



THE



RUNSTONE



RAVEN GRAPHICS

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

THE RUNESTONE is the official journal of the Asatru Free Assembly and is published quarterly. Subscriptions are \$7.00 per year in the US and Canada, and \$9.00 per year overseas (airmail). Write to: AFA, P.O.Box 1832, Grass Valley, CA 95945. Please make checks payable to the Asatru Free Assembly.

Staff for this issue: Stephen A. McNallen, Editor-in-Chief, Maddy Snow, production.

May 11 is the deadline for the Summer issue.

## ~ CALENDAR ~

March 9 - Day of Rememberance honoring Olvir, an adherent of Asatru who persisted in organizing sacrifices to the gods despite Olaf the Lawbreaker (Olaf Tryggvason), who forbade such rites. An informer betrayed Olvir, and Olaf's men martyred him along with many others loyal to the gods.

March 20 - Summer Finding - The equinox, when day and night are of equal length. After Winter's cold, Spring's promise of life follows. Praise Freya and all the life-givers!

March 28 - Day of Rememberance for that great viking, Ragnar Lodbrok, who on this day in 845 C.E. sacked Paris. Skoal, Ragnar!

April 12 - Sumarsdag, or the first day of Summer in the old Icelandic calendar. It always falls on the Thursday between April 9 and April 15. Salute the returning Sun today.

April 30 - Walpurgisnacht, an ancient festival connected with the Germanic goddess Walberg. The Christians obscured the connection with Asatru by linking this day to a Saint Walburga, supposedly a Sussax-born woman who moved to Germany and died there in about 780 C.E..

May 1 - May Day was a holy day of rebirth long before it was taken over by the Church and the communists. Help us reclaim it by honoring the goddesses of our faith today.

June 8 - Lindisfarne Day, commemorating the viking warriors who raided the monastery on the island of Lindisfarne on the date in 793 C.E., thus striking back against the oppressor and more or less officially opening the Viking Age.

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# HONOR is better than dishonor

By Stephen A. McNallen

Honor is one of those words that we don't see used much anymore. It's a bit out of date, and to invoke it in conversation may bring cynical smiles and even a snicker or two. In recapturing the spiritual essence of Asatru, however, few concepts could be more important.

The Oxford Dictionary uses phrases like "nobleness of mind... allegiance to what is right. . . reputation" in defining honor. Let us look deeper.

In thinking about honor it soon becomes apparent that this is a virtue which sums up other virtues. It is honorable to be loyal. It is honorable to be truthful. All the character traits held in high esteem by our ancestors, when lumped together, constitute honorable behavior. When we do these things we are being honorable. From this it follows that there are many different roads we can and must travel to lead an honorable life, and that we have daily opportunities to train ourselves along these lines. Such molding of the personality is not easy because honor so frequently means placing spiritual considerations over money, personal advantage, and convenience. My dictionary tells me that honor is "allegiance. . . to conventional standards of conduct" which is only partially correct; in all too many instances the conventional standard of conduct involves lying, cheating and betrayal to kin. A life of honor often places us in direct opposition to the major trends in our society.

Among our ancestors, honor was given an importance which would seem almost fanatical to the cynical, jaded minds of our day. To impugn a person's honor during the Viking Age might have meant battle to the death. Honor was worth life itself, and lasted after the body was a corpse in the tomb -

Cattle die, kinsmen die,  
Every man is mortal:  
But the good name never dies  
Of one who has done well.

says the poet in the old Norse literature.

Honor is something we acquire by strict self-examination. Look at your actions at the end of the day - can you hold your conduct up to a mirror and say that your deeds have been honorable ones? If not, why not - and what can you do about it?

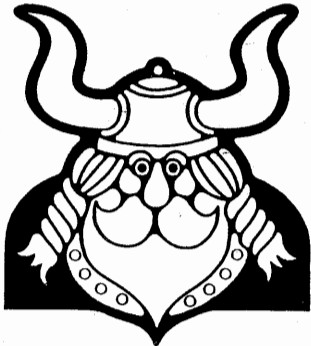
We can, bit by bit, strive for perfection in all matters of honor. When honor concerns mundane things easily within our control, this is hard enough but not impossible. Doing one's duty in the daily course of things, speaking truly and forthrightly - these are important for us all and they add to the spiritual stature of ourselves and those groups of which we are a part. In some matters, though, the price of honor in our society becomes desperately high.

Suppose your mother is robbed and beaten. You see the attack and chase the assailant down the street, throw him into an alley, and begin smashing his face against the sidewalk. Since you have just used "unreasonable force" beyond that needed to restrain the criminal, you will face assault charges. If you honorably resist arrest, you will be forcibly subdued or even shot by the arresting officers. Dishonorable laws made by dishonorable men forbid the exercise of honor. All of us who live in the modern nation-state make compromises because we don't want to go to prison or die in a police shoot-out; to that extent we are all tainted by the corrupt system around us. Honor is no longer the simple thing it was a thousand years ago. That mugger, despicable as he is, is less threat to your honor than is the very structure of law and order that is allegedly on your side. Honor is no longer person on person or family on family; it is person or family against a system that most obviously includes the police and courts but actually includes the very fabric of modern life, from television and advertising to Christianity. So what do we do about such a dreadful dilemma?

Honor, cont.

Saga and epic show us that great men - stronger and bolder than most any of us - have used deception and guile against foe who outnumbered them greatly. The Havamal, purported to be the words of Odin himself, advises us that the use of trickery is acceptable. Do we say that the soldier who uses raid and ambush is a coward because he does not meet his enemy in orderly phalanx? Should Herman the Cherusci have fought Rome's legions on flat terrain, forsaking the forested hills of Teutoberger Wald?

No, the only disgrace lies in not fighting, in surrendering while life is left. We live in a debased society where perfect honor is impossible. Let us fight then - openly where we can, stealthily where we must - to replace this system, top to bottom, with one where honor can live.



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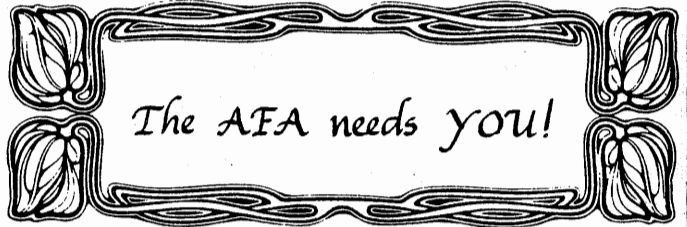
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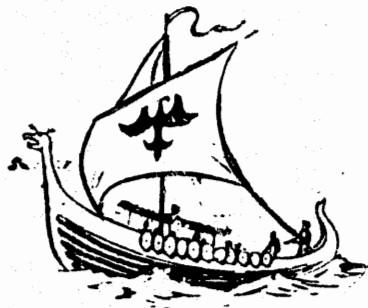
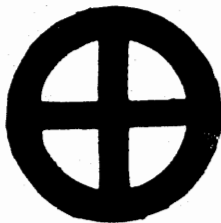
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# GUILDS

## WARRIOR GUILD and MARTIAL ARTS GUILD MERGE!

The AFA's Warrior Guild and Martial Arts Guild have worked out an agreement that would merge their two organizations. The Martial Arts Guild newsletter will be discontinued, although Guildmaster Greg Steiner will contribute articles on the martial arts to the Warrior Guild Newsletter. Martial Arts Guild members will be invited to join the Warrior Guild.

The Warrior Guild Newsletter is a monthly, edited by the able John Parmenter for the Guild. John's energy and knowledge make it a truly fine publication! Inquiries may be directed to the AFA, ATTN: Warrior Guild.

Greg, at the Martial Arts Guild, has been having trouble getting his mail due to several changes of residence. So if he hasn't responded to your letter, drop him a line care of Edred, P.O.Box 7622, Austin, TX 78712

The Aerospace Technology Guild announces the first issue of its newsletter, "SLEIPNIR". Contents include "Asatru - Outward Bound", a book review, various news items, and a list of useful information sources. Send 50¢ for a sample copy, or three dollars payable to Stephen A. McNallen for five issues.

Recent Guild events have included small-scale rocket launchings. More such launchings, as well as field trips and other activities, are planned for the future.

The ATG may be contacted care of the AFA, P.O.Box 1832, Grass Valley, CA 95945

When ordering publications from the AFA, please make checks payable to the Asatru Free Assembly, P.O.Box 1832, Grass Valley CA 95945.

**THE AMERYSK FOLKBOND** - A Folk-Nationalist guild towards building a Teutonic folkdom in North America (The Ameryk) and beginning anew a fresh Asatru/Odinist culture. Dedicated to producing American Europeans. Publishes newsletter FOLKSELAED - Available from P.O.Box 2305, Ventnor, New Jersey, 08406.

## The Brewing Guild:

The Frothing Vat has become more of an annual than a quarterly - I hope that no one is too pissed off. Number 3 will go to the press shortly, and will include: 1) a continuation of "Mead and the Indo-Europeans"; 2) brewing notes; 3) and article on the making of a drinking horn; and 4) I'm not sure yet what else. (An account of a sumbel from Althing '83 would be welcomed. . .)

TFV is in no danger of folding or anything, despite the above aired problems. I enjoy writing and have access to a very inexpensive print shop. The danger, rather, is that it continues to reflect only my attitudes. I am more of a scholastic thinker (in the Aquinian sense) than most people are used to, and can easily go on for ages, unaware that my audience has slipped away. I try to keep the scholastic method out of my Odinist writings, but when I'm my own editor, they may creep in.

How are things with brewers in California? There must be an active-minded brewer out there who can post me on "was Gibt." Perhaps a note for "Quaffers Corner" usw?

Jace Crouch, Guildmaster

The Skaldic Guild - Due to personal problems, Thunarr (Jim Wittenberg to some of you) can no longer continue as master of this guild. He is, however, willing to contribute poems if someone else will take over production of Woden's Word-Sword. Thunarr has done fine work for the cause by stimulating Asatru-inclined poets to more and better work - let's not let it stop now. Wanted - someone to take over the Skaldic Guild! Write us, and write him at his NEW ADDRESS: 2309 I St. #2, Sacramento, CA 95816

# THE ASATRU FREE ASSEMBLY PRESENTS!

## PUBLICATIONS:

- 1984 CALENDAR** ~ TWELVE UNCOMMON SYMBOLS OF OUR FAITH DEPICTED AND THOROUGHLY EXPLAINED TO CARRY YOU THROUGH THE YEAR WITH THE POWER OF ASATRU. \$6.00
- ODINIST ANTHOLOGY** ~ SEMINAL SELECTIONS FROM TEN YEARS OF THE RUNESTONE, PLUS MATERIAL NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED. \$6.00
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- FREYA'S FOLK** ~ A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO FREYA AND THE ROLE OF GODDESSES (AND WOMEN) IN ASATRU. \$1.00
- "WHY ASATRU?"** ~ OUR INTRODUCTORY LEAFLET, JUST RIGHT FOR HANDING TO A FRIEND. 15¢ EACH
- THE RUNESTONE** ~ BACK ISSUES ARE AVAILABLE. \$1.00 EACH
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### Tape #1 - "INTRODUCTION TO RITUAL"/"INVOCATIONS"

Side One: A discussion of the theory and practice of ritual in Asatru, complete with a step-by-step description of a ritual to Odin.

Side Two: Invocations to seven deities, with a commentary on each. Suitable for use with the ritual format on side one.

### Tape #2 - "STORIES FROM SCANDINAVIAN MYTHOLOGY"

Six well-loved tales of the North recorded for children, newcomers to Asatru, and all of those who share a reverence for the legends that reveal so clearly the spirit of our people.

Side One: Odin Visits Mimir's Well  
Sif's Golden Hair  
Idun's Apples

Side Two: Thor Loses his Magic Hammer  
Balder the Beautiful  
Tyr and the Fenris Wolf

# TRIAL BY JURY

A Study in Different Social Systems by Steven Gustafson

Many of you are probably aware of the early Scandinavian antecedents of trial by jury. However, to judge the true significance of this fact, it is also necessary to understand the systems of justice with which the jury trial was competing.

Throughout Christian Europe, there were three main methods of proving guilt or innocence. They were ordeal, duel, and compurgation. None of them figured in Greek or Roman law; instead, they were Christian inventions, and their priestly origin becomes clearer when you recall that all three were in various ways thought of as oracles from Jehovah.

The various sorts of ordeals show this most clearly. The premise of all of them was that God would intervene with an appropriate miracle which would show the guilt or innocence of the accused.

One of the commonest ordeals was the ordeal of iron, named in the Skane Law as farnburdar. The object was to carry a bar of red-hot iron for twelve paces. If the accused dropped the iron, or if the wounds it left festered, he was convicted; but if he succeeded, he was acquitted. The cauldron-ordeal (ketilltak) is also recorded in the laws of Christianized Scandinavia. The object here was to pluck stones from a cauldron of boiling water.

When we read that people were actually acquitted by these methods, we find many reasons to get suspicious. These suspicions are heightened when we learn of the ordeal universally applied to accused clergymen. Called corsned, the procedure was as follows: In full sacerdotal regalia, the accused approached the church-altar. On the altar sat a piece of bread and cheese. The priest said a prayer, the tenor of which was that if he were guilty, the Archangel Gabriel would descend from heaven to cause him to choke when he ate the bread and cheese. I have seen no record of any priest being convicted by this trial.

Indeed, since all of the ordeals were oracles of the Christian god, they were all administered by priests who controlled all the variables. The weight and temperature of the iron, the temperature and depth of the water, the size of the stones -- all were under the priest's control. Techniques of stage magic -- for instance, painting the iron red, or greasing the accused's hand -- could also be used in order to reach a result consistent with the priest's predetermined outcome, which was later confirmed with an appropriate miracle.

The other two modes of trial -- duel and compurgation -- applied only to the nobility and holders of fiefs. Duel requires no explanation; it too, was thought to be an oracle of Jehovah, who decided the outcome. Compurgation involved finding a prescribed number of witnesses who would appear to testify that the accused nobleman did not commit the crime, owe the money, or whatever else was in question. They did not have to have knowledge of the facts they swore to. No cross-examination was allowed. They did not even have to know what the dispute was about -- they only had to swear that the defendant's denial was truthful, in a ritualized stock oath.

In short, the legal system of Christian Europe accurately reflects the Christian feudal social structure. Noblemen, given the privilege of compurgation, could repel any charges made against them easily. Disputes between noblemen were settled by combat. For the majority, however, there remained only ordeals which were punishments in themselves, and whose results were firmly controlled by the priesthood.

The native legal system of Scandinavia was very different. Duels and compurgation played a part in it, but the parts taken were different and much more restricted. Duel was restricted by law to what we now call "libel and slander" -- the taking of revenge against purely personal insults. One could bring "oath-helpers", compurgators, to bolster one's case, but no case was ever decided on that basis alone.



The most striking innovation of native Scandinavian legal procedure was the namnd or nefnd. The word means "named", or "nominated" men. It is the first reappearance in Europe since classical Greek and Roman times of the notion that cases at law should be decided by a neutral body of outsiders who were informed about the facts. Edzors Balk af Landalagh provided that:

The namnd shall investigate and ascertain the truth . . . If there be witnesses, let them appear before the namnd, and let each man swear the oath prescribed to him.

In the collection of ancient customs made by King Magnus of Norway, we find the following description of procedure:

The thing shall last so long as the Lawman chooses, and during such time as he, with the consent of the jury, deems necessary for adjudging the cases which then are to be heard. Their number is three times twelve; their nomination must be so managed that some fit men are chosen from every district. Those who are chosen to be jurors shall, before they enter court, swear an oath after the following form:

"I protest . . . that I will give such a vote in every cause, as well on the side of the plaintiff as defendant, as I consider most just according to law and conscience, and I shall always do the same whenever I shall be chosen as juror (laugrettomadr).

Those who are chosen to serve as jurors shall judge according to law, in all cases that in a lawful manner are appealed to Gula-thing. But in all cases that the code does not decide, that is to be considered law what the jurors agree upon. But if they disagree, the lawman prevails with those who agree with him; unless the king with the advice of the most prudent men shall decide otherwise.

This is a genuinely remarkable and modern-sounding statute. Neutrality is sworn to, and steps are taken to guarantee it by taking jurors from several districts. All free men are eligible to participate; furthermore, the body not only has the power to enforce the law, but to create new laws.

This legal system implies a different social order from the mediaeval Christian one. Here the lawful men of the country are entrusted with the responsibility not only for deciding disputes, but also for choosing what the law should be. I dare say that this system determined guilt and innocence more accurately than the church's ordeals.

Unfortunately, these laws did not long survive after the introduction of Christianity. Saxo Grammaticus holds as crucial to the conversion of the Danes the act of Bishop Poppo in submitting to a ketilltak demonstration -- plunging his arm into boiling water to prove that his religion was divine. Reason and common sense were defeated by a prestidigitator's trick. However, these live on in Anglo-Saxon law as a result of the anti-clerical policies of the Norman Plantagenet kings.

Shortly after Bishop Poppo had put on his show, Pagan Norsemen had invaded France with an intent to settle there. It had been less than one hundred years since Hrolf had refused to kiss the French king's toes that William invaded and defeated Alfred of England.

The English dynasty that William founded -- the Plantagenets -- was not famous for cooperating with the church. Furthermore, they were strong administrators, eager to centralize power in the throne. As strong rulers, they were unwilling to sacrifice their power to the special interests represented in the duels and ordeals. King William Rufus was openly contemptuous of the Christian god's ordeals, saying that if God couldn't do a better job than that, he would decide them himself. King Henry II completed the job, abolishing ordeals and instituting the jury.

Trial by Jury cont.

It seems reasonable that Henry II, in searching for a way to take judicial power away from the church, remembered the customs of his pagan ancestors; it is also likely that he deemed this new procedure as more liable to reach a just result. Furthermore, his feud with the church which led to the assassination of Thomas Beckett was essentially a legal dispute -- Beckett claimed that ecclesiastics were not subject to the secular law, but had a right to be tried by church trials (including the corsned); Henry thought otherwise.

Thus, one of the most esteemed traditional rights of Anglo-Saxon peoples has its origin in the conception of man and society formed in pagan Scandinavia.

\* \* \* \* \*

# ALTHING 1984

DATE: AUGUST 11,12,&13, 1984

A.F.A. members, potential members and others true to the gods of the Northlands are invited to attend the annual celebration of Asatru. The weekend event will include rituals, workshops, fellowship, feasting and fun surrounded by evergreens and oaks in the forested mountains of Northern California.

If you want to be part of the work and wonder of our ancient religion, we urge you to complete the form below, so we can plan for an event to surpass all others!

NOTE: Members are admitted free of charge. Non-members are asked to donate \$15.00.

Yes, I would like to participate in Althing Five. Please send me details on the program, location and facilities in the next weeks as they are available.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please check:

- I am a member and claim admission as part of membership.
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- I am not a member but will either join the AFA or will pay my entrance fees later,

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Special offer for fast moving RS readers lasts only until April 1; \$10.00 after.

Kinsman planning to establish Earth-oriented, self-sufficient tribe-stead in Pennsylvania mountains is looking to hear from interested Kin-folk. Seeking ideas, advice, help from anyone interested in forming an Asatru-tribe, living in harmony with the Earth-Mother and learning self-sufficiency. Interests include solar/wind energies, Earth-sheltered homes, farming, fish and fur farming, wood and leather crafting, furniture-making, hunting/trapping. Desires eventually to establish tribal school/education system, and to withdraw from dependence upon government policies etc.. Must be sincere and dedicated to living Asatru.

Interested? Write: Brian Smith  
M-4897 Drawer-K  
Dallas, Penna. 18612



## The Goddess

Springtide maid, White Goddess fair,  
Lo! My keening hearken thee!  
Ride the wind, snow driven mare,  
Grant the gift of destiny!

Hither come on silvered steed  
Wisdom wont to be my own!  
Fill my cup thine honeyed mead!  
Water turn to golden stone!

*Marguerite Elsbeth Chandler*  
Marguerite Elsbeth Chandler

(c) 1982

# FREYA'S FOLK

**BONN [Reuters]**—The blonde female warriors lay side-by-side in the grave with the bodies of their male comrades-in-arms. Their bows and arrows lay beside them and their spears marked their resting place.

Ancient war graves recently discovered by German archeologists have provided the first full proof of what so far has only been known from legend and Roman chroniclers—that young German women of 2,000 years ago fought shoulder-to-shoulder with men.

In A. D. 274 in the reign of the Roman Emperor Aurelianus, it is recorded that 10 captured female warriors from the tribe of the Goths were led through the streets wearing men's clothing in a triumphal procession.

**A GRAVE** dating from 350 B. C. opened recently in Tecklenburg, Westphalia, contained three women and eight men. They had shields, swords, and spears beside them and the women who had died from weapon wounds, and bows and arrows, as well.

The women were wearing long, close-fitting doeskin trousers with woolen jackets, according to a report in a West German specialist periodical.

Dr. Alfred Dieck, author of the article, also details another find near Bad Grund in the Harz Mountains where the bodies of four female warriors were found. All had died from stabbings, evidently received in battle. They, too, were wearing male clothing.

Many of the graves have been found in Moorland, where the peat has helped to preserve the bodies, clothing, and weapons.

In Osterburg, Saxony, which is now part of East Germany, the body of a female warrior was found, also wearing leather trousers and jacket. Her shield was badly hacked and she had been killed by sword cuts.

**OTHERS HAVE** been found in Brandenburg, near Berlin, and in the formerly German-inhabited Sudetenland, now in Czechoslovakia, indicating that the custom of putting women in the front line was widespread.

Other graves preserved in Moorland near Denmark and Upper Bavaria enable a rough dating of the time when female bow-and-arrow brigades were being demobilized and fighting became an exclusively male occupation.

These graves, dating from 600 and 700 A. D., contain the bodies of women killed in battle, but who were banner bearers and not combatants. The women in northern Germany lay on a shield which had been pierced by an arrow but the Bavarian woman was clasping what appeared to be a thick flagstaff which had been hacked by swords. Her skull was cloven by a blade.

In this era, archeologists conjecture, young women were chosen for their purity to carry the tribe's banner or totem. Many centuries later, it was customary to choose a virgin to carry the banner.

The magical influence credited to virgins in the Middle Ages was exemplified in Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans. She rode into battle against the English but was primarily a symbol and inspiration to the French troops.

## Attention!

### FREYA'S FOLK MEMBERS!

Because of the recent change in leadership of Freya's Folk, we would like to ask all of you who have joined the group to do a couple of things.

- First, and most important, send us a postcard with your name and present address.

- Second, tell us what you received from Freya's Folk.

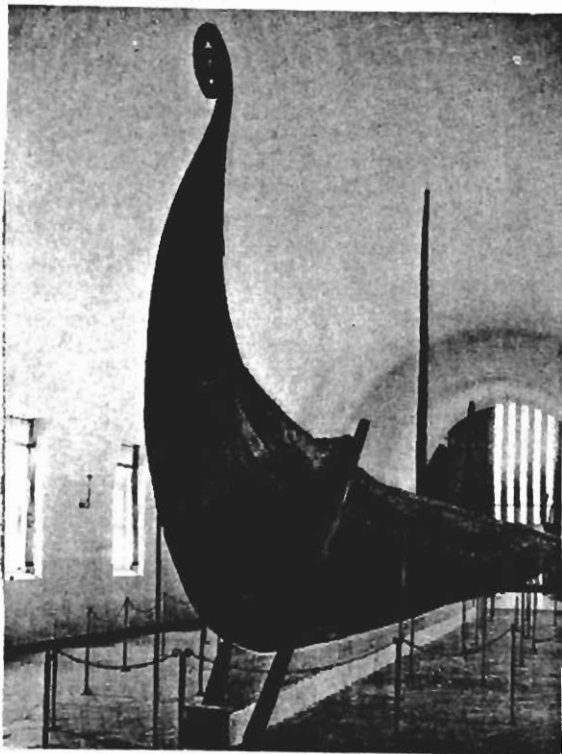
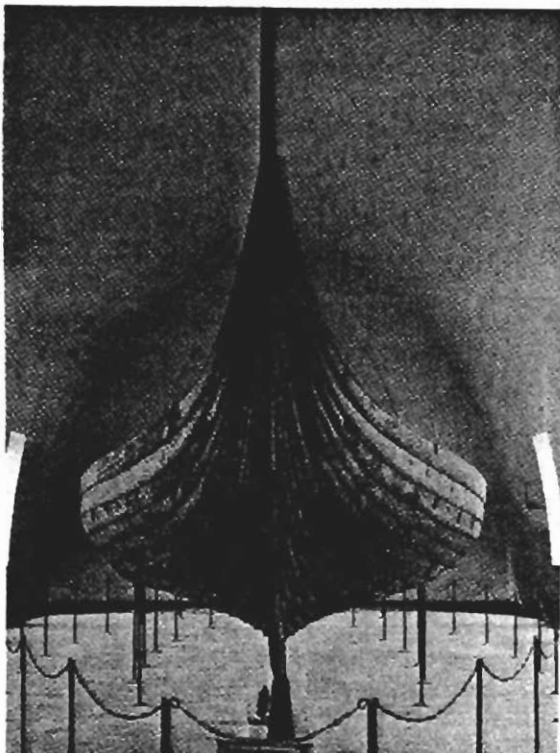
In return, we will send you an attractive Invocation to Freya and include you in all future Freya's Folk mailings.

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THANK YOU!

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# SHAMANISM AND

## Guðfraeði: Part One by Brian Regan

Comparative religiology has shown that among historically early or non-literate peoples there have always been many individuals who were trained to experience a death-like relaxation of the brain's control over their consciousness and a simultaneous "knowing" of an utterly different reality. These "religious specialists" were (and some still are) able to melt themselves into the Worldsoul and thereby partake of its infinite intelligence and its existence beyond time and space.

Now there are various ways to achieve this state (of which, more later), but the way used by the religious specialists of northern Siberia and northernmost Europe is called "shamanism". This word is taken from the Siberian tribe of the Tungus, who use the word shaman to refer to those who habitually and professionally enter the state referred to. The word was originally used to refer Buddhist monks and ultimately comes (through Tocharian) from the Sanskrit sramanas "an ascetic", "Buddhist or Jain ascetic". The term sram-ana really means something like "mortifying the flesh", and is based on the root sram "grow weary, fatigued". Shamanism itself, however, is not merely mortification of the flesh. It is a circum-arctic and Central Asian conceptual complex characterized by religious and magical thoughts and practices, although not directly integrated with any religion. Shamans can be either male (shaman) or female (shamanka); they can use their powers to help either individuals (e.g., by healing them) or the community (e.g., by giving success in the hunt). Both birth (that is, being the son or daughter of a shaman) and vocation (when one is "called" by a supernatural being in a vision) enable one to become a shaman. After considerable training and with the help of assisting spirits, the novice undergoes an extremely gruelling initiation, "dies", and then returns to life. The initiate (with the aid of a drum or rattle) typically goes into a trance during this "death", and during it either undertakes a journey into the beyond (from which he may never return -- a phenomenon also known in Zen Buddhism) or is possessed by spirits. As the "escort of souls" (technically called a psychopomp) he will often guide the souls of the newly dead to the abyssal depths where they are integrated with the Worldsoul. He is healer, sorcerer and soothsayer, and sometimes also a priest, mystic and poet.

In the broad, river-crossed plains between the southern Baltic and the Black Seas (i.e., the eastern Poland, western USSR and the Ukraine of 1983), a number of different peoples known collectively as the "Rider Peoples" (whose warriors were mounted) lived from about the ninth or eighth century B.C.E. for the next five or six centuries. Archeologists have found evidence of their presence as far as Central Europe: their horse harnesses and, often, various noise-making instruments (especially the rattle) which were obviously used for shamanistic purposes. Two of the peoples of the South Russian steppes were of Iranian origin: the Scythians and the Sarmatians. From the Sarmatians came a tribe called the Alans who later accompanied the Goths as far west as Gaul. Of the Scythians, the Greek historian Herodotus (490-423 B.C.E.) reports that after a funeral they would purify themselves by inhaling the vapors from hemp seeds placed on red-hot stones under felt tents. They would then "yell out in ecstasy, enraptured by this vapor bath". Herodotus says he fails to understand this ritual. As we now know, however, smoking hemp (i.e., marijuana) is the classical manner of putting oneself into trance. The Greek historian likewise mentions that the Scythians also had a custom of divining the future by throwing twigs into the air and reading them when they fall. A practice of the Ukrainian-steppe peoples such as this was probably one of the sources on which Wooden drew to create the divining system of the runes.

# GERMANIC MYSTICISM

The Germanic folk originated in the fusion of the Jutish battle-axe people and the Nordic megalithic farmers in the area of northern Germany between the Elbe and Oder rivers, with a gradual expansion to the Weser and Vistula rivers, and the low mountains of middle Germany to the south and towards southern Scandinavia to the north. It is likely that only the Jutish battle-axe people were Indo-European (Aryan) speakers, and that they were a small minority, but superior in military and, hence, political power. At any rate, the fusion was complete by about 2000 B.C.E.. Then, almost two millennia later, around the third century B.C.E., the first Germanic groups began to move toward the Black Sea: first the Skirians, then the Bastarns (arriving at the Black Sea ca. 230 B.C.E.), later the Goths (at the Black Sea ca. 170 C.E.), Herulians, Burgundians, Vandals, Gepids and Rugians. Of the first two tribes, the Bastarns, whose name means "Mixed(-bloods)", were originally a Germanic tribe which migrated far to the southeast; many of the men had interbred with non-Germanic women, hence the tribal name. (The Germanic root bast- "mixed-blooded" appears much later in Old French  fils de bast  "illegitimate child" and Old French bastard "acknowledged son of a nobleman, not stemming from the legal wife". This Old French bast does not stem, as English dictionaries usually claim, from medieval Latin bastum "packsaddle".) In contrast to the Bastarns, the Skirians were the "Pure (-blooded)" (compare Gothic skeirs "clear (as pure water), lucid"). In addition, the Germanic number system was taken from the Babylonian-Assyrian duodecimal-sexagesimal system based not on ten, but twelve and sixty (like hours and minutes). Proto-Germanic \*hundan "hundred" had the value "120" (not "100"). Thus it is clear that there were extensive cultural contacts between the Germanic nations migrating to the southeast and the peoples they found there. Further, because of their early arrival at the Black Sea, (ca. 270 B.C.E.) and their intermarriages there, the Bastarns were probably the first disciples of the institution of Aryan shamanism, and adapted it to Germanic tastes and passed it on to the rest of the Germanic world.

The close relationship between the eastern Germanic peoples and the shamanistic peoples of the Ural-Altai expanses is also shown by the later Ostrogothic alignment with the Huns under Attila, at whose court the (Visi-)Gothic skalds also found shelter and could continue their oral tradition. In spite of their feeling of cultural superiority over the Huns, the heathen Ostrogoths, and the skalds of the Visigoths, needed and took temporary refuge from the religious-political advance of imperial Mediterranean Christianity in a historically brief martial union with their former eastern neighbors on the steppes, the fierce Huns. It was a refuge sore needed after the Visigoths had defected to Arian Christianity under Bishop Wulfila. The alliance with Attila enabled the main body of the Ostrogoths to maintain the cultural heritage of their ancestors, their poetic creativity and their oral tradition, all of which the converted Visigoths had rejected and abandoned. Thus, even when, after Attila's death in 452 C.E., the three Germanic nations of the Gepids, the Ostrogoths and the Herulians had thrown off the Hunnish yoke and driven the Huns from Europe, the intense and traumatic Germanic memories of Attila and the Huns was kept alive in the heroic poetry of the North. Examples include the Old Norse Atlakvida, "Lay of Attila", and the Middle High German Nibelungenlied, "Song of the Nibelings", and many other Germanic epics and songs. Indeed, the very name Attila is Gothic, meaning "Little Father" or "Daddykins" (from Gothic atta "father" with diminutive suffix -ila).

And so it came about that, from their encounters with the shamanistic peoples of the steppes, the early Germanic folk acquired, among other things, the knowledge of how to alter their states of consciousness profoundly and in such a way that they could perceive the ghostly undergirding of the universe for mantic purposes - for soothsaying, prophecy, and divining the future.

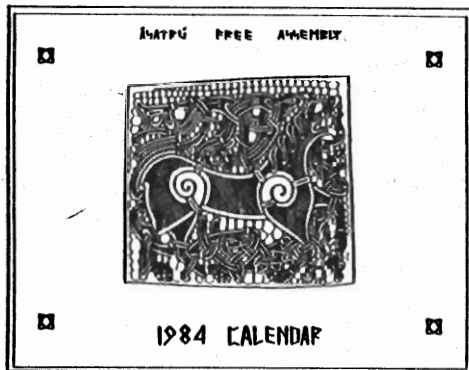
NEXT ISSUE. . . . . Odin and Ecstasy

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Odinst Fellowship is sponsoring its second International FOLK MOOT. Those of us who attended last year in Los Angeles will be anxious to hear details of this event. So far the date is set for the weekend of June 23, 1984, and the site will be on the east coast.

For more information as it becomes available, write to Bruce Kline of The Auld Kirk, 1916 Spruce St., Philadelphia, PA 19103

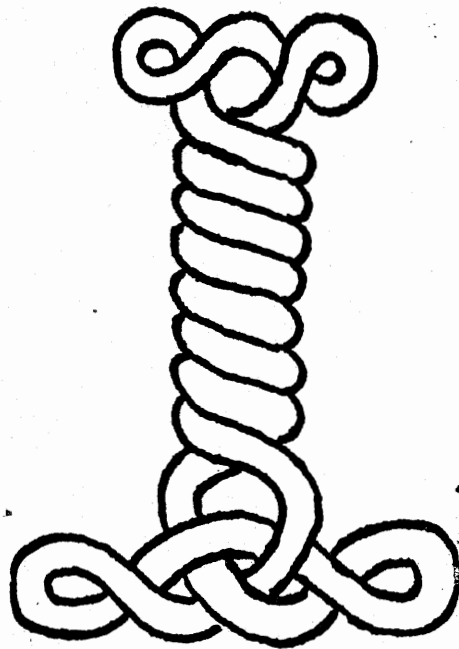
RS readers who admired the artwork in the AFA's 1984 Calendar will be interested to know the artist of our cover this issue. Robert Stine has been sending us many fine examples of his skill which we will certainly be using in the Runestone as well as in our Ritual Book. Anyone who may have a need of a kinsman with artistic talents should write to Raven Graphics, 2256 Meyhem Rd, Carrolton, OH 44615.



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# How to Live

## The Lessons of Frigga

By Stephen A. McHallen

In the myths, not much is said about Frigga. As wife of Odin and queen of the gods, she remains in the background and only occasionally steps forward to wield authority or influence events. Yet, surely a goddess of such high status has much to teach us. What, then, do we know about her that would help us discern her lessons for our lives?

Frigga's reticence is evident from the myths. She knows many things - past, present and future - but she speaks seldom. Surely her royal mate shares mighty confidences with her, but she keeps them locked in her bosom. When Frigga breaks her silence or takes action in the stories handed down to us, it is usually to ward danger from kin or to give aid to those under her protection. Examples of these functions are, respectively, her attempt to spare her son Balder from harm and the occasion when she tricked Odin into naming the Langobards so that he would be obliged to give them victory. We also know from studying the myths that Odin's wife shares many of the functions of the goddess Freya. Thus, she is involved in fertility, childbirth, marriage, and family.

Precious little with which to work! But we do have more information on Frigga, not from what the myths have to say about her, but rather based on who she is, archeotypally. Frigga is none other than our Mother Earth, consort of the Sky Father. Knowing this, we can assume she is concerned with nurturing, with the producing and sustaining of life, and with the welfare of the planetary biosphere.

Based on these facts and suppositions, what does Frigga say to us?

Well, she doesn't really say much - and this is her first lesson, to know much but say little. She knows that a person's (or goddess's) significance is not in proportion to the amount of talking he or she does. This wisdom is echoed in the Havamal, where Odin reminds us that

No one knows less what a nitwit he is  
Than the man who talks too much.

and

Wise is he not who is never silent,  
Mouthing meaningless words.

When Frigga acts to save Balder or give victory to the tribe she favors, she is doing two things. First, she is fulfilling duty to kin or to others to whom she is obliged. We should do likewise both as a point of honor and for the very practical consideration that such actions make for strong bonds of family and tribe and produce stable relationships on a personal level - all of which comes under Frigga's domain. Second, her actions in these instances are protective and nurturing in a general way, suitable for the Mother of the Gods. We too should exhibit these traits to those to whom we are tied by blood and by loyalty, for the good of the Folk and happiness and contentment in our personal lives.

The connection between Frigga and Freya reinforces this commitment to nurture, and expands it to take in the sphere of fertility, childbearing (and raising) and marriage. Each of us has an obligation to continue the family line, even at great personal sacrifice. Once we have children, we are responsible for seeing that they are raised in an environment that will encourage them to grow strong, brave, and aware. To do this, we must strengthen the institutions of marriage and the family - by giving young people realistic criteria for choosing mates. All of us have a supporting role to play in these societal functions; our duties lie around us waiting to be done.

Finally, if Frigga is Mother Earth, we have a religious duty to preserve the environment. Can we despoil Frigga by poisoning the water and air, or by eroding her topsoil into the oceans with poor farming practices, or covering the planet with parking lots and skyscrapers? One does not have to be anti-science or anti-technology to realize that these marvelous abilities of ours must be used with wisdom, love and foresight.

cont.

Frigga, cont.

In summary, be like the Earth. Who has seen more transpire than the ancient hills? Yet they are silent in their wisdom. Be solid, anchored in bedrock. Nurture life, and give blessings to those who depend on you. These are the things we have to learn from Frigga, queen of Asgard!

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# FIRST BLOOD

by Ben G. Price

Into the valley of marvelous strife  
Churning the vengence of hate like a knife,  
Into the chaos of human warfare  
A trembling lad with the first sprout of hair  
On his chin and his chest trod the stoney hill path  
To discover what courage might spring from his wrath.

"These monsters have driven the game from our wood;  
They'd poison the rivers and air if they could!  
I'll do in my power whatever I can  
To drive off the enemy far from our land!"

So, clad as a warrior, armored he drove  
And drew out his sword as he entered the grove;  
Assaying the damage the foe had bestowed,  
He charged as an elk might, and loudly bellowed.

"Mine is the damage and mine is the right  
To murder offenders in honor's own fight!  
You've broken unspoken the vow that's between us,  
Defiling what's sacred, as though with your penis  
You merely sought pleasure and mounted some whore,  
But you've entered my house without tapping the door!"

The lad followed elders to the thick of the battle  
And lost first his breakfast and next his brave prattle.  
He hadn't the time for the boasting and blame  
As he drove home his blade and he garnered his fame,  
While one and then many harried invaders  
Fell silent and writhed at the feet of the raiders.

When the blood of the heroes turned from hot to warm  
And the homewood fell silent in wake of the storm;  
As the heathen corpses were stacked in a pyre  
And the name of Odin was whispered by fire,  
The lad wiped a tear from his shade-hidden face  
And from his last victim he retrieved a mace.

"You weep for your boyhood," a horn-helmed man said  
To his back, and his shoulder he clasped and he ruffled his head.  
"It's gone; it's the price that the foe will exact  
In exchange for their lives; it's a silent contract  
The true man accepts and counts lucky his fate;  
It's as sacred a pact as the vow to your mate.  
But that'll come later; you've much more to learn.  
For now, watch the smoke and see the past burn!"



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# The King's Mirror on Greenland

(in the 1200's)

A description of mediaeval Greenland in the thirteenth century. From the Konungs Skuggsja, Norwegian, c. 1250. Translated and edited by Jeffrey R. Redmond.

## Introduction

During the reign of the Norwegian King Hakon 11 (1217-63), a large amount of information was compiled on much of the known world. It was titled the King's Mirror and accurately told of the climate, resources, and people of the various known regions. The narration was written in a style of a conversation between a father and son, in which the older man is telling the younger one all his knowledge of the world.

The following is an account of the King's Mirror which mentions the life style of the Norsemen in Greenland in the mid 1200's. It gives a detailed and informative account of the Norse colonies there, after over two centuries of Christianity, in the period following the Viking Age.

"There is still another species that the Greenlanders list with the whales, but that, I think, should be listed with the seals. They are called walrus, and grow to be as long as fourteen ells, or fifteen at the longest. This fish looks like the seal in its hair, head, skin, and the webbed feet in back. And it has swimming feet like the seal. Its flesh, as with the other seals, must not be eaten on the fasting days. It looks different from the other seals as it has, with other small teeth, two large and long tusks. And these are in the front of the upper jaw, and sometimes grow as long as almost an ell and a half. Its skin is thick and good to make into rope. It can be sliced into leather strips so long that sixty men or more can pull one rope and not break it. The seals that we have spoken of are called fish as they get their food in the sea, and live on other fishes. They can be eaten always, but not as the whales. All of the whales' flesh can be eaten on the fasting days like other fishes, but these fishes can be eaten only on the days when flesh is permitted. Now I know of nothing more in the Greenland waters that seems to be worth telling or repeating, but just those that we have spoken of."

"These must seem wondrous to all who hear of them, of what is told of both the fishes and monsters that are said to be in those waters. Now I understand that this sea is more stormy than all the other seas. And so I think it is strange that it is covered with ice, in both winter and summer, more than all the other seas. And I am curious to know why men are so desirous to go there, as there are great dangers to watch for. And what can one find in that land that can be used for work or leisure? And with your permission, I want to ask what the men who dwell in those lands live on? What is the lay of the land? Is it covered with ice like the sea even if the sea is frozen? And does wheat grow in that land as in other lands? And I want to know, do you think it is a mainland or an island, and are there any beasts or other creatures in that land as there are in other lands?"

"The answer to your question of what men go to find in that land, and why they go there despite great dangers, will be found in man's three desires. One desire is for honor and contest. It is the nature of man to go to where great dangers can be found, and so gain glory. A second desire is curiosity. It is also in man's nature to desire to see and know about what he has heard tell of, and so find out if it is all as told of or not. The third desire is for profit. Men go in search of wealth where they have heard tell that it is to be gained, even though there can be great dangers in it. In Greenland it is thus so, as you likely know. Whatever goods come from other lands are worth much, as the land is so far from other lands that men rarely go there. And all that is required to better the land has to be brought abroad, both iron and all of the wood that is used in house building. In exchange for their goods, the merchants return with these goods: hides, sealskins, and the kind of rope that we spoke of before. It is called leather rope and it is cut from that fish called walrus. And also walrus tusks. As to what kind of wheat grows there, I think that the land gets little of that. But there are men, who are listed with the wealthiest and foremost, who have tried to grow wheat as a trial. But most of the people in the land do not know what bread is, as they have never seen it. You also ask about the lay of the land, and if it is a mainland or an island. I think that few men know the size of the land, but all think that it is with a continent, and connected to a mainland. It is known to have a number of the kind of animals that are known to live on the mainland, but seldom on islands. Hares and wolves are abundant, and there are many reindeer. But it is commonly thought that these animals do not live on islands, except where men have taken them. And all seem to think that no one has taken them to Greenland, and that they must have gone to there from other mainlands. There are bears also in that land. They are white, and men think that they are native to the land. For they are greatly different in their manners from the black bears that roam the forests. These kill horses, cattle and other animals to eat them. But the white bear in Greenland is mostly on the ice in the sea. And it hunts seals and whales, and feeds on them. It is also as good in swimming as any seal or whale. To answer your question if the land thaws out or stays an ice-covered land as the sea, I can say that just a small area of the land thaws. All of the rest of it stays under ice. But no one knows if the land is large or small, as all of the mountain ranges and all of the valleys are ice-covered, and no gap has been found. But it must be that there are gaps, along the shore or in the valleys between the mountain, for the animals to come. For they could not go there from the other lands if they did not find ways through the ice, and the land thaws. Men have tried often to go up into the land and climb the high mountains in some places, to see and find out if any of the land was free of ice and habitable. But nowhere has such a place been found, except what is now settled, and that is a little strip along the sea coast. There is much marble in the areas that are settled. It is colored red and blue and striped with green. There are also many large hawks in the land that in other lands would be considered very costly white falcons, and there are more of them there than in any other land. But the men there do not know what to do with them."

"You said before that no wheat grows in the land. So now I want to ask you what the men in that land live on. How many men live there? What is the food that they eat? And have they accepted Christianity?"

"The men in that land are few, as only a small area is free enough of ice to live there. But the men are Christians, and they have churches and priests. If the land was by another land, it could be considered as a third of a bishop's see. But the Greenlanders now have their own bishop, because nothing else is possible from the vast distance from others. You ask what men eat in that land if they grow no wheat. Men can live on food other than bread. It is said that the pasturing is good, and that there are large and good farms in Greenland. The farmers raise many cattle and sheep, and they make much butter and cheese. The men eat these foods and beef. And they also eat other animal flesh, such as reindeer, whales, seals and bears. That is what the men live on in that land."

#### Epilogue

The Norsemen in Greenland tried to keep their colony a free and independent entity. However, because of economic dependency on Scandinavia, and the Church's monopoly on all religious practices, political submission eventually became a reality. In the year 1256, King Magnus of Norway influenced King Eirikr of Denmark to send enough ships and fighting

men to Iceland and Greenland to give the Norsemen there a show of strength. Five years after this, in 1261, Iceland and Greenland both became a part of the Norwegian Kingdom. The church gained complete control over the people's lives, and eventually gained ownership over most of the land and wealth in Greenland. Despite this, and the increasingly colder temperatures of the 1300's, the Norsemen endured and probably would have survived had it not been for the migrations and attacks of the Eskimoes. Nevertheless, the Norse Greenlanders remained a stalwart and hardy people right until the final destruction of the Greenland colonies in the 1400's.

### Wernher von Braun University

All of us of Germanic heritage can take pride in the accomplishments of Dr. Wernher von Braun, who is as responsible as any man for getting the Western world into space. Finally, Dr. von Braun is getting appropriate recognition in the form of a university to occupy 40 acres near Huntsville, Alabama. This facility will specialize in the sciences but will also provide a philosophical alternative to the Marxist ideas promoted in many modern classrooms.

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#### THOR'S HAMMER

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#### ODIN

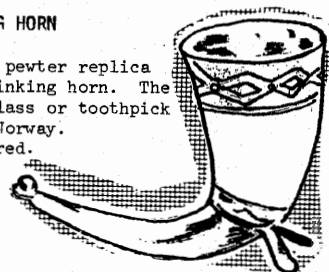
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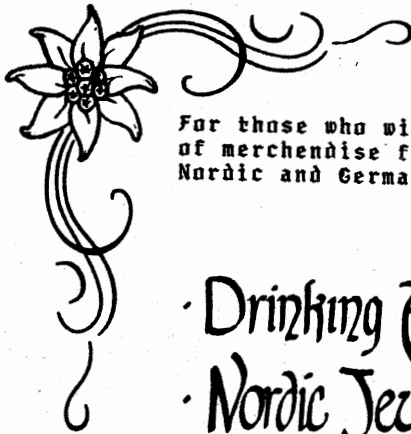


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# MOOT POINT



Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Payson Muller and I am fourteen years old. I am very interested in the ancient Vikings and Celts. I am a regular subscriber to Soldier of Fortune magazine and when I was flipping through the classified section of a July '83 issue of that magazine, I was startled to notice the heading "A Warrior's Religion". I got very excited and decided to write to you.

Here is my problem. I have many books on polytheistic religions but I have never been able to start "worshipping" so to speak, because my books have either history or mythos and nothing on holy days or customs. I consider myself a warrior for I have always, for as long as I can remember, been interested and proud of my Irish, Scottish and Scandinavian heritage. I have always fought with wooden swords and I now own a few.

Anyway, I would be very pleased if you would send me some information on your faith and maybe a list of books on customs and rituals of the Vikings and Celts. I would be very grateful. Also I have some friends interested in the same things; please send them some information also.

Sincerely,

Payson Muller

Dear AFA

I am interested in learning about Odinism. So far all I have been able to find is your organization's name and address. Having studied the myths and lifestyles of the pre-Christian Scandinavian and Germanic people, I found their ideas of honor, pride, courage, and personal worth far more honest and in tune with the way of nature than the strange guilt and self-effacing morality of Christianity. If your organization's beliefs are along the lines of the old Germanic religions, I would be very interested in hearing from you.

Joel Hains

Letters like these make us aware that there are thousands of people out there, isolated from each other and from any organization, who are consciously attracted to the old gods of Northern Europe. After all, your editor was one such person! Let's grow enough to reach out and show them the way home.





Dear Kinsman Steve:

I was reading Bertha Philpotts' "Edda and Saga" and came across an idea that might help us to communicate our myth to wide audiences. She mentions that due to the oral traditions of the Eddic lore and sagas, the appeal was largely due to the expertise of the skald. The skald had a captive audience. The stories told, especially the Icelandic sagas, had to appeal to the class of persons in the audience. The heroic tales were probably told at the request of chieftains, surrounded by warriors - hence the "heroism" of the tale. But Icelandic sagas contain mundane characters - farmers, shepherds, the infirm and able, since the Icelandic audiences were also composed of like characters.

The idea struck me that we all have difficulty in encouraging others - especially new asatruarar - to read! Some think that this archaic poetry has no lesson in our modern times. If we can present our material in a modern form - tape, video enactments, movie film etc. and by oral readings of condensed stories, we can use the captive, but broad-interest audiences at gatherings in a constructive manner. We can teach through the use of modern media and oral readings because it is not boring; it includes everyone present, and it ties us together within even small groups to a cohesive organization.

By going backward in time, we can go forward. By reviving the oral tradition of teaching, a lost art in modern times, we have the ability to show emotion and conviction in belief that we may be unable to convey by the written word. A speaker is able to project a feeling while a book requires a discipline that many people have lost.

Keep up the good work in "The Runestone". Everyone I've shown it to has enjoyed the articles immensely!

We can revive the old tradition and make it work by performing short plays - unrehearsed maybe - of the Eddic stories and sagas. Condensed scripts could be handed out at gatherings and the participants just read out loud their parts. ( It could be a lot of fun; throw in your own ad-libs if you want). You people are very creative - try it!

Dan West

Dear Steve and Maddy,

Our Yule party went very well. I read your 12/12/83 letter to the kindred and everyone liked it. Besides the homemade mead (supplemented by purchased spirits) our master brewer Skip made a Scottish drink for the occasion which I believe is called Loc-hor-en? I try my hand at the brewer's art only occasionally. Skip always has several bubbling jugs stashed behind the couch or somewhere.

Since that time; we have had a New Year's party where we shot off a quantity of fireworks; we went to the Grand Prairie Public Gun Range where we did a little target shooting, and we had a regular meeting. This month we plan to go to the Dallas Museum to see a travelling exhibit on Viking settlements in North America and we will probably attend a Gun and Knife show in Fort Worth.

Hail Odin!

Tim Jones

I am glad to see that our kinsmen in my home state are thriving so! Perhaps Skip could forward his Loc-hor-en recipe to Jace Crouch of the Brewing Guild? Share your knowledge with all our interested folk - and keep up the good work for the cause!

Dear Steve,

Next issue, please put my name in the Runestone as desiring to hear from other Odinists. My P.O.Box # is P.O.Box 747, Keyser, West Virginia, 26726.

How are you doing? Did you have a good Jul celebration? Well I've got to go now.

Hail Odini!

George Saunders



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Vor Tru is back! Vor Tru (which means "our belief" in Icelandic) can be had for \$8, cash only, from 2922 S.Marvin, Tucson, AZ 85730. This newsletter is especially interesting for its close contacts with the Asatru movement in Iceland.

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