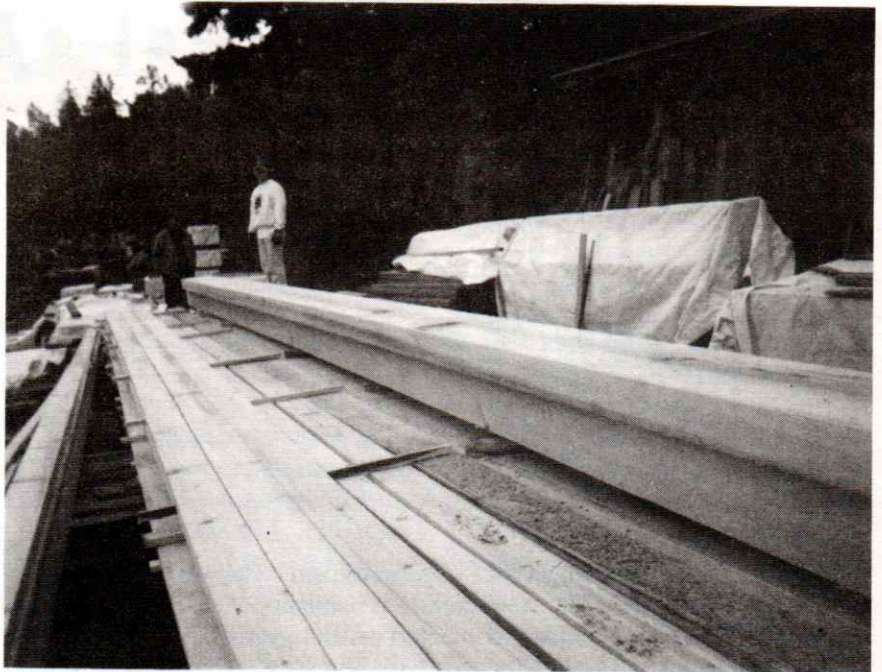
Remember **Brian Bates'** intriguing novel *The Way of Wyrd*, set in Anglo-Saxon England? In its pages he titillated us with a tale of shapeshifting and healing, and finished the volume with a bibliography that was almost worth the price of the book all by itself. Well, he's back - but this time it's not a fictional book, it's a factual study of Anglo-Saxon sorcery. The new work, titled *The Wisdom of Wyrd*, is published by Rider (ISBN 0-7126-7277-X).

Does anybody out there read Italian? We just got a very impressive journal from Italy, *L'Araldo di Thule*. We'd like someone who can look it over and maybe translate enough to permit a brief extract for the next *Runestone*. They're "dedicated to the renaissance of Longobard Asatru and to the exploration of the cisAlpine-land's roots." Interested folks can reach them care of Paolo Gauna, F.P. 14047, Mombercelli (AT), Italy.

THE VIKING SHIP PROJECT

Send your tax deductible contributions
for the Viking Ship Guild to

**Reinhold Clinton,
8709 NE Winters Road,
Camas, WA 98607**



THE VIKING SHIP GUILD now has a drying room full of freshly-cut boards from which to construct their dream vessel. The Douglas fir was cut so as to maximize the strength of the wood, and the results are impressive - hull pieces with 40-foot runs of knot-free, clear lumber. The mast weighs well over 3,000 pounds, and the keel is even heavier. Actual construction started on November 2, with the shaping of the keel. We are well on the way to having a functioning Viking ship!

A local woodcarver has donated a series of panels done in the style decorating the Oseburg ship, unearthed in Norway. These fixtures will decorate the prow, stern, and waterline of the vessel.

However, this project still needs your contributions! There are expenses to be met - a sail, special preservatives for the hull, accessories, and transportation. Your donations are earnestly sought, and of course they are

HELP FLOAT OUR BOAT!

Donate \$100 and you will receive membership in the Viking Ship Guild, and a T-shirt emblazoned with the Guild's name and a neat picture of a Viking ship. You'll also get a frameable certificate acknowledging your contribution to reviving this bit of our heritage and history.

Donate \$200 and get everything mentioned above, plus your name on a bronze commemorative plaque attached to the vessel, plus the right to come along as a crew member on voyages!

For \$500 or more, your business will be advertised as a major sponsor in addition to all the privileges listed above! Remember, a lot of people are going to be hearing about his ship, which makes it a GREAT advertising possibility!



tax-deductible. The Guild has developed a series of incentives to reward your generosity. See the ad on this page, then send your checks payable to the Asatru Folk Assembly. We will promptly forward them to the Viking Ship Guild. Help us make this dream a reality!

Here are some publications that
deserve your attention!

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Dragon's Fire, 1015 Rutledge Avenue, Phoenixville, PA 19460. Subtitled "A Heathen Journal for All," seeks to encompass not only Asatru but also Celtic and Norse Wicca. \$15 per year.

Folkvang Horg, 20 Ascot Drive, Longsford, Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 1PE, England. Focuses on Asatru's Goddesses, but not to the exclusion of other topics. 12 Pounds for Airmail, 10 Pounds surface.

Huginn and Muninn, P.O. Box 1159, 121 Reykjavik, Iceland. Dedicated to the Nyall philosophy associated with Asatru in Iceland. \$10 U.S., preferably cash.

Don't miss the 1996 Championship # 51826
Current Journal of Freyja's Web, independent organization dedicated to the work of this esteemed Goddess. \$15 includes annual membership dues; payable to Alissa Sorenson.

Our Hammer, c/o. Odinist Prison Project, P.O. Box 6088, Harrisburg, PA 17112-6088. Covers activities of the OPP, issued irregularly. No mailing list - request on an issue-by-issue basis. Free, but of course, the honorable thing to do is to send a buck.

Renewal, Box 4333, University of Melbourne, Victoria, 3052 Australia. Very good writing, particularly "Ota's Talking Point," and lots of information that you just won't find anywhere else. \$12 Australian, plus \$4 for air-mail.

Theod, P.O. Box 8062, Watertown, NY 13601. A magazine dedicated to Anglo-Saxon religion. Lots of material, with an emphasis on "the big picture." \$15 per year.

Uncle Thorr's Magazine, P.O. Box 080437, Staten Island, NY 10308-0005. Outspoken, frequently humorous comment on the Northern religious scene. Quarterly, \$15 per year.

Vor Tru, P.O. Box 961, Payson, AZ 85547. Journal of the Asatru Alliance. Lots of content. Steadfastly tribalist/folkish in orientation. \$18 per year.

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The Viking Ship Guild

has actually started construction on their dragon ship! On November 2, Guild members put steel to wood and began shaping the keel.

However, this project still needs your contributions! There are expenses to be met - a sail, special preservatives for the hull, accessories, and transportation. Your donations are earnestly sought, and of course they are tax-deductible. The Guild has developed a series of incentives to reward your generosity. You will find them described in the box elsewhere in this issue. Send your checks payable to the Asatru Folk Assembly. We will promptly forward them to the Viking Ship Guild. Help us make this dream a reality!

You can contact the Guild by writing to Reinhold Clinton, 8709 NE Winters Road, Camas, WA 98607.

The Genealogy Guild

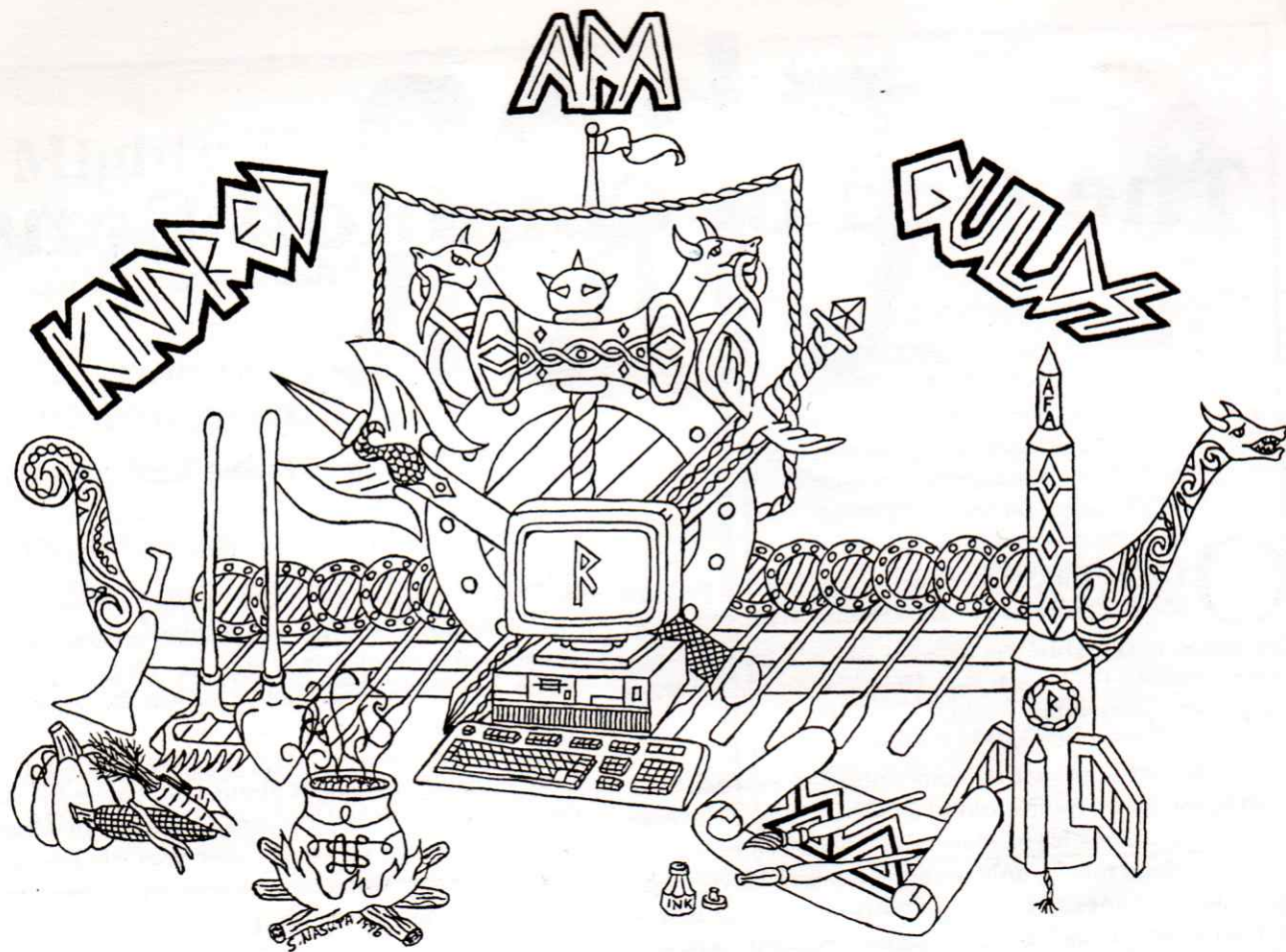
is ready to assist you in your search for your ancestral heritage! What could be more appropriate as we move toward the ultimate family festival, Yule? Join with us as we compare research tips, share family lore, pour over surname and place name indexes, and access the latest in library/computer resources. With your support, we can help each other to delve into that special past which is always with us...Contact the Guild through the AFA, c/o Sheila.

The Warrior Guild

has published issue #5 of their magazine, *Wolf Age*. A partial list of the contents includes an article on "Runenmacht," or runic energy, as it applies to the warrior, a piece on choosing a protection dog, an essay on the bearing of arms from a religious viewpoint, and a caution about the futuristic techno-warriors on the drawing boards at the Pentagon.

Wolf Age, as we report elsewhere in this *Runestone*, is selling well on the news stands. But the simple truth is that it needs to reach many more people. You can help that happen by requesting it at your local Tower Books, or by ordering bulk quantities and placing them with your neighborhood book dealer. We think they'd sell well at gun shows, too. The only limits are set by your imagination!

The Warrior Guild bivouacs at the AFA's "head-quarters;" drop them a line through Steve.



GUILD NEWS

The Organic Gardening Guild

is just right for people who want to watch things grow from Mother Earth - and then enjoy the fruits (and vegetables and herbs and flowers) of their labors! Do you like getting your hands in the soil and feeling the sun on your back? Then you ought to write to Cathy Clinton, at 8709 NE Winters Road, Camas, WA 98607.

The Seith Guild

explores the native Teutonic form of shamanism. Their newsletter is called *Earthways*, and they can always use articles, artwork, and enthusiastic input in general. You can find out more about the Guild by visiting

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/R_Schuet4>

which is the Guildmaster's home page. Or you could write to Ragnar Schuett, P.O. Box 2366, Loveland, CO 80539.

The Aerospace Technology Guild

in what has become something of a ritual in itself, launched rockets to open Wotan Kindred's Winter Finding celebration on September 21st. First in the air was a (relatively) small Estes "Maniac," testing the winds on a "D" engine. Then, "Initiator" bounded off the pad! This bird, which measures around thirty inches in length, shot to the limits of visibility under "G" power. Gracefully, gently, it settled to earth - perhaps half a mile away. Sadly, it was never recovered. The smoke and roar, however, are burned into our memories!

But not to despair. The Guildmaster has just purchased an Aero-Tech "Arreaux" - and he's got an electronic altimeter to stick inside it which, when plugged into his home computer, will give a complete flight profile. And another local member just purchased a similar rocket, the "Warthog." I think some trips to the desert are in order...

Sleipnir, the ATG's newsletter, recently saw its seventh issue, and number eight will be out by the time you read this!

The God of Common Sense

by CHARLES SPRATLING

Of all the tricksters known in mythology, perhaps the most unlikely is Thor. Some have gone so far (too far) as to call Thor the "Norse God of Stupidity." No, clever subtlety isn't his forte. He's known for his short temper and physical prowess.

But let's take a closer look at the Red-Bearded One.

In all of the many myths told of the Thunderer, is he ever wrong for reaching for his hammer? Never! Does he ever perform a deed rashly, only to regret it later? Never! Has his brute-force approach brought the desired result, whenever in his "stupidity" he has chosen to employ it? Always! I'd say that, far from being the divine dunce, Thor is the God of simple common sense.

Very interesting, but that doesn't make for a trickster. Or does it? In *Alvismal*, Mjollnir's Master outsmarts his opponent, saving his daughter from a mixed marriage in the process. You don't know the tale? Well, here's the short version...

Alvis the dwarf (His name means "All Wise") was so proud of his great store of knowledge, he let hubris get the better of him. Off he went to Asgard, aiming to win a wife from among the Aesir. Thor's daughter Thrud caught his eye, and apparently the know-it-all impressed her with his smooth talk. Reluctantly, the Gods agreed to this mismatched marriage.

But Thor was off bashing Jotuns, as he's so often called upon to do. He met Alvis on the road as he was returning, and was not pleased with the tale the dwarf told.

Alvis was still protected by the laws of hospitality; Thor's hammer couldn't help him here. And to simply forbid the marriage wouldn't prevent a future elopement. No, Daddy Thor would have to save his daughter from her impetuous infatuation, and without resorting to violence.

So the Friend of Man (There are lots of ways to refer

to Thor!) took a different tack. Perhaps he'd already sized up his daughter's suitor. Or maybe he decided to give the dwarf a chance to prove himself. Regardless, he asked Alvis why he, a God, should bestow his blessing on this betrothal.

Alvis was silent about his prowess and warlike deeds. He made no mention of wealth or family background. No, all he could offer was his education and erudite words. "Ask me anything," was the essence of his speech. "I know everything!"

Thor agreed to these terms. Notice that Thor doesn't attempt to match knowledge with the dwarf. At that, he'd surely lose. But he knows the only thing he needs to know - that given the chance, Alvis would talk all night.

So Thor proceeded to ask questions, and the dwarf had all the answers, just as he'd promised. They're all recorded in the *Alvisimal* for our edification. But Alvis, clever Alvis, would have been better served with a bit less wisdom and a mite more common sense. When daylight arrived with him still above ground, he was turned to stone.

The real lesson here is likely to be lost. Be not deceived by degrees and proffered Ph.D.'s. Too many talkers are but educated fools, and arrogant to boot. I'm particularly fond of this tale because I have more Alvis than Thor in me. A little common sense goes a long way, while discussion can drag on too long.

Some of these educated fools have gone so far as to suggest that the story doesn't fit Thor's character. No? They'd have us believe the Thunderer is simply an extension of his hammer? Thor was and is the God of the common man. When the Gods outsmart themselves with their cleverness, it's Thor who pulls their chestnuts out of the fire. So, too, it's often the ordinary Joes who must clean up the mess made by experts in their "wisdom." In your life, give common sense the final veto!

Mighty Thor,

whose bolts are blue,
rightful help I ask from you.

Charge my thoughtform
with your power,
all attacks against me sour.

Thunderbolts do fire on cue,
strike your mighty blow of blue,
That my life be free of dread,
living in bright Light instead.

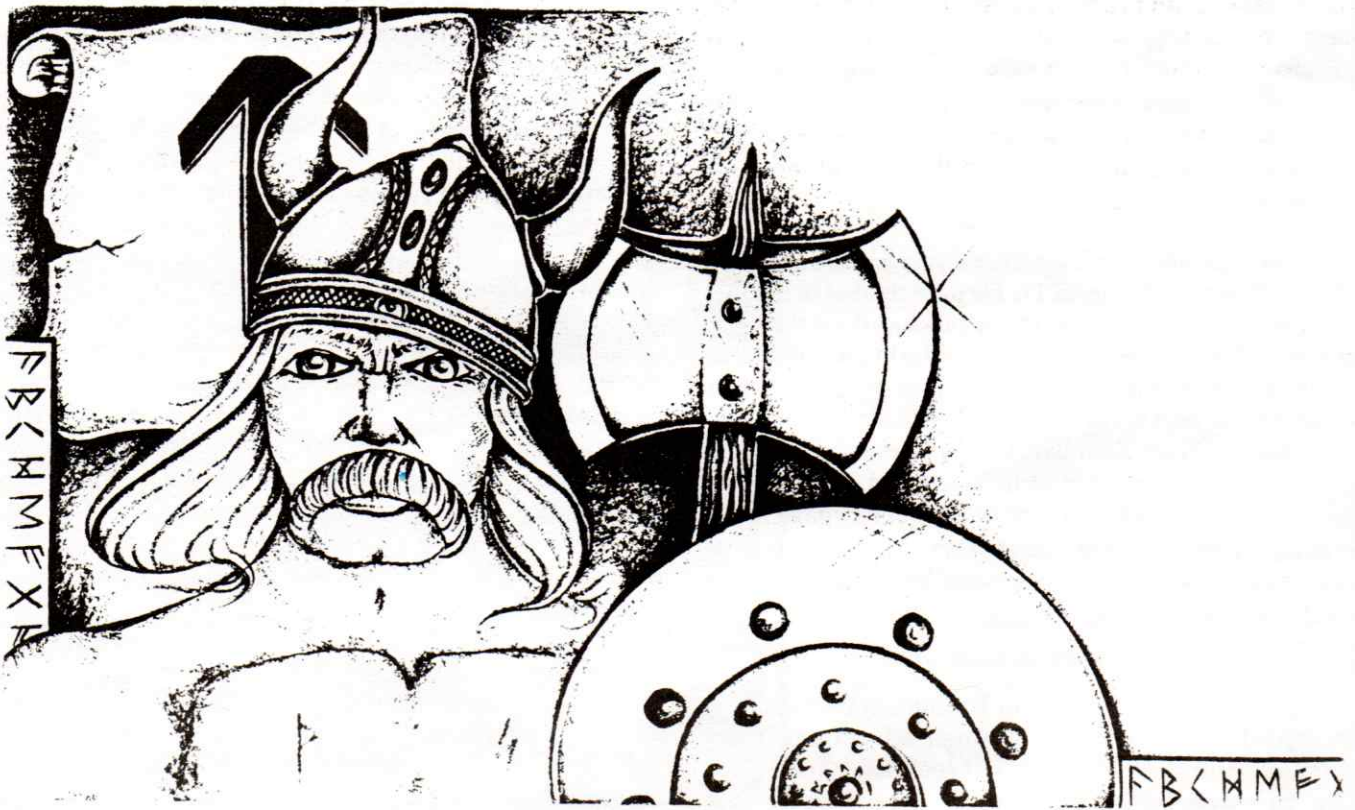
My thanks I offer now to thee,
and as my will so must it be!



RUNE NAME: *Ingwaz*

KEY CONCEPTS: *Ingwaz* describes potential energy or stored power. Like the seed which lies dormant during its gestation period, the strength of *ingwaz* remains unmanifest until it is rightfully released. This rune bears the name of the fertility God, Ing, and expresses one of the ways in which he manifests in Midgard.

AFFIRMATION: My richness lies hidden in darkness. I am a seed awaiting the sun.



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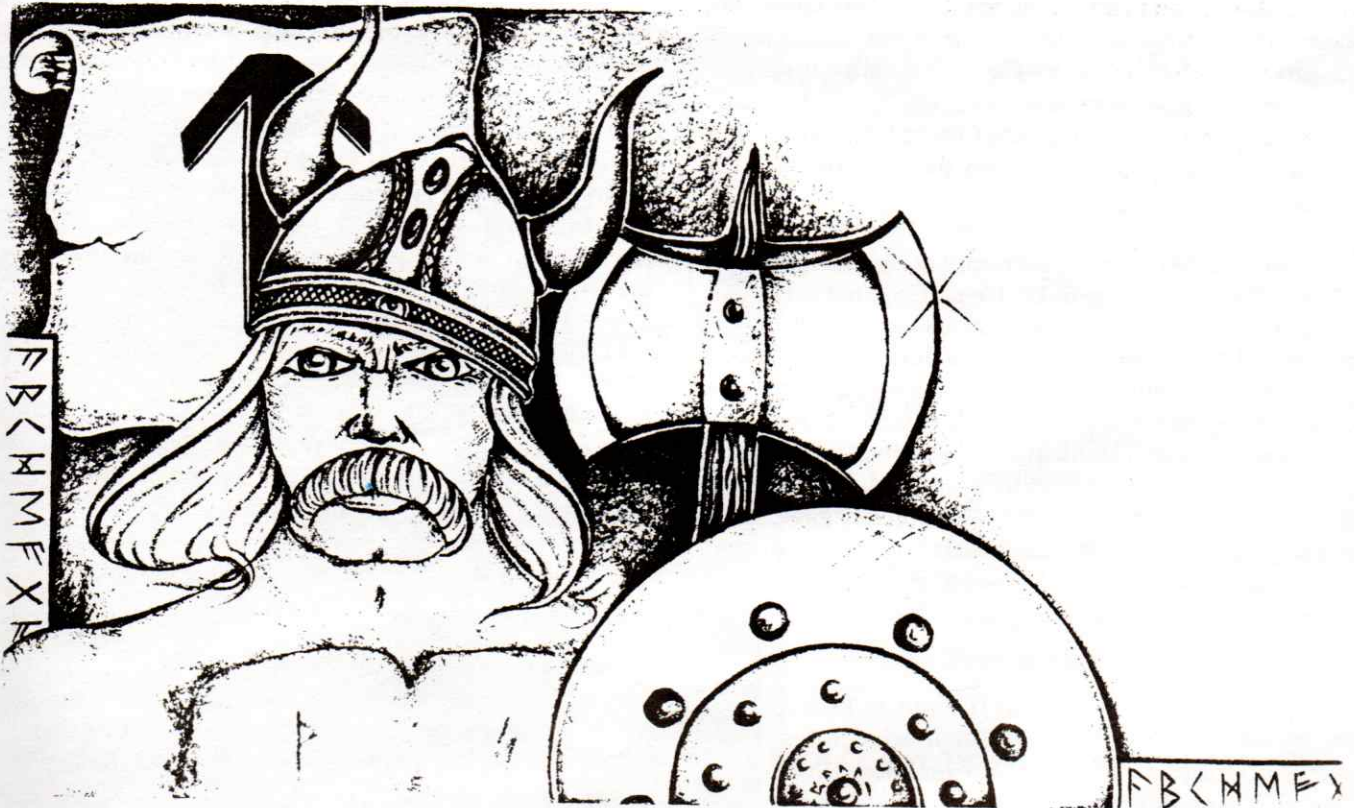
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Max Hyatt

in Asatru

Anyone who has ever read the book *The World Tree, an Introduction to the Ancient European Earth Religion of Asatru*, will be familiar with the name E. Max Hyatt. That book credits Mr. Hyatt (or "Max," as he prefers to be called) as the designer and illustrator, but what many do not know is that Max is also the author of that powerful little book. He often writes under his adopted spiritual name of "Edred Wodanson," and has authored many leaflets, articles, etc. under that powerful pseudonym.

Born in southern California in 1948, Max was raised in a family that felt "church" was a social obligation. Very early on, Max began to doubt the reality of Christianity. He remembers one time, around the age of ten, sitting in his backyard alone, challenging the Christian God to kill him...to do anything...to give some sign or proof. Needless to say, nothing happened. From that time forward, Max knew that his future course would not be on the path of so-called "normalcy."

In 1966, being a very patriotic young man, he joined the U.S. military at the age of 17. He participated in the Viet Nam war and was stationed in various locations throughout Asia and the United States. It was during this time that he began a serious quest for the "truth," a very difficult task even under the best of conditions. He tried it all, from LSD to Buddhism, from Satanism to Asian martial arts and everything in between, but as he often said, "nothing felt right." Finally, in the fall of 1981 "I completely gave up on this quest," as Max puts it. Nine years later he discovered Asatru by a most unique and unusual method - Alfater appeared to him in a vision and, as he is fond of saying, "the rest is history!"

He met his wife Janice in Toronto, in 1971, and she participated in many of his spiritual adventures, often rather reluctantly. As she says, "I never knew what he was going to come home with next! One year it was Buddhism...another year it was Satanism! It has always been a very wild and interesting ride!"

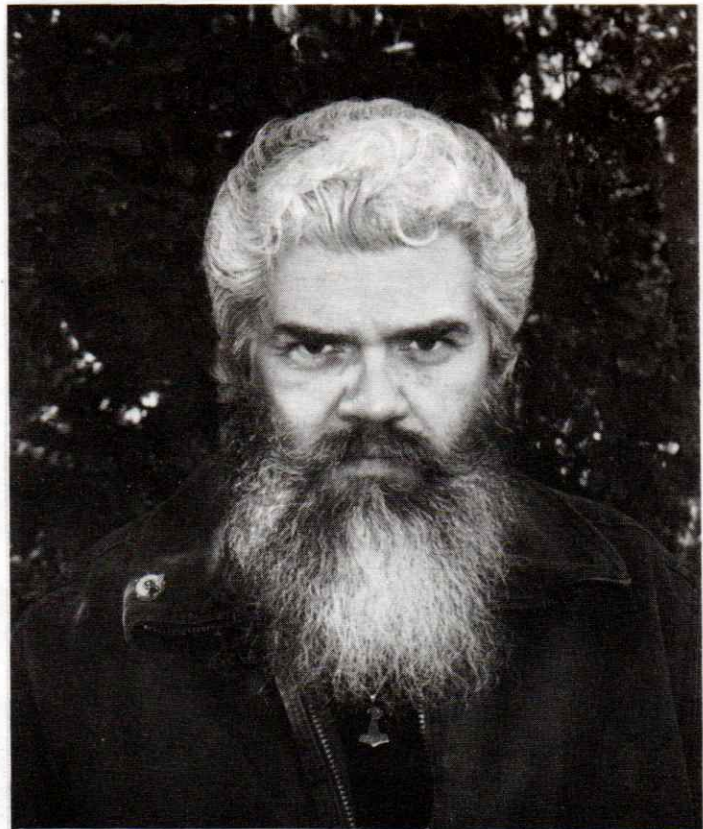
Their daughter Freya, who many in the Asatru community know from her very intense letters and articles, was born in 1974. At that point Max set out to raise a daughter who would be free of "guilt" and sin." His goal was to give her a feeling of pride in her gender and her German heritage, to raise a being who could be both sensual and strong at the same time, to eliminate the idea that females are weak and helpless. It seems to have worked; as Max says, "...she has the quiet qualities of a cat, with a well-developed sexual identity...at the same time, she knows how to slit your throat from ear to ear, with the very sharp knife she carries!...I am quite proud of her!"

After discovering Asatru in 1990, Max was at first alone in his devotion to the old Gods. Six months later, after much discussion and debate, his daughter Freya joined him and took the rite of profession. Half a year after that, Janice joined the other two and the Kindred of Dashwood Mews was formed. "At first we thought we were the only ones in the world who had returned to the old ways!" says Max. "Sure, there were a few books out there...mostly written by Wiccans...but we couldn't find any actual practicing Odinis/Asatruar." It went along like this for several years..."We collected all the books and regalia that we could find...it was a difficult search...but, we prevailed!...Finally, in 1993, I believe, we found the address for a group in England - the Odinic Rite. It was a joyous experience. There were others like us!" Max added, "Through the good Folk at the Odinic Rite, we finally got the address of the Asatru Alliance of Independent Kindreds...and the rest is history!" The Kindred of Dashwood Mews became Wodan's Kindred and has grown in strength and knowledge ever since.

Today Max and his family live off the west coast of Canada, on Vancouver Island. Max is the publisher and editor of *Wodanesdag*, the official publication for Wodan's Kindred. He also continues to write about Asatru and design images for the Tru Folk, which are all produced through Wodanesdag Press. This is a small publishing business started by Max and his family and devoted to Asatru.

In conclusion, Max remarked "It seems I don't have a lot of choice in the matter, not that I'm complaining...but Alfater has compelled me to always be doing something for the Folk, the Gods, the ancestors...that is my life. Years ago, when I was at one of the lowest points in my life and was planning my own death by my own hand..Alfater appeared to me and saved my life. I have never looked back from that moment, only forward. I have never questioned the purpose of my life since that time."

As Max declares at the end of all his writings..."Hail the Holy Aesir and Vanir!"



WODANESDAG

A Kindred Journal of the Asatru Religion

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\$2.00 sample copy (US funds)

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CANADA

It's time to pay tribute to the Alliance and it's loyal members who planned this year's Althing. Southern California's Raven Kindred hosted the event which was held on an oak-shaded knoll just west of Big Bear Lake. Ragnar Storyteller assisted Valgard in his official duties, and Ken Krill did a superb job of setting up the areas for camping, feasting, gaming, and marketing of wares. Thanks to indomitable Skadhi and her assistant Caroline, we relived feasts of old with ample portions of wild meats and vegetables. Over 120 participants came away knowing they had experienced Southern California hospitality at its very best.

Althing 16



ABOVE
"Bud" Moorman Oliver is joined by one of the beauties from Thor's Hammer Kindred.



LEFT
Kjolr and Carol of Helga Ve Kindred wearing some of the quality clothing which she designs and sells.

BELOW
Kindred delgates who participated in the Thing.





ABOVE
Many old and new friends stopped by the AFA table for a chat with Steve McNallen.

ABOVE LEFT
Steve McNallen leads an invocation to the Gods and ancestors.

LEFT
Janice Hyatt, of Wodan's Kindred in Canada, receives a gift from the Alliance. Presenters are Valgard Murray and Jerry Parker of Eagle Kindred.

Activism and Chasing Cats

Asatru activism. It's something we'd all better start thinking about. It's also something that requires a certain amount of thinking. The word 'activism' itself can easily conjure up images that seem fundamentally opposed to our beliefs and practices. The aggressive proselytism of so many of the Christian sects and their dogged determination to drag everyone under their universalist umbrella have no places in Asatru. What's more, intrusive fanaticism often works against activists ...picture chasing the neighbor's cat with a saucer of milk! Now picture simply leaving the milk on your back step and going about your business. The difference, and the results, are obvious.

Most Asa-Folk would agree that Asatru is there for those with the inclination (and presumably, the reasons) to seek it. But where will they find it? Where should we leave *our* saucer of milk?

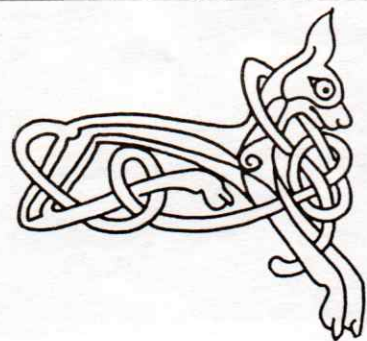
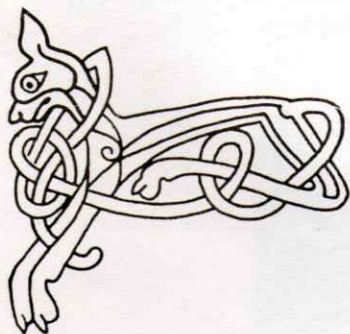
Recently I stumbled upon one of many answers to that question. While researching material at the local library for a university class, I noticed that a

few of the dozens of religious encyclopedias mentioned Asatru among 'living' religions. My elation was tempered by the fact that most of the information was years out of date. I copied down the editors' and publishers' addresses, wrote a brief note explaining the situation and sent the information to both the AFA and the Asatru Alliance. Case closed. Or so I thought at first. It later occurred to me that there are scores of books in every local library which deal with living religions. The vast majority of them make no mention of Asatru. We weren't even on the playing field, and I had only scratched the surface!

Admittedly, not all of these types of books take an objective view of the faiths which they attempt to document, and even the ones which do are read mostly by students and academics. The general public isn't exactly tripping over this information. Still, many sincere and intelligent Euro-Americans are seeking to expand their knowledge. Will they find any value in Asatru? Not if they don't know it exists!

I suggest taking a couple of hours, locating a few of the newer volumes which deal with religious and cultural movements and, after determining that they're reporting from an objective, unbiased perspective, write a letter to each editor (care of the publisher.) Describe the modern Asatru revival as you perceive it. Give an account of Asatru values or perhaps your Kindred activities. These editors are scholars, compiling information for updated editions. Some even request readers' input! A flood of current information from the Folk can only help to raise our profile. If it seems appropriate, contact other publications. Be polite, professional, and positive; always keeping good public relations in mind.

This is only one of many ways in which Asatru can make our existence known to the general public. By the time my beard is long and gray, I want to be able to say "Asatru" in a crowded room...and **not** have to explain the meaning of the word!





BUILDING ASATRU

Asatru is very much under construction. In its revived form, our religion is only a few decades old, still very vulnerable, and subject to all sorts of difficulties. While we can draw on much from the past, building Asatru is a day-by-day task that requires us all to pitch in and help!

Here are a few things you can do:

JOIN THE AFA! We've revised our procedures to make it easier than ever to join the AFA. Your membership is your vote of confidence in our program, and gives you a chance to take part. Write today for free information on how you can get involved.

WRITE! We can always use good articles! Ask for our writer's guidelines.

PROMOTE WOLF AGE! It's our other big publishing effort, and you'd be surprised how many people don't know about it! This attractive, Asatru warrior-oriented publication is full of great material. Let's get the word out!

JOIN A GUILD!

We have all sorts of guilds that can get you deeply involved with different projects and activities. So why wait?

ADVERTISE IN THE RUNESTONE!

Write for a rate card if you're got a product or service that your fellow readers need to know about!

TELL A FRIEND! Let others know that we exist! Tell them about *The Runestone* and our other fine publications!

BE A CYBERWARRIOR! There are a lot of people out there who ought to be aware of us, but aren't. And others spend a lot of time attacking us. Some well-placed, well-expressed information on the various newsgroups would really help out. Refer people to our web page (<http://www.lrbcg.com/heathen/intro.html>) so they can find out for themselves what we are all about!

DRAW! Your artwork can appear here, if it's up to our standards and meets our needs.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE VIKING SHIP PROJECT!

They're making progress, but they need your donation to get our Viking ship built. There's a whole list of incentives to encourage your contribution; see the guild page and the article on page 16, for details!

Okay, there's a whole list of things! Grab a "rock" and let's get busy

BUILDING ASATRU!

gifts of the gods

by Trudi James

*"Now I will sail across the sea
with your gift to gladden my heart,
little caring, son of kings,
how my children choose to quarrel later."*

The Awakening of Angantyr
poetic translation by Patricia Terry

Thus Hervor answered Angantyr's ghost upon wrenching from him the magical sword Tyrfing. It was his wish that this family "gift" should never be in the hand of one of his descendants, for he had foreseen that it would bring about the death of any who dared bear it, and thus end the family line. Though it was a particularly gruesome family "gift," Angantyr's daughter Hervor was able to claim the sword from her father (even though he was never wed to her mother) because it was a family gift, a blood inheritance. Taking it, Hervor accepted the fate that would follow, through her and after her, to her own descendants.

Our own family "gifts" may not be as readily tangible or full of woe as the sword Tyrfing - indeed I hope not! Yet a gift such as a way with words, musical talent, or keen drawing ability could be used as a "weapon" by an individual to defend his individuality (sometimes referred to as freedom), or to further himself on the road of life. Just so, Angantyr used Tyrfing, a gift from *his* father, to pursue his own life goals in the battle on the Isle of Samsey, a battle which ended in his own death as well as that of his eleven

brothers. He felt at the time that the clash was worth the risks. We, too, face risks when trying to achieve our aims, rightly or wrongly chosen. But how often do we face our struggles with our Gods-given gifts drawn and ready for combat?

Gifts move through the Gods' families, also. Mjollnir, Thor's hammer, survives Ragnarok. Lying in the grasses that spring up out of the destruction, it waits for the two who have enough might and will to pick it up. Modi and Magni, Thor's sons, are the ones to carry the hammer into the new age. Odin's gift to Balder, the ring Draupnir, was not given after Odin's passing, but at *Balder's* passing; Odin laid the ring on his son's chest as a last gift. Though Draupnir travels in a different direction across the barrier of death, it is still a gift along family lines. Gifts can also be shared while family members are still alive; death is not a necessary element in the giving. Freya gave her daughters the names Hnoss and Gersimi, both meaning "jewel," reflecting the power of the great necklace Brisingamen. Since names are gifts which help us deal with the worlds in which we have to live, perhaps the name-gifts which Freya

gave to her daughters were meant to help them wield and wear the necklace when it passed to them.

When Odin, Hoenir, and Lodur came upon two pieces of driftwood on the strand and fashioned them into the first man and woman, they gave their new creations gifts. These were linked directly with the divine functions of the giving Gods, and indeed are the very essence of these deities. Odin gave the gift of soul, Hoenir gave the gift of sense, and Lodur gave the gift of heat and goodly hue. Though we may not be physically of the Gods (our bodies are but driftwood), we are connected to the Gods in the very ways which separate us from the other creatures and humans that roam this Earth of ours. The Cosmic Three have touched us, and this touch cannot be erased from our most deeply imbedded life codes. In this way we are their children and their gifts are within us, waiting for us to use them to make ourselves and our world more than they are. We, too have been given the ability to create, for both good and bad.

To balance these gifts - indeed, to limit mankind's wild ability to create - the three Norns arrive on the scene with the rules of conduct to restrain mankind. Their gift to us is a box of limitations to keep us in line - yes, even to draw a line between us and the Gods. In our spiritual and magical quests, it is these very limitations that we are constantly working through and around. Like loving mothers, the Norns have set the rules as to where we can go, and at what time we have to return home. Though perhaps a little overbearing at times, they work for our own good as well as the good of the Gods, whom only a thousand years ago we tried most valiantly to destroy. This power struggle is nothing new to parents or to those of us who remember what it is like to be rebellious children. The gifts of the Norns, sometimes referred to as Fate, are always with us, and if we take time to look at them instead of fighting them, we can find guidance toward our goals - just as Odin took time out from fighting and looked within and found the runes, a gift used to see Fate more clearly.

Sometimes, though, we unwittingly turn our backs on the gifts that are ours. Many people on the road of spiritual growth feel that the best way to truly free themselves from the limitations of their families and friends is by rebelling. Others never awake to spiritual things, and instead build themselves a life filled only with features of their own choosing. Some retreat into a virtual monasticism, stripping away one set of rules just to put on another, more severe set. Others fight a slow, painful battle against the law-makers - parents, society, religion - while keeping what they can adapt and disregarding all the rest. Another path, traveled by a lot of Generation X, is to turn against all that is considered good and holy, and try the other side of things for a while.

One of the most serious results of such actions is that the individual may cut him- or herself off from the very

sources of goodness and fulfillment he or she is seeking. It may take years, if not a lifetime, to heal such wounds, but for some there may be no other way to advance - and to not advance may mean the suicide of the soul. To return to the family and accept its gifts, however, will mean dealing once more with the things that made you leave. To become whole again means finding the good that was there in your past, the good from whence you came.

Our personal past, and particularly our relationships with our parents, may have not been an ideal one by any means. Still, we shouldn't close ourselves off from the gifts handed us by our family line; our parents and theirs before them are deeply connected to who we are and the corner of the spiritual universe into which we were born. Yes, they made mistakes - what parents don't? Even the Gods make mistakes! What matters is what they do to amend those mistakes. If the wounds were so gross and grievous that a channel of communication is too painful to keep open, as in sexual abuse, then of course it must be closed. Yet, that doesn't mean some good can't be recovered from the family line. Good can come from just remembering tales of family gatherings or family heroes. From such family sagas it might just be possible to identify patterns to which you feel strongly attracted, such as a long line of clergy, a great number of musicians, or a gifted painter. There may be an outstanding line of athletes, or maybe a grandmother who was asked to attend at local births, or perhaps your great-great-grandfather had a way of finding water on even the driest piece of land - the list goes on and on!

These family traits are the very gifts of the Gods given Ask and Embla at the beginning of time. These gifts have translated themselves into the ancestral line you were born to, and eventually into you, yourself. Because families tend to have recurring themes running through their collective fates, or *orlog*, family members over the ages developed their own ways of getting around the limitations set by the Norns. Even looking back on these family foibles may be painful for some, but failing to do so may be worse. Just think - in times of adversity and oppression in the past, how did your forebears survive, where did they hide that innermost part of themselves, how did they deal with their connection to the Gods in a prying and hostile world? That, too, was a special gift.

As the presents pile up under the tree this Yule, remember the gifts you can't see - the ones from the Gods, and from kin both living and long dead. Accept them graciously, and pass them on to those who will sit, awe-struck, before Yule trees that will still be seeds when you and I are dust!

A California pioneer; a Norwegian; a true hero.



So begins and ends the tale of Snowshoe Thompson. His story seems amazing to all who know it. Our friend Thorgrun, of Gullinbursti Kindred, recently mentioned Snowshoe as a favorite historical figure. We heartily agreed, adding that we spent two days last summer in the Sierra Nevada, tracing the life of this legendary man...

by SHEILA EDLUND

Snowshoe Thompson

Jon Torsteinson-Rue, later known as "Snowshoe Thompson," was born April 30, 1827 in Telemark, Norway; the last child of his hard-working parents. When his father died a couple of years later, the family continued to farm their craggy acreage but were unsuccessful. In 1836, Jon's mother chose to start over in America with her youngest son. It was a fateful trip for many; but the ship *Njord* safely delivered the Thompson family, as they were now known, to the port of New York.

For the next dozen years, the family moved restlessly from one Norwegian community to another. And for John (for this was how he now spelled his name) this was a dull and frustrating existence. He yearned for the adventure that other men were experiencing in their journeys out west. With a plan in mind, he drove a herd of dairy cows to the California gold fields in 1851.

After a short and unrewarding stint at mining in Placerville, John crossed the Sacramento Valley to the barren western hills to try farming again. Although this venture was quite successful, nothing raised his spirits like looking off towards the Sierra Nevada which were so like the Norwegian mountains of his youth. He resolved to someday live among the craggy peaks.

In 1855, John saw an ad in a local paper advertising for a mail carrier to take provisions to settlers of the Sierra's eastern slope. This contract, authorized by the US Congress, required the carrier to deliver mail summer *and* winter, by foot, if need be! John knew that hardiness alone wouldn't guarantee survival under such harsh conditions; he would need specific knowledge about snow and the means to cross the passes in winter, which he did not yet have. What does a hearty Scandinavian do under the

circumstances? He simply had to make a pair of skis and relearn the use of them. And learn he did! His prowess soon became legendary.

Over the years he made several sets of skis, which he called "snowshoes" in the fashion of the times. Even his earliest efforts, made from oak and measuring up to ten feet in length, showed the Nordic craftsman's touch in the spiraling, upturned tips. Seen in a museum display case today, they remind us of the curved prow of a Viking ship. Did such images come to his mind, or did he think on those gods of ancient myth, Ullr and Skadhi, who rode through the snow on skis like those he was fashioning for himself?

In December of 1855, he blackened his face with charcoal to prevent snow blindness, and left on his first ninety mile trip to Genoa, Nevada. By 1857, he had crossed the Sierras thirty-one times. Regardless of the weather,

he took only a single blanket for warmth at night; he even shunned an overcoat! When overtaken by a blizzard, he would climb up on a large rock and dance in the Norwegian folk-style until the storm subsided. To lie down would have meant certain death. During the next twenty years, he would carry hundred-pound shipments through snowdrifts up to forty feet deep. (Remember that the Donner party tragedy took place only ten years prior, and 30 miles north of his route.) Nevada's famous silver strike, the Comstock Lode, had its first ore sent for assaying via "Showshoe Thompson."

Thompson was known for his daring rescues and uncanny ability to locate people lost in snowstorms. He also felt it was his duty to check on isolated pioneers braving out the winter in their cabins. In December 1856, he stopped at what appeared to be a deserted home. Once inside, he discovered a man suffering with frozen legs, turned purple to the knees. Thompson immediately set out for Genoa and returned with six men who transported the injured man on a sled. With amputation the only recourse, Snowshoe then high-tailed it in the opposite direction to Sacramento to obtain chloroform for the operation. Hundreds of miles of untrodden snow was no deterrent when a man was in need.

This modern Viking had no fear of the wilderness. On only one occasion did he feel in personal danger. While crossing a moonlit meadow, he came across six huge timber wolves feeding on a carcass. They stopped and eyed him warily, then sat in a row awaiting his approach. In unison, they all tilted their heads and let out a howl. The sound was something he never forgot. Although he wanted to run, he gathered his courage and marched forward, walking past the wolves like a general reviewing his troops. This show of power perplexed the wolves who remained stationary until he was beyond reach. They then went back to their midnight meal.

His skiing ability often drew him into ski races with stakes as high as

\$500. New refinements in ski construction and the discovery of ski wax put Thompson at a disadvantage. One time, however, he was in a race that matched anything in the sagas. A noisy crowd watched as Thompson and six other Norwegians approached the first obstacle of a cross-country ski course. As a split rail fence loomed ahead, his opponents capably ducked under it; but jaws dropped in disbelief as Thompson leaped over it, beating the others by eleven seconds. Our stories tell of jumping competitions among the Vikings, so one can almost imagine ghostly forebears in the crowd, shouting, "Jump, Torsteinson, jump!"

For a brief time Snowshoe Thompson tried "soldiering" in Nevada under Major Ormsby. In the 1860 Pyramid Lake War with the Paiute Indians, his horse was shot out from under him, leaving him exposed and on foot, surrounded by dying men. Then, like a miracle, a riderless horse ran towards him. He grabbed the reins, jumped on, and rode to safety - one of the few men to survive the battle.

For his homestead, Thompson chose remote Diamond Valley in the eastern shadow of the Sierra Nevada. It was here that he met and married thirty-one year old Agnes Singleton, an English immigrant. In the next year, they added two rooms and an infant boy to their spartan cabin. Thompson's gifts

to his newborn were a cradle crafted from a miner's sluice box and a miniature pair of skis.

Living thirty miles from the nearest town had its drawbacks, particularly in emergencies. Thompson was a man of heroic proportions, illustrated when he was forced to take his ill four-year old son to the doctor's in the middle of winter. He attached leather straps to his back with which to carry his wife, and with his desperately ill son in his arms, made the sixty mile round trip to Genoa. The boy survived his bout of pneumonia and the family continued to thrive for several years, despite the fact that Thompson was never compensated by the government for his delivery services!





This remarkable man, who in life had won every contest with Nature, lost his fight to appendicitis and pneumonia on May 15, 1876. The headstone his wife erected in the Genoa Cemetary is engraved with crossed skis and the simple epitaph "Gone but not forgotten."

Thompson's only son died two years later, so there are no direct descendants to honor this mighty man. But truly, he has not been forgotten. For decades, plaques have been dedicated to him by groups such as the Sons of Norway, E Clampus Vitas, and the Norwegian Olympic team; and so it is right that we Asatruar, too, add him to our respected ancestors. But does this hero's story die with us? I think not.

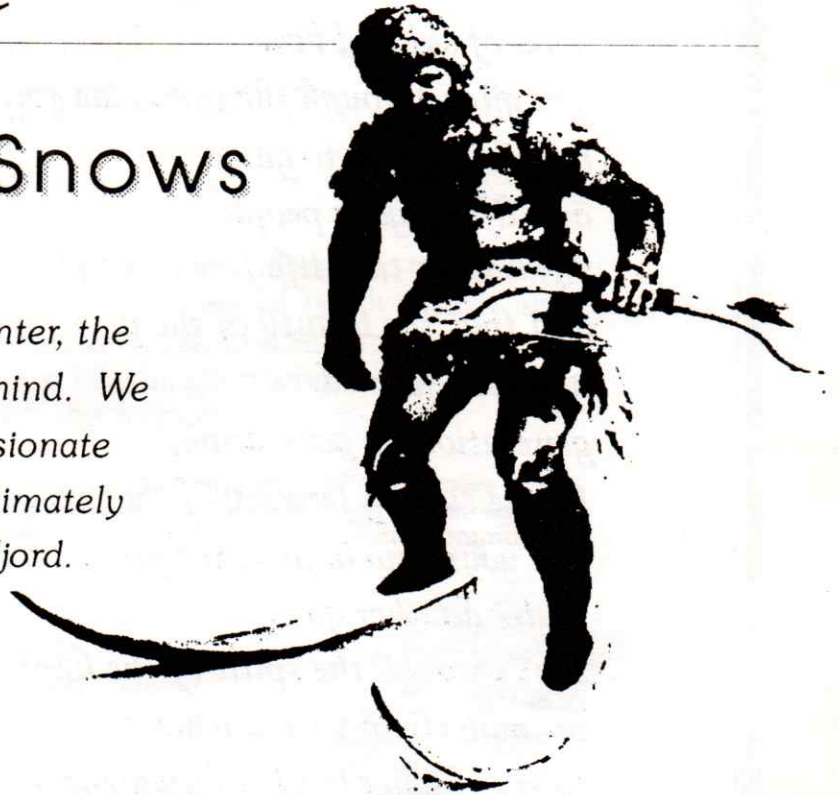
Just today, one of my seventh graders shared his biographical book report on Snowshoe Thompson. His fellow students were intrigued by the story, with several adding vignettes of Snowshoe's life which he had left out. And so I will end this on a positive note. These twelve year olds are the first in my teaching career who acknowledge heroes according to *our* criteria, which they seem to share. That is not to say that they are oblivious to TV, pop-culture idols, and sports figures. But when they see a hero in the true sense (and I believe there are sagas yet to be written) it may be these young folk who add us to the list as "Gone, but not forgotten."



ULLR

God of the Snows

As we wend our way through winter, the Gods Skadhi and Ullr come to mind. We all know Skadhi, proud and passionate daughter of giants and Vanir, ultimately married to the raging sea-God Njord. But who is this other God, Ullr, and how does he relate to us?



I imagine that you're on foot, half-way to your destination in the snowy depths of winter. The wind picks up, and a dusting of snow becomes a vortex about you. You lose your sense of place, and temporarily, your sense of purpose. With anxiety you look up through this frozen tunnel which seems to have trapped you. And then you see waves of color, shifting green to blue. It must be the Rainbow Bridge; perhaps Heimdal can direct you!

As the snow settles, you realize that you've been beneath the Northern Lights. It dusts the barren landscape, and casts an unearthly glow on a figure which emerges behind an ice mountain. In silence he approaches on skis, lifts his arm in greeting, and stops

before you. With a quick motion, he slings his yew-bow, bone-skates, some furs and a leather bag onto the snow. He says nothing, yet he speaks through his actions. You marvel at his confidence and how safe you feel in his presence - for this is Ullr, son of Sif and stepson of Thor. Wordless, the two of you build a fire in the wilderness.

By sipping from his horn, you get a taste of how empowering solitude can be. And the firelight reminds you of the flame in your soul which set you on this journey, and of man's ability to use the elements responsibly for his well-being. For a moment, you can see through his eyes the solitary struggles which make up life's landscape. You resolve to do your best in single combat; but should you need

focus, calmness, or a steady aim, you know who to call for help...

Ullr's influence goes back thousands of years and may have preceded Odin's in Scandinavia. From the number of holy sites in northern Sweden which carry his name we know that he was considered a powerful God, equated with Tyr in the south. Among his symbols is the oath ring, a reminder of our earliest ancestors' concern with honor, justice, and truth.

Ullr is the God of winter, the bow, and the solitary combatant. In any situation when you feel forces, natural or otherwise, attempting to control you; seek the power of the Eiwaz, the Yew-rune, and our fearless God of the north!

Ullr,

*God of ski and bow,
you glide through the snowclad forest
bringing death to game,
and life to your people.
Remind us that life feeds on life,
and that the beauty of the prey
has been formed,
generation by generation,
by the culling ferocity of the predator.
Let your yew bow be the great World Yew
under another guise,
that through the spirit of the hunter
we may climb its branches
to ever higher levels of awareness.*

Reprinted from *A Book of Uncommon Prayers*



WANTED WANTED WANTED WANTED

ASATRU COUPLES WHO WANT TO MOVE TO THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

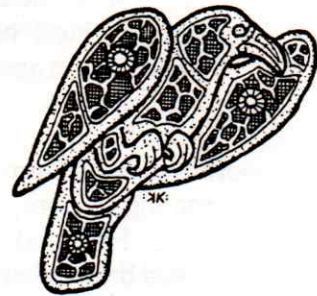
Ever wanted to move to the Pacific Northwest and belong to a growing community of Asatruar, but couldn't because of work and housing obstacles? Well now you can! There are now five Asatru couples (with more on the way) living in southwest Washington who are busy forming "The Enhanced Community" with the following plans:

1) Building a Viking Hof on donated acreage that will function as an Asatru church, community center, school, and educational center for our Folk.

2) Drawing at least 12 couples to the area in the next 5 years that want to belong to a viable Asatru community.

What we offer is the following:

Professionals who will assist you in finding suitable employment, as well as temporary and permanent housing. Interested couples should contact Reinhold Clinton for more details, at 8709 NE Winters Road, Camas, WA 98607



A TIP OF THE HORN...

A TIP OF THE HORN...to Mary Holford, of San Jose, California. Mary is a Celtic activist who says outright "In a society where ethnic identity is priceless, our young are told they have none." She has organized The Hedge School, with goals such as funding scholarships for students of Celtic ancestry, building a monument to the Great Hunger (incorrectly called the "Irish potato famine"), and outreach to the Celtic-American poor. The Hedge School's address is 6555 Tam O'Shanter Drive, San Jose, CA 95120.



AND, THE OTHER TIP
OF THE HORN...

AND THE OTHER TIP OF THE HORN...to Congressman Robert Dornan, who cares so little about his own ethnic identity that he can face the demise of European-Americans in California with a flip-pant "So what if 5000 years from now we're all going to have a golden tan?" Of course, his time scale is off by about 4900 years...



WHO IS THE WINTER WANDERER?

JACK FROST

by **LB HAILODIN**

Striding down out of the north, he came in the first snowfall of the season. He was the lover of storms and weather. He walked contentedly, as though he were an ordinary man. His breath fell as the snow, his voice was the north wind, in low admonitions, to shhh the trees to sleep.

When he came to the ponds rimming the edge of town, he touched the calm face of the water with his fingertip. Ice crystals began to form and spread fanwise from his touch. The ducks and geese leaped into flight, their reedy voices piping in roundelays as they flew away south. He watched them go as a parent who sees his children fledge and fly from home before his eyes. Poised thus, kneeling in the flawless snow at the edge of the pond, he resembled a learned and savage god, the incarnation of ancient Norse wisdom serenely creating the world.

He gazed into the mirror of the frozen pond as if it were a crystal ball. His own eyes looked back at him, one marbled, the other cobalt and bottomless as the sea. He breathed onto the glass-hard surface and a mist began to flow sadly within the ice as if it were a tide beckoning out the distant past, to ask the ageless questions to which only the sea replies.

The mere grew dark and a twilight sky appeared; years and centuries uncounted seemed to pass. The vision changed. Night gave way to a blazing sunwheel and the face of a golden child appeared, then a harvest of hope grew from unsown fields and the human heart awoke to compassion.

The vision faded from sight and he saw just an ordinary pond again. Smiling, he headed for the warm lights of the town that had begun to wink on as darkness fell, and the snow whispered down.

He came down the street in the deep gray of the early twilight hues, the air alive with enormous snowflakes, like manna from a more northerly heaven. The town glowed with the lamp lights of the festive season, and became enchanted by them. Voices of carolers lofted in the doorways and under windows and on street corners gave the snowfall a warm quality, and people would gather before the Yuletide choirs as if they were a hearth to warm themselves by.

Sleighs passing up and down the street, their bells ringing in ancient percussion, articulated in rhythm by the wide feet of draft horses. The drivers shouted "Hey, Jack Frost! You're late this year!" to the man who grinned and touched the brim of his hat as they passed.

People in this town have always gotten on well with the cold. They look forward to the first mantling of snow each year and welcome it with holiday festivities. Something

sleeping in the Teutonic blood awakens gently and whispers to them that this is their season, the one that they were cradled in, the one that is part of their ancient soul. It is irresistible to those whose ancestors lived so close to the rhythm of the seasons and their work.

He made his way casually down the street until he came to the inn, a huge four-story structure built in the half-timbering style of the Old World. It couldn't have been a more inviting place to a man who comes in from the cold and the night. The small octagonal lanterns, glowing like souls of illumination, turned the room a honey color. The huge stone hearth warmed the room and made everything dance by the light of the stammering flames.

As soon as he swung the door open, warm air scented with freshly-baked loaves and meat pies filled his senses. And over all, the rich aroma of pipe smoke floated in the air, omnipresent and divine.

From the steps of the gray stone church, the Bishop watched Jack Frost make his way down the whited street. He was filled with apprehension at the sight of him, as he always was when Jack appeared each year at the first snowfall. The Bishop was a tame man, grown thin and hollow-eyed from his slavish devotion to the church. He looked consumed with starvation. Dissatisfied with his steady diet of Puritanism, he was starving his soul to death. No matter the depth or degree of his penance, he still awaited the final proof of God's hostility, and he awaited it daily.

And now Jack Frost had returned again like some peregrination, a merry waywont, jaunty and sad like an old soldier. He seemed to remind the Bishop of something he could not quite remember, some lost memory that seemed to reside in his blood or some atrophied chamber of his mind. But this year would be different.

He watched Jack turn at the inn, then he made his way towards the Sheriff's Office two streets over.

"Jack Frost!" the innkeeper called to him as the wanderer's figure stepped in from the street.

"Hello, Borodine!" Jack hailed him from the door.

"It's good to know you are still abroad in the world, Jack. Whiskey or beer?" The innkeeper looked more like a bear than a man, but he was well liked and kindly enough.

"Whiskey, I think." Jack called over the noise of the public house. "Evening, everybody!" he said to the other drinkers in the house.

They were hardened men, the children of immigrants, of nomadic German tribes washed up on the shore of a new land. No pilgrims, these who knew toil and unbearable privation; these, who practiced violence and debauchery, but who knew no fear. And they rightfully resented the sentimental voices of missionaries who bewailed the hardness of their fate.

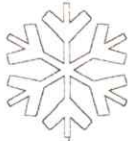
To them, Jack Frost was witness of a different nature - strong as ever, undevoured by any Christian dogma, his man's passions still alive and whole within him. For that alone, if nothing else, they admired him.

Voices shouted back greetings, for he was well known and generally liked. Everyone watched him make his way to the bar, greeting old friends. Everyone watched him, with a human curiosity that insists on staring. It was not Jack Frost's appearance that warned of anything out of the ordinary, but rather a profound and unshakable awareness of the supernatural.

If you looked closely at him you might catch a glint of gold under the collar of his shirt, or sliding down his wrist and spilling out of his sleeve as he moved. Old gold, dull and warm, worked in some antique fashion, maybe robbed from an ancient grave in a country that has since forgotten its own name.

The early twilight gave way to darkest night, the sun having been taken in as usual





by the coming winter solstice, the practical joke of a young and careless sun goddess. The evening had grown late when Jack Frost found that the sheriff's deputy had come in from the street, like a startling bad dream - and arrested Jack for vagrancy.

"I'm sorry, Jack," he said almost timidly, "but you'll have to come along with me."

Jack Frost and the innkeeper glanced at each other and Jack winked. Then he turned to the deputy and hit him in the face, knocking him flat on his back. The dazed man staggered to his feet and mumbled "What did you hit me for?" as he wiped blood off his chin.

"Well, I figured that if you were going to arrest me, you might as well have a good reason for doing it," said Jack. He helped him to his feet.

* * *

Later that night, the door to the jail opened for a visitor. The huge oak door was seemingly bad tempered; it groaned and shrieked on its hinges, protesting whenever it allowed anyone through, as though they were all trespassers. Even a holly wreath tacked to its wooden face didn't seem to improve its temper, in spite of the Yule season.

The Bishop walked down to Jack's cell and stood looking in at him, his face saturnine and slightly edged with corruption. He had great confidence in the iron bars, in their tangible reality, and in the myth of their authority.

"Evening, Bishop," said Jack Frost as he stood up and came over to the bars. Even though his face bore the mask of friendship, something in his manner said that he was behind bars only because he was willing to stay there. The Bishop's confidence diminished somewhat, and he took a step backward.

"Jack," he nodded, "Mind if we chat for a bit? I have a few questions I'd like to ask."

"Sure. But you could have asked me anyplace. You didn't have to have me arrested to do it," said Jack.

The Bishop's eyes widened a little. "How did you know it was me?" he stammered. The innocence of his surprise was comic, and Jack chuckled at him.

"You would be amazed at the things I know," Jack grinned.

"I'm sure I would." The Bishop composed himself, put his hands in his trouser pockets with elegant indifference, and began to pace out a short stretch of the stone floor. Articulating with his feet and knees, he turned back and forth with the precision of a dancer in his steps.

"Are you baptized, Jack?" He made the question seem perfectly natural coming from a man of his profession, without any implication for a wrong answer.

"Why, I don't believe I am, not in the way you might expect, least ways," Jack replied. "I think mine was of fire, not water."

"How do you mean?" the Bishop said, a little too eagerly. He studied him for a moment, then smiled patronizingly. "Oh, it was a joke," he said at last.

"If you like," said Jack indifferently.

"I know Jack Frost is not your name."

"That's the name I've been given here."

"I know. But what's your right name? The name your parents gave you?"

"Let's see...I'm not rightly sure. You start forgetting when you're as old as I am, and you go by the thousand or so names folks give you."

"Old!" scoffed the Bishop. "You don't look like you're over fifty yet"

"I'm older than I look."

"You've been showing up in this town every year at the first snowfall since I can remember. And you haven't aged. You haven't changed in all those years, damn you! And there are men and women in town creeping up into their nineties who say the same thing.

What are you? Where do you come from?" The Bishop's pale face, sweating and bent in his anxiety and anger, pressed against the iron bars. His hands gripped white-knuckled, as if he were the one caged, rather than Jack.

"Why, Bishop! You look at me as though I was some startling visitor come to you from a nightmare." Jack put his callused hands through the bars, palm upward. His five fingers articulated human kinship. "But I think you know where I come from, and you know who I am. The intuition of your own heritage has already told you, in its wordless language."

The Bishop glared in at him, pallid and glassy-eyed. "Are you pretending to be some heathen entity, some mythological sage or immortal? That's blasphemous!" he shouted, trembling in rage.

"In strange guises, the old Gods still walk among us, I believe. The Gods that watched over our cradle in the morning of the world, when we were without fire, when our speech groaned and yammered still unfit to shape words - the same Gods who walked beside us with each stammering footstep of our advance. And in the thousand millennia since then, because they reside in our stone age bodies, watching over us still," Jack said calmly.

"That's nonsense! It's of the devil, and illegitimate because it's not of true religion!"

"You are guarding your faith, Bishop. You are unable to accept any concept of God that is higher than the one you have been spoon-fed your whole life. That's profoundly ignorant and it veils your mind with the craft of a sorcerer."

Jack sat in the cold stone jail for eight days. And with unnerving patience he listened to the Bishop's endless questions, his childish demands, his empty threats. At last the Bishop sank down onto the floor, his soul's anguish showing on his face. He had quietly folded his arms and rested his head upon them, exhausted. Jack Frost looked at him, and felt pity.

The Bishop asked, in a broken voice and without raising his head, "What is it you come here for, Jack?"

"Compassion in the human heart. That singular artifact that says the human soul is above the lower kingdoms of this world. That's what I'm looking for," Jack Frost answered him.

The Bishop rose and staggered once. Leaning heavily upon the wall of the jail, he opened the door to leave, pale and lean.

"Be true to yourself, Bishop," Jack called to him. "Don't destroy yourself trying to fulfill purposes that are not rightfully your own. You won't see me again."

Later that evening, Jack barely heard the door groan as it opened and closed, nor did he hear the light, short footfall of the child as she walked down the row of empty jail cells to where he was. He sat on his cot, leaning back against the wall, his hat down over his eyes to the light showed only his mouth and chin. His long legs stretched out in front of him, ending in jackboots now scuffed and worn. His hands folded over his wide chest that rose and fell rhythmically; he seemed asleep.

But as the child approached, Jack tipped his hat back and sat up. He rose from the cot and came up to the iron bars. She stood there in front of him very small and white. She was a child doomed to change her fate, and the fate of others. She handed him up a long-necked beer.

"I think my father was wrong to have an innocent man thrown in jail," she said to him.

He took the bottle from her tiny hand, lifted it out of her fingers with his hand folded





over hers, as hands will that have a healing touch. He raised the bottle and drained it to the last as she watched. Wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, he looked down at her and smiled kindly.

"Now listen closely to all I'm going to say, because you will never receive better payment for a bottle of beer. You may not understand all of it now, but in the fullness of time you will know what it is all about. And I promise, you will never forget a single word of it."

He continued, "It is at the outskirts of the world that the old things accumulate, beyond all boundaries. That is where I come from. In the endless Northern night, with its silence and snow, there is a power. It stands without regard for the philosophy or reason of men. I am the servant of that power.

"Far from humankind, out in the great loneliness, is the upholder of the Universe, of all life. He is so mighty that his speech to humans does not use ordinary words. He speaks through thunder and lightning, in rain and snow, storms at sea; through fire, through the things that people often fear. But he also speaks through sunshine, and little children like yourself, and in good days well spent in contentment. That is as it has always been right from the beginning, when there was nothing but the gaping abyss of darkness and ice. This too had its meaning and its purpose.

"Life is unutterable sorrow and hardship, solely because it is sometimes beautiful. There is always the chance that another heart will come to yours and know it. So never stop hoping, or keeping faith, or loving beauty in all the world and in its human family. You must remain in this world and to do that you must live in terms of your own humanity. Discover the things that are important in your own heart.

"That is why you must never be afraid to take the left-hand path. When the world trespasses upon you, search for a quieter place and there you must bless the enemy for he is the instrument of your destiny. If you find you walk alone in some desolate place that has become a graveyard of hopes, fear not Death's twilight shade. But go on in peace, for your ancestors are near you. And finally, honor the Gods of your own holy kindred, or they are your only true possessions. You are what they made you, of what you would repent.

"When the sun comes up in the morning, it will be a better day. Go out and greet it with your arms wide open. Never forget, little girl. And tell your father. Tell him."

"Will you come back again next fall, Jack Frost?" she asked in her childish voice.

"No." He smiled at her. "I've found what I was looking for, and my work is done here."

On that night Jack Frost vanished from his cell without leaving a single mark or any record that he had ever been there. He passed into the immortal winter night going north again, just like any other man.

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MOOT POINT

Heilsa, Steve:

Am sending you a contribution to the Else Christensen Defense Fund. You may remember that Else was my first contact with the modern Asatru movement. When her freedom of action was curtailed she referred me to you.

At the same time I want to commend you for restructuring the AFA membership fee schedule...I am definitely committed to joining the AFA in the near future and to taking the Gothi/Gythja course. For now I place a higher priority on contributing all that I can to help provide Else with a competent defense.

My compliments on *The Runestone* number 15. While the main effort still falls on your shoulders, you are starting to attract a variety of capable writers who all seem to have worthwhile things to say. I hope you attract more of them. I especially enjoyed Brian Regan's tome on shamanism...

Sincerely,

Jim

Waes Hael , Steve!

I greatly enjoyed the recent summer issue of *The Runestone*. Thank you so much for featuring Frigga's Web so beautifully and prominently. And the cover was lovely! We already have received letters of interest from some of your members. Great!

...You mentioned the word "hubris" in one of your articles and wondered what the Old Norse equivalent might be. Can't help you there, but can give you an Old English term that's fairly close, though not identical: "ofermod" (pronounced "overmoad"). It means having an excess of pride and confidence that leads to disaster. The classic example in the literature is the Ealdor Byrhtnoth, who allowed the raiding Vikings to cross a bridge into his territory and was thereby slaughtered with all his men (the Battle of Maldon). Just for the sake of interest!

Yours in Troth,

Winifred Hodge

Dear Runestone,

In your recent interview with Heimgest, there was some discussion about where to draw the lines among Northern European peoples/practitioners of Asatru. I will suggest that one of the best pieces of work on this subject is exhibited in *The History and Geography of Human Genes* by Luca Cavalli-Sforza et. al. The Scots, Welsh, English, Germans, Dutch and Scandinavians - the cultures in which worship of the Aesir was most rooted - are all found in a rather small portion of the overall European culture...These clusters are quite small compared to even the overall European genetic variability, let alone that of humanity as a whole.

Now part of the reason why this is relevant is that in large part what modern-day Asatruar are attempting to do is to re-create the basis for the kind of tribal community their ancestors had over a thousand years ago. The thing is, their ancestors who had this kind of tribal community were much more closely related to each other genetically than most American Asatruar are to each other, or perhaps even more so than modern Swedes or British...

The best modern-day example of a successful communal experiment may well be the Hutterites in the Midwest. They are the descendants of 52 people from a village in Germany that adopted this peculiar form of Protestantism over 400 years ago. The group now has over 200,000 members. They have no private property and live communally, and they are among the fastest reproducing and most homogeneous groups on the planet. I will suggest that part of the reason for their success - and one of the reasons why they have succeeded where other groups like the Israeli kibbutz have failed - is that the Hutterites have preserved much of the genetic homogeneity that was present in the pre-Christian Northern European tribes.

This kind of genetic homogeneity or some specific kinds of genetic variation may be the key to creating successful, cooperative communities. Now, modern genetic technology is very close to the point where we could precisely measure the genetic distance between any two individuals, meaning that it may be possible in our lifetimes to identify the specific individuals from the American "melting pot" that we would have been most likely to find ourselves with in Northern Europe...I can imagine groups like the AFA in the future having a computer database that would match people with kindreds either most like themselves or most in genetic need of someone like themselves.

The main thing we need to understand here is this: Our ancestral community took place in a higher degree of genetic homogeneity than many of us have ever experienced even in the context of our families. The kind of bonds that we can realistically have among Northern Europeans as a whole, or Northern Europeans and the rest of humanity, are fundamentally different. This is not to say that peace and cooperation between diverse groups is not a good thing, we just can't expect a full re-creation of our lost tribal identity without a full re-creation of our clans and tribes.

Frey's Friend

Dear Frey's Friend,

This is certainly an intriguing possibility. At the same time, some things I've observed have made me wonder if there's not some unconscious attraction between individuals in this country who appear to be from the same tribe or region in Europe. At a recent gathering of about fifteen adults, we discovered that three of those in attendance had relatives who set sail from the same town in the Baltic region of Germany, in the same or almost the same years, to set up life in America.

The idea of kin recognition (and preference) is found not only in humans, but throughout the animal kingdom. While some part of this ability may be based on subtle physical clues, my own belief is that much or most of this is psychic - and another validation of the concept of metagenetics.

Hail the Aesir and Vanir!

Steve McNallen

P.L.B., writing to *The Runestone* last summer (1995), tells of a good change wrought in the life of a friend, attributed partly to the help of the Frisian Goddess Friagabi. P.L.B. recited an offering-poem to Friagabi and this is printed in the issue. As I claim with some likelihood to have ancient Frisian blood in my veins, I was moved to compose my own acrostic poem to this deity:

Friend of the Frisians falcon far-seeing

Radbod's Repose rider through time

I make thee an offering in quiet of soul

After ancient customs accept it of me

Guide and Giver good and gracious

Ask of me what you will and make me wiser

Bring me home be close beside me

I am yours in your hand I rest

This poem can be shortened by omitting the second half of each line, or two people can recite it antiphonally, so dividing the lines while making offering jointly...Antiphony is very ancient and

pagan; in Shakespeare's "Who is Sylvia, what is she..." you have the pagan type of communal antiphony between a choir of bachelors on the one hand, and of maidens on the other.

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CALENDAR

OCTOBER 8 - Today is a Day of Remembrance for Erik the Red, father of Leif Erikson. Erik was a stalwart follower of Thor, strongest of the Gods. Recall Leif's sire with a toast, and by praising Thor for such robust Vikings. Do something for a friend, in imitation of Thor, friendliest of the Gods!

OCTOBER 9 - Leif Erikson's Day is not a religious occasion as such, but it is a great opportunity to boost Nordic culture. However, lots of people don't know that President Johnson established this observance back in 1965 - so you'll have to tell them. Inform several of your acquaintances, and write a letter to your local newspaper boasting of our Viking heritage (Don't attack Columbus, though).

OCTOBER 12 - Winter Nights is in honor of the disir. These are female fertility spirits, ruled over by Freya. Our feminine ancestors are sometimes counted among the disir, so this is a good time to recall outstanding women in your family line. Do you have photos of them you can look at? The mood of Winter Nights is one of conserving resources against the scarcity of the coming cold season. 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. Honor your dead kin, or the famous heroes, 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. Consecrate your personal weapon in a ritual of your devising.

DECEMBER 9 - Our observances this month start with a Day of Remembrance for Egil Skallagrimsson - warrior, poet, and devout follower of Odin. Read excerpts from his saga on this day (or look him up in your collection of books on the Vikings). Write a poem, or do something bold.

DECEMBER 20 - Coming just before the winter solstice, Mother Night is when the new year is born. The traditional twelve days of Yule begin now. This is a season for honoring the family line and rejoicing in the sun's renewal. Celebrate Yule with all the ancient trimmings, such as wreaths of evergreen, a "Christmas" tree, and good cheer. Visit kin. Tell your children family stories and show them photos of their ancestors. Drink a toast to the God Frey, and to the reborn sun.

DECEMBER 31 - If Mother's Night is the beginning of Yuletide, Twelfth Night is its culmination. Meditate on the past year - what you did, what your wish you had done. Take stock and set a course for the future. Making New Year's resolutions is an old Teutonic custom that goes back at least to the Viking Age, and perhaps much earlier. In the old days, these oaths were sworn on a boar sacred to Frey.

JANUARY 9 - This Day of Remembrance is for Raud the Strong. King Olaf Tryggvason of Norway executed him by making him swallow a snake. His crime was refusing to give up Asatru. Tryggvason then confiscated Raud's land and all his other wealth. Praise Raud by lifting a horn (or cup or glass) in his honor, and by doing something deliberate to spread the religion King Olaf tried so hard to stamp out.

JANUARY 22 - Thorrablot comes in the depths of winter, when we all need our spirits lifted. Gregarious, lusty Thor is our obvious antidote to the blues. Build a snow statue of the hammer-wielding God, go winter camping, or have a party. Take a walk without your coat, mentally accept winter, and go back to your house for a shot of brandy.

FEBRUARY 9 - Eyvind Kinnrifi was another Asatru martyr. On this Day of Remembrance we recall how Olaf tormented him to death by placing a bowl of red-hot embers on his stomach. Eyvind died, and Valhalla received another hero. Salute his courage the same way you did that of Raud the Strong.

FEBRUARY 14 - Valentine's Day? Not really...rather, a day devoted to Vali, God of Rebirth. Frey has a role to play here, too. Do something erotic to please her, and meditate on the following question for Vali. If we are born again into the family line, as our ancestors thought, how should this affect our actions here and now?

