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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.

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

CALENDAR

March 9 - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR OLVIR. Olvir was a Norwegian who organized sacrifices to the Gods in defiance of King Olaf Trygvason. When Olaf caught him planning Ostara celebrations, he killed him. Olvir's co-conspirators were murdered, mutilated, exiled, or fined, depending on their degree of complicity. Honor this Asatru martyr by observing Ostara, thus proving that Olaf did not, in the long run, succeed.

March 21 - OSTARA. Praise this Saxon Goddess of the springtime and the dawn, and revel in the rebirth of life at winter's end. "Easter" is a corruption of Ostara's name, and you can celebrate her day with bunnies, eggs, and the other heathen symbols that usually characterize this holiday.

March 28 - RAGNAR LODBROK DAY. Ragnar was one of legend's most famous vikings. On this date in the year 845, he raided Paris. It just happened to be Easter Sunday. Toast Ragnar with a raised glass, and read from his saga.

April 9 - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR JARL HAKON OF NORWAY. Hakon restored the worship of the Gods after it had been suppressed by

(Continued on back cover)

UP FRONT

The warrior thing has always been important for Asatru, and our lead article takes this topic head-on in a statement of just what the warrior is, and is not, in Indo-European society. There's been way too much nonsense written on the subject, and it's time to set the record straight! If that sounds impassioned - well, I guess it's close to my heart.

After the exertion of the warrior piece, we thought you'd appreciate a rest. Relax, then, with Maddy's more introspective article on runes and how to use them - not for magic, nor for philosophical insight, but for inspiration and problem-solving in your day-to-day life. See A Runic Inspiration, our new booklet on the same lines!

Speaking of life...and death...reminds us of two back-to-back holy days that come around this time of year. Walburg and May Day are powerful, dynamic events, and we'll tell you how to celebrate them in this adaptation from another new book, Living Asatru.

How frequently do we hear from the children? Not often enough. Daughter Rachael remedies this oversight with comments on what it's like to be an Asa-kid. After all, our primary task is to pass Asatru on to the next generation; we *fail* if it stops with us! This idea of continuity is the

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heart of the next article, too. Why is it that things as foreign to us as Native American religion and Tibetan Buddhism are more credible to the public than our own European-based beliefs?

Finally, Karen Taylor shares her triumph over the forces of weather and gravity, in an account of a flight that wasn't quite solo, since Odin and Thor were along for the ride.

Have a nice read, and thanks for your ongoing comments and wonderful support. May Odin and Thor, and all the rest, be with you on YOUR flight from this issue to the next, and beyond!

-Steve McNallen and
Maddy Hutter

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THE WARRIOR

Trial and Triumph

With the rise of the men's movement, it has become acceptable to speak of "the warrior within" and to extoll virtues that had, until recently, been repressed in most males. For the first time in decades, they are being told that the fiercer, tougher virtues residing in their breasts are something to be accepted, not ignored. They are going to ritual workshops, drumming in the woods, sitting in sweat lodges, writing male poetry, and doing lots of other things which may or may not be productive. This is often accompanied by politically-correct jargon that would never pass a real warrior's muster, but at least men are looking at themselves in the mirror and asking just what IS there, beneath the hairy exterior.

As a result, we are hearing more and more about "Earth Warriors" and "Rainbow Warriors". "New Age Sensitive Warm-Fuzzy Warriors" will no doubt be next. However, there is a problem...

My dictionaries define "warrior" in ways that all have to do with war - with organized deadly violence. Moreover, they imply experience or actual participation in combat. This is very

different from the "gentle warrior" or "warrior of the spirit" bandied about in "men's mysteries" circles. So what do we do about the gulf between these ideas? Should those of us who are not combat veterans give up on the warrior ideal and take up erotic massage and armpit sniffing instead?

Not necessarily. While being a warrior - a real one, not just someone who read Carlos Castaneda and took it all to heart - DOES involve violence, there's more to it than that. Let us examine the three requirements for warriorhood:

THE WARRIOR SERVES OTHERS. His duty is to protect the interests of his family, clan, tribe or nation. For the sake of these, he goes hungry, forgoes sleep, spends a lot of time being bored and scared by turns, and if necessary, dies. Brigands, robbers, and rioters have no stomach for the rigors of the military campaign, nor do they serve anything except themselves. Thus, they are not warriors even though they use violence to attain their ends. True warriors are integral members of the larger group: They are born into it, enrich it with their offspring, serve it faithfully, and join the

revered ancestors when they depart this world and go down into death.

THE WARRIOR HAS CERTAIN VIRTUES. He prizes everything which tends to give victory in war. Courage is foremost, followed closely by strength, endurance, and agility. With these he does his duties reliably and unhesitatingly. He treasures honesty to the point of bluntness, because the war band cannot afford hidden hostilities or intrigues that would weaken its coherence. Trust is essential. Cheerfulness and humor enable him to survive the stresses of his chosen life. Are warriors the only ones who exhibit these traits? Not at all. But for others they are laudable - to the warrior they mean life or death.

THE WARRIOR IS INITIATED. This is two-fold. The first part is a test which verifies the practical traits of the candidate - strength, courage, and the willingness to take a life. It typically involves stalking and killing (or sometimes capturing) a particularly fierce and dangerous animal, or slaying a human enemy. The Irish hero Cu Chulainn battled three brothers and took their heads; an applicant to the Finians had to fight nine men with a spear, while stripped naked.

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Historian S.L.A. Marshall wrote, in speaking of modern Western man, that

"...he comes from a civilization in which aggression, connected with the taking of life, is prohibited and unacceptable. The teaching and ideals of that civilization are against killing, against taking advantage. The fear of aggression has been expressed to him so strongly and absorbed by him so deeply - practically with his mother's milk - that it is a part of his normal makeup. This is his greatest handicap when he enters combat. It stays his trigger finger even though he is hardly conscious there is a restraint on him."

This is not all bad. No one wants to live in a society where violence is unbridled and life always at risk. After all, security is one of the main functions of society, and providing that security is what the warrior is supposed to do. Paradoxically, if he is out of control he is a threat to that very order. Scholars call this "the dilemma of the warrior". The answer is to instill a dual code of behavior. Members of the "in-group" (family, tribe, and so forth) are met with amity and cooperation; those in the "out-group" receive indifference at best.

Another answer is to reintegrate the warrior into the social fabric through appropriate ritual and celebration. Sometimes, as with the Vietnam veteran, this is done belatedly or not at all.

Nevertheless, the inhibition against killing has to be overcome. The harsh realities of the battlefield leave no room for sentimentality; hesitation can mean the death of oneself and one's comrades.

Service, military virtue, and initiation stand out as the requirements for the warrior.

While the first part of the warrior initiation tests strength, courage, and readiness to kill, the second part leaves the practical behind and moves into the realm of ritual. According to Mircea Eliade, "The essential part of the military initiation consisted in ritually transforming the young warrior into some species of predatory wild animal. It was...a magico-religious experience that radically changed the young warrior's mode of being. He had to transmute his humanity by an access of aggressive and terrifying fury that made him like a raging carnivore".

For our Nordic ancestors, and throughout our larger Indo-European family, the two obvious predators for this role were the bear and the wolf. Both, of course, figure in the lore surrounding the Scandinavian berserkers. These fighters, specially sacred to Odin, would go into a battle frenzy that gave them vast strength, utter ferocity, and temporary

invulnerability to the pain of steel and fire. They were, in effect, possessed by their totem animals so they could acquire those beasts' abilities. In general, though, warriorhood does not seem to have required transformation into a ravening beast every time a battle was fought. Perhaps the berserkers routinely reiterated their initiation rite during combat, unlike their fellows.

The "killing" of an image of a fierce animal may have also figured in initiations. Evidence from archeological finds as well as some saga accounts suggests a ritual in which a simulacrum of a monster or wild animal was "killed", and its "blood" drunk to impart courage and strength to the new warrior.

To summarize: Service, military virtue, and initiation stand out as the requirements for the warrior. How about gender? Can women be warriors?

The obvious answer is "Yes". Women can serve the group as easily as their male counterparts. Likewise, the warrior's bravery and toughness is not monopolized by men. And females certainly exhibit the skills, and the willingness, to take life. Women who want to be warriors are in the honorable company of several of their saga sisters who played that part. Having been politically correct to this point, it is worth adding that most women are much less interested in the business of slaying than men. Testosterone tells.

With all the pain and terror that goes with the warrior life, it is a little amazing that anyone would choose it. Nevertheless, many men are compelled to seek this path. That's good, because we need warriors. Society, and particularly our own Folk, needs defending. The world is not a kind and gentle place. Murder is much more common in our urban areas than it ever was in viking Iceland. It is ironic that our modern world, which has largely turned its back on the hard virtues in favor of softness and submission, is wide open to the assaults of rapists, gang members and others of their ilk.

No, we should not give up on becoming warriors just because we may not be combat veterans (yet) or because the requirements are so very demanding. Warriors are needed, and the need will become more desperate as the facade of our civilization faces the challenges of the coming century.

To the early Indo-Europeans, to be a man WAS to be a warrior - the two were inseparable.

If you would be a warrior, there are certain things you can do.

You can develop an attitude of service to your family, your clan or extended family, and your Folk. This service can be in many forms, depending on your life situation.

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If you would be a warrior, there are certain things you can do.

You can develop an attitude of service to your family, your clan or extended family, and your Folk. This service can be in many forms, depending on your life situation.

Practice loyalty to your kin and cultivate a readiness to sacrifice for their sake. A little thought should show you the way.

You can instill in yourself the warrior virtues mentioned earlier in this article. Strength and endurance? Exercise and diet are the answer. Courage? Train yourself to face your fears and overcome them. Truthfulness? Happiness in hardship? These are built into the personality with persistence and introspection, over a long period. All these traits relate directly to personal evolution as we have discussed it in THE RUNESTONE, and speed our climb toward the Superman.

You can seek initiation...but that's not so easy, is it? We no longer have a cultural context for it. To the early Indo-Europeans, to be a man WAS to be a warrior - the two were inseparable. We will re-establish systems to make such an initiation possible. Rites are being devised to handle the ritual portion of initiation, but we can't send you to war. You'll have to depend on your own fate (*orlog*) for that one!

Throughout this article we have been trying to get a feel for just what a warrior is. We've cut through all the recent misuse of an ancient word. In the process, we have uncovered a primordial concept a lot more demanding, and more dangerous, than the one peering shyly out from the shelves of metaphysical bookstores. Being

(Continued on page 11)

RUNES

Tools For Everyday Life

By Maddy Hutter

The moon is high between the pines, and the road is still quiet although lights show at the windows of our home this early morning. In the office, Steve sits cross legged gazing at an index card held in front of him. He speaks the name of the blood red rune he watches, absorbing its shape and color, accessing its rich layers of meaning.

In the living room, lying flat on the carpet, I breathe slowly and rhythmically, muscles relaxed and eyes closed. As I clear my mind of daily muddles, I bring my own rune to mind, visualizing its jagged form and silently sounding its name.

We don't do the same kind of rune meditation every day. Often we lead each other through a guided visualization, or simply talk about a rune that seems relevant to our current situation. We devise runic affirmations to stay close to a needed spiritual truth, or we might survey all the runes of the elder futhark for special significance (for the warrior, for instance). The point, of course, is that the runes, symbols that embody the workings of all things, have become part of our daily Asatru life.

For us, runes are profound tools for personal change. In our dried up, materialist world they are particularly useful in helping us to tune in to the richness of our ancestral past, and to work through problems in our complex psychological present.

A Runic Triad

Recently, times were tough for me. I had let myself get bogged down in emotional turmoil, (people stuff, you know the sort of thing) and I needed all the spiritual help I could get. As I worked through my feelings with runic assistance, I uncovered a trio of runes that provided a powerhouse of overcoming. Perhaps they can work for you, too.

First, naturally, I turned to the rune *isa* (|). This straight line rune offered me ego strength, endurance, and calm in the storm. By focusing on its centralizing, concentrating force, I could numb pain and hold on tight:

the wild waters around me surged. Without solidity and temporary safety.

With *isa's* abyss-spanning bridge around a bit to try to figure out solutions to my personal favorite rune. *Raido* knows the conscious realms, so on my journey through results, *raido* was a guide. I found that (and carrying it with me; remember the realities as natural and right. I didn't desperate self defense. *Raido*, rhythmically away from self pity and channelled to stop simply "surviving" and start succeeding.

The next rune to come to my aid in struggle comes the healing. *Wunjo* brings called on *wunjo*, through meditation and of personal integrity and to unite former directions. Actually, I'm still working with are hard to maintain, so my *wunjo* affirmations

Perhaps your emotional ship is now. Your present passage through life. But if things get rocky, if you need some runes. Look to ice-hard *isa*, right-knowing combination that works.

(Rune meanings are adapted from Thorsson's *Essence*)

|

RUNE NAME: *Isa*

KEY CONCEPTS: ice, ego, the centering force of will during times of trial; stillness, endurance and calm; a bridge over the troubled waters of crisis.

AFFIRMATION: Calm fills my body. I am still, holding the forces within me.

the wild waters around me surged. While I didn't feel peace, at least I found solidity and temporary safety.

With *isa's* abyss-spanning bridge under my feet, I could look around a bit to try to figure out solutions to my difficulties. Enter *raido* (ᚱ), my personal favorite rune. *Raido* knows what works in the instinctual and conscious realms, so on my journey from fear and despair to practical results, *raido* was a guide. I found that by meditating and thinking on *raido*, (and carrying it with me; remember the old *raido* AFA pins?) I could accept realities as natural and right. I didn't have to fight everything out of desperate self defense. *Raido*, rhythmically, moved me forward on the road away from self pity and channelled my energies into active change. I could stop simply "surviving" and start succeeding.

The next rune to come to my aid was wonderful *wunjo* (ᚹ). After the struggle comes the healing. *Wunjo* brings understanding, harmony and joy. I called on *wunjo*, through meditation and affirmation, to solidify my sense of personal integrity and to unite forces that had been straining in different directions. Actually, I'm still working with *wunjo*; wholeness and balance are hard to maintain, so my *wunjo* affirmation is always close at hand.

Perhaps your emotional ship is sailing steady in the breeze right now. Your present passage through life is smooth and focused. I hope so. But if things get rocky, if you need some deep and vital assistance, try the runes. Look to ice-hard *isa*, right-knowing *raido* and blessed *wunjo*. It's a combination that works.

(Rune meanings are adapted from Thorsson's *Futhark* and Gundarsson's *Teutonic Magic*)

|

RUNE NAME: *Isa*

KEY CONCEPTS: ice, ego, the centering force of will during times of trial; stillness, endurance and calm; a bridge over the troubled waters of crisis.

AFFIRMATION: Calm fills my body: I am still, holding the forces within me.

"Odinism is a creed of iron"

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BITS & PIECES . .

Snorri Sturluson's **Prose Edda**, translated by Anthony Faulkes, has recently been reissued by Everyman's Library (Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc., 28 S. Main Street, Rutland, VT 05701). As anyone with a long-term interest in Nordica can testify, the fundamental documents of our heathen culture are not always easy to locate, and tend to go out of print with no warning. Support our heritage and help keep these worthy works available to us all - add a copy to your library!

Maddy and I will be in Vancouver, Washington on March 21st, giving a lecture as guests of Wotan Kindred. The affair will be taped and offered to the local public access television channel, as well as to interested groups. It's been a long time since we've done something like this, and of course we're quite excited. Information is available from 8117 N.E. 32nd St., Vancouver, WA 98662.

T-shirts from Iceland, with a picture of Odin and his favorite animals? With a drawing of Thor, bashing giants? Nope, we don't have them - but you CAN get them from long-time Asaman Mark Rippetoe. He'll send you one for a mere \$13, postpaid. They're on white cotton, and they look mighty

fine. His address is 3000 Kemp, Wichita Falls, Texas 76308.

If you live in Washington state, don't forget the first annual Viking Day on Saturday, July 10th, in Clark County, Washington. Organized by the Viking Day Cultural Committee in cooperation with the Nordic Heritage Museum of Seattle, it will feature games, art, storytelling, food, and much, much more. The last year or two has seen the emergence of the viking festival as a recurrent theme, and we can't think of a better way to promote Asatru and the culture of which it is a part. For information, write 8117 N.E. 32nd St., Vancouver, WA 98662.

If warrior matters interest you, find a copy of **In Search of the Warrior Spirit** by Richard Strozzi Heckler. The author is an aikido master who ends up on a contract to teach martial arts, meditation, and biofeedback to Army Special Forces teams - the famous Green Berets. The book is a probing query into the heart of warriorhood from two apparently opposing viewpoints, that of the contemplative, passive Oriental way on one hand and the extroverted, forceful Occidental style on the other. While the differences are real, there are lessons here for Westerners who seek their own philosophy of combat. I recommend this work as a valuable addition to warrior literature.



The night when

There is a special point when the slender eye between the well: the slender eye between the well meet, strengthen each other, and from which we can reap great benefits.

Walburg or Walburge is known. There was a legend in England to live among the dead. This legend is a reflection of the namesake.

The name Walburg may mean "fortress" of the slain", which would be a mound and Valhalla.

The heroic dead, whether in the great deeds laid in the Well of Wyrd. The powerful lives continuing to shape the reputation, and physical offspring the alive. Just as past events manifest themselves so the mound-buried dead will eventually be with us once more. At Walburg we are down in the Well of Wyrd by our own deeds more in line with the result we desire.

Walburg symbolizes a sort of bridge of the past (fallen warriors, for example) to the past (heroic deeds, and their fruits). It is what have been done can rest, germinating again. Seeds under the ground, actions and souls waiting between incarnations of Walburg.

The night when life and death meet

There is a special point when life and death touch each other, and us as well: the slender eve between April 30th and May 1st. Two holy days meet, strengthen each other, and reflect into our lives. It is a magical time from which we can reap great benefits.

Walburg or Walburga is a Teutonic Goddess about whom little is known. There was a Saint Walburga who left her native England to live among the tribes of Germany, and no doubt this legend is a reflection of dull memories of her mightier, less tangible namesake.

The name Walburg may mean something like “mountain [or fortress] of the slain”, which would identify her with both the burial mound and Valhalla.

The heroic dead, whether in Odin's hall or in the earth, are like great deeds laid in the Well of Wyrd. They are the layers of the past, their powerful lives continuing to shape the present through the acts, reputation, and physical offspring they engendered while they were alive. Just as past events manifest among us, being constantly “reborn”, so the mound-buried dead will eventually be reborn into their clan and be with us once more. At Walburg we notice the layers we are putting down in the Well of Wyrd by our own deeds, and we act to bring ourselves more in line with the result we desire.

Walburg symbolizes a sort of holding area, not just for the bodies of the past (fallen warriors, for example) but also for the actions of the past (heroic deeds, and their fruits). It is a state where the things that have been done can rest, germinating before bursting into our awareness again. Seeds under the ground, actions that haven't yet run their course, and souls waiting between incarnations all deal with the essential idea of Walburg.

This is a powerful time. We can gain much from it by acts like these:

* Think: What layers - deeds - have you laid down in your life? What acts or thoughts or other lasting things will you leave behind when you die? What would you change about yourself or what you are doing? Now, do something about it!

* Write your obituary. How satisfied are you with the verdict on your life?

* Visit a graveyard to get at least a fleeting sense of your mortality, and to contemplate the essence of life and death.

* Our ancestors were usually buried with grave goods. These treasures, like great deeds, were deposited in the mound/past. Sometimes a great sword or similar artifact would be retrieved by a hero for use many years later. In the same way, buried events affect the present world. Make a list of things you would like buried with you when you die, and reflect on their symbolic nature (if any).

* Pour a libation in memory of those sleeping in the earth.

* Meditate on the runes *perthro* (𐌷) and *ingwaz* (ᚱ) as they apply to these themes.

From Gloom to Bloom

If Walburg is Asatru's gloomiest day, May Day is one of our happiest. It is no coincidence that they follow back-to-back; the startling juxtaposition of life and death, corpse and new-born, seed and blossom jolts us into a heightened awareness of both. Walburg is for death, the laying down of great deeds, and transformation in the earth. May Day, however, sings of life, the results of gestation, and acts brought to fruition. It is a day to celebrate the manifested world around us, and especially the life that animates it. Grim Holda has overseen death and germination, now glorious Freya reigns over Nature and souls return.

Religious rites of this day are no dreary chore! You can -

* Make love - outdoors if possible! There's no surer way to celebrate life. The possibilities for creative heathenry are many and

wonderful.

* Take a walk through the forest. What different plants are in flower? What wildflowers?

* Send flowers to a friend, or to yourself.

* Meditate on the runes *berkanan* (ᚷ) and *ingwaz* (ᚱ).

* Think on Freya: How many times has she died today? Picture her in your mind, in her beauty. What do you think she would say to you about life and death? Use your imagination.

Walburg and Freya, life and death, the night day of revealing - opposites, of course.

Willful and mighty, skilled in hidden things, from life to death and death to life, they are the same. Likewise, life and death themselves are part of a cycle of rebirth-life-death and rebirth. If we look back at death just behind us as we walk through life, death's gloom is the gleam, however faint, that leads to the wisdom of these Goddesses, growth and

(Continued from page 5)

a warrior is not just a "personal growth experience". It is deadly serious...and just plain deadly.

But wait! You don't have to be a warrior to have a warrior attitude, or to acquire the virtues of the strenuous calling. We all need to be capable of defending ourselves and our loved ones. No one is exempt from a need to be tough, or capable, or brave. Life tests us all; how we react to it is up to us. You're in charge, aren't you?

How about a few pushups to get started?

wonderful.

* Take a walk through the forests and meadows. How many different plants are in flower? What wildlife do you see?

* Send flowers to a friend, or to yourself.

* Meditate on the runes *berkano* (ᚷ) and *uruz* (ᚱ).

* Think on Freya: How many manifestations of her can you see today? Picture her in your mind, in detail and as clearly as possible. What do you think she would say to you? Let her speak into your imagination.

Walburg and Freya, life and death, the dark of mystic night and the bright day of revealing - opposites, of course. And yet...

Willful and mighty, skilled in hidden lore, involved in the passage from life to death and death to life, they are not without their similarities. Likewise, life and death themselves are part of a higher unity, the great cycle of birth-life-death and rebirth. If we look carefully, we will find the shadow of death just behind us as we walk through life. Conversely, hidden in death's gloom is the gleam, however faint, that promises life's return. Listen to the wisdom of these Goddesses, grow in love of life and in great deeds!

(Continued from page 5)

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How about a few pushups for starters?

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85547*

A Kid s-Eye View of Asatru

By Rachael Snow

"So what did you do this weekend?" Christi asked.

"I, uh, went camping and, um, well, it was fun" I said, looking down. Another Asatru weekend that I could never explain to my eighth grade friends at school! Being an Asakid has never been the easiest thing in the world, but it is not without good points, either.

Although impossible to talk about to my friends, the camping trips have been the best part of Asatru for me. The weekends spent romping and playing in the woods are some of the best times I can recall. My stepdad told some of the ancient tales, we sang songs of the Gods around the camp fire, drank from horns, went for dark walks in the middle of the night, got bitten by mosquitos. . . it was great.

Being involved with Asatru also helped me when we

studied the Vikings in 7th grade. I was surprised to discover how much more I knew than some of my fellow students. And the costume we had to put together was no problem because my family had been collecting Viking style clothes for years.

Asatru is not without its problems, though. There have been a thousand questions from my friends. I always answered them as truthfully as possible without going into too much detail. This wasn't because I was embarrassed; I simply didn't wish to take the time to explain to someone who would likely forget all I had said in a matter of seconds. They just wanted to be reassured that I wasn't a Satan worshiper. And of course I am not.

I do have a very different outlook on life because of Asatru. My family values stress strength, competition and excellence, but my Christian friends don't prize these as much. To me, Asatru is more realistic than Christianity. I mean, the "love your enemy" stuff just doesn't fit for me.

Another Asa advantage is the myths. I love having more than one God. With Christianity, God has no personality, he is simply perfect. Well, what is

perfect? The pagan Gods of Asatru are more colorful characters. With strong personalities and ideas, they aren't at all perfect, but they are attractive and interesting.

I am always cautious when telling my friends about my different opinions, because they will seem out of place and weird. The worst example of this happened in Texas when I was in 3rd grade. My mom and stepdad had complained to the school superintendent about



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I am always cautious when telling my friends about my different opinions, because they will seem out of place and weird. The worst example of this happened in Texas when I was in 3rd grade. My mom and stepdad had complained to the school superintendent about

students being forced to say prayers in school. As a result, my whole family was known as devil worshipers throughout town. Especially my brother who sometimes says way too much. After a few weeks of funny looks and some harassment, all was forgotten and things were back to normal.

Sometimes Asatru is not all fun and games but thinking back on all that I have done and others haven't, I wouldn't give my religion up for anything.



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ASATRU

Continuity, Credibility, Future

There's a flyer on the town bulletin board, advertising a workshop on shamanism. As you might expect, the thrust is clearly Native American. Last week there was a meditation seminar locally; it focused on Tibetan Buddhism. I needn't tell you that nothing on the spiritual smorgasbord related to our own beliefs.

You and I can certainly imagine Teutonic shamanism classes or day-long sessions on Germanic mysticism, but in our guts we know they wouldn't get the kind of attention commanded by non-European spiritual paths. It's time we asked ourselves why Asatru seems so much less legitimate than the other native traditions which seem to be flourishing in today's relaxed religious climate.

There are several reasons for our poor credibility. The currently low collective self-esteem among people of European descent is a factor. Another is that Asatru preaches and practices the hard virtues of honor, courage, and duty. A third cause of our psychic exclusion is lack of continuity, and this is the one I want to address in some detail.

Tibetan Buddhism has been going strong for about thirteen hundred years, and it incorporates elements which are even older. The Chinese invaders have reduced most of the monasteries to empty ruins, thrown monks in jail, forced the Dalai Lama into exile, and tried to commercialize and co-opt the religious hierarchy that still exists within Tibet. Still, the common people remain loyal to the practice of their faith and to the person of the Dalai Lama.

Now, by our standards Tibetan Buddhism is strange indeed. The demons, the chanting, the customs and rituals of Lamaism - all these are bizarre from our viewpoint. Nothing in Asatru could possibly be further removed from American culture. Why, then, does it have a legitimacy that Asatru does not share? The answer is simply that it has been practiced, continuously and with loving devotion, for a very long time.

American Indian... the war for the possession... been easy to relegate their... happened. On the contrary... tremendous rebirth and is... something more organic than... makes Native American religion... inherent truth or intrinsic... identifiable group of people...

Continuity grants credibility... and of Black Elk are believable... pause for many centuries. Asatru... crushed, with only shattered fragments... what our tradition had been. Putting... like all who lose a war, we start with...

The healing of Asatru, and... Today, our roots are not deeply set... deeper - a mere half-century will... traditions. But it will not happen... enough. We must actively participate... families. It is not sufficient to declare... philosophical position, or to read... PRACTICE ASATRU. We must honor... Gods daily, light candles and pour... filling our lives, and the lives of our... well.

In short, we have to prove... When we do that, we will have the... religions. YOU, reading these words... Will you do your part?

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American Indian belief is another example. When the Indians lost the war for the possession of the North American continent, it would have been easy to relegate their religion to permanent obscurity. This has not happened. On the contrary, Amerind spirituality has experienced a tremendous rebirth and is often adopted by wayward Whites searching for something more organic than the Christian creed of their upbringing. What makes Native American religion acceptable in the public mind is not its inherent truth or intrinsic virtue, but that it has been followed by an identifiable group of people since prehistory.

Continuity grants credibility. The ancient ways of the Dalai Lama and of Black Elk are believable because they have been upheld without pause for many centuries. Asatru, though, lost its war for survival. It was crushed, with only shattered fragments and disjointed vestiges indicating what our tradition had been. Putting it together again is no easy task, and, like all who lose a war, we start with a massive psychological disadvantage.

The healing of Asatru, and of the people of Asatru, will take time. Today, our roots are not deeply set. In a generation or two they will be much deeper - a mere half-century will go a long way toward *reestablishing our traditions*. But it will not happen automatically, and time alone is not enough. *We must actively participate in Asatru, as individuals and as families. It is not sufficient to declare ourselves Asafolk, or to adopt a philosophical position, or to read various books and periodicals. WE MUST PRACTICE ASATRU.* We must honor the holy days of our troth, praise the Gods daily, light candles and pour libations. These must become traditions filling our lives, and the lives of our children, and their children's lives as well.

In short, we have to prove, by our actions, that Asatru is not dead. When we do that, we will have the legitimacy enjoyed by other native religions. YOU, reading these words, can help do that now, today, this hour. Will you do your part?

Living Asatru

by Stephen McNallen

A Complete Guide to Lively and Informal Celebrations of Asatru.

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FIRST FLIGHT

By Karen Taylor

Conquering fear and opening the soul to adventure are themes we touched on last issue, with Maddy's description of her first parachute jump. Karen, a long-time Asawoman, was moved to tell her story of a similar time, when she slipped the bonds of gravity to discover other, more interior, fetters fall away as well. We thought you'd find her account inspiring as you apply Asatru to your own life.

It was a slate-gray day. The clouds hung dense, dark and foreboding in the morning sky. The near-arctic wind pushed me along with intermittent gusts as I made my way through the knee-deep snow. As I stood pumping water for the horses, I thought to myself: "Today I fly!" I watched snowflakes dancing by and wondered if this was, in fact, a really good day for flying. My most recent class at ground school had dealt with the effects of weather on flying an airplane. I knew that today was less than ideal for such an endeavor... I'd know for sure when I got to the airport.

At the airport I stood with only the wind and my inner thoughts as company. I scanned the horizon for sight of the school airplane. No sign of it yet. I was a little scared and very excited. I asked Thor for courage in meeting this challenge. I asked Odin to calm the winds. Finally the plane came into sight and landed. My turn had arrived.

I introduced myself to the instructor. He in turn introduced me to the plane I would be flying. Yes, he said, I would be required to do it all - take off, fly and navigate the journey back, finally landing the plane. "Have courage," I thought; "This is not the time to entertain any doubts or fear." I squared my shoulders and climbed into the cabin. I felt that Odin was with me, as were all the Gods and Goddesses of our folk.

The sky cleared and the sun shined bright. And yes, I did it all - take-off, landing, and an hour of flight over the ice-locked waters of Lake Michigan. I even buzzed my own home, whose red roof stood out distinctly amid the snow drifts of January. I saw the world, or at least my part of the world, with a God's eye view. After landing, my instructor said I had done great. I walked away still striding on the clouds, with a new sense of pride. Even in my euphoria, though, I remembered to thank Odin and Thor for a great, one-of-a-kind day.

(Calendar continued from front cover)

Christian kings. Recall his virtue by formally renouncing Christ and all his works, or by vigorously exercising any of your guarantees under the Bill of Rights.

April 15 - SUMARSDAG/SIGRBLÖT. This was the first day of summer in the Icelandic calendar. It falls at about the same time as the annual sacrifice to Odin, for success in the coming raiding season. Welcome the warm months, and make an offering to the Father of Victory!

April 30 - WALBURG. This Teutonic Goddess safeguards the dead heroes who sleep in the burial mound, and harbors deeds yet to bear fruit. Pour a libation to the bold ones awaiting rebirth, and think on how your own acts will live beyond you.

May 1 - MAY DAY. From the gloom of Walburg we enter the sunshine of May Day. Think on Freya, take a walk in the forest, or send flowers to a friend.

May 9 - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR GUTHROTH. This Norwegian martyr spoke out against the tyranny of the Christian fanatic Tryggvason, and urged others to resist. For this, the king had his tongue cut out. Call an Asa-friend today - use your tongue to participate in Asatru!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What are the basic tenets or beliefs of Asatru?

The Asatru Free Assembly summarized these key tenets as:

"We believe in an underlying, all-pervading divine energy or essence which is generally hidden from us because it surpasses our direct understanding. We further believe that this spiritual reality is interdependent with us - that we affect it, and it affects us.

We believe that this underlying divinity expresses itself to us in the forms of the Gods and Goddesses. Stories about these deities are like a sort of code, the mysterious "language" through which the divine reality speaks to us.

We believe in standards of behavior which are consistent with these spiritual truths and harmonious with our innermost nature."

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