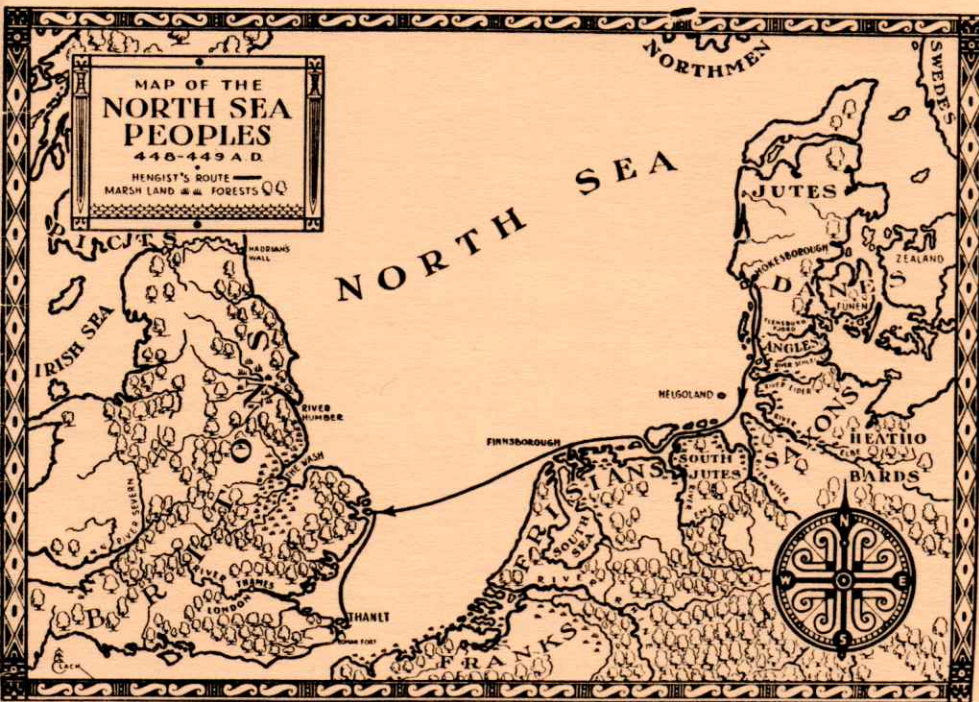


THE RUNESTONE



SPRING 1994 NUMBER 7

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

THE RUNESTONE is published four times a year, at the equinoxes and solstices. Subscriptions are \$10 per year in the U.S. and \$15 per year overseas airmail, payable to Stephen A. McNallen or Maddy Hutter.

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

Submissions of articles are invited. Deadlines are as follows:

Spring - January 15	Summer - April 15
Fall - July 15	Winter - October 15

CALENDAR

March 9 - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR OLVIR. Olvir was a Norwegian who organized sacrifices to the Gods in defiance of King Olaf Tryggvason. 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.

UP FRONT



With spring on our mind
and in our step, how
new **Runestone**

sure harbinger of the coming season:
clear skies and warmer weather. What
what's hatching, like an Easter egg,
in this issue?

"Up Front" is appropriate, with
first selection tells us of heathen
warriors in places as diverse as
and Bosnia. Weapons-bearing
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A&A up and down the hills, enough
be ready for a little contemporary
quiet. Maddy's prayer poem is
right for this. No, not perfect
ing, but the prayer - good, calm
and often raging. Maybe it's the
mental at that?

A poem to Freya, representing
and Phoen. And our own prayer,
Wendy's "Wendy." The latter is
better than the real, more like
and I found myself moved with
it while you can, because maybe
"The Egg" is about to happen, with
patiently, why you should
Direct just for the good of the
do with resolution and the
and I'm sure they will all be
in *Phoen* III.

So what does it mean to be
with aggressive? These are the
Ragnar Lodbrok. Ragnar was
but they're not the same. The
normal letter to the editor, and
love. See the poem?

UP FRONT

With spring on our minds and in our step, here's a new **Runestone** - a sure harbinger of the coming season's clear skies and warmer weather. Look what's hatching, like an Ostara egg, in this issue!

"Up Front" is appropriate, as the first selection tells us of Asatru's warriors in places as diverse as Burma and Bosnia. Weapons-bearing wanderers, inspired by the Father of Victory, are circling the globe like Odin's sleek ravens and this eyewitness report will give you the details.

After the exertion of lugging an AK47 up and down the hills, you might be ready for a little contemplation and quiet. Maddy's prayer piece is just right for this. No, not glorified sniveling, but Asa-prayer - proud, active, and often raging (Maybe it's NOT so restful at that!).

A poem to Freya...reports from **Bits and Pieces**...and our new category, **Mimir's Market**. The latter is less hectic than the mall, more folkish, and a darned sight more useful. Enjoy it while you can, because mighty "Rip" Rippetoe is about to explain, not too patiently, why you should exercise. It's not just for the pain of it; it has to do with evolution and the Pleistocene and lots more they didn't tell you about in Phys Ed.

So what does Jarl Hakon have to do with springtime? Plenty! And so does Ragnar Lodbrok. Bunnies they aren't, but they've got life force galore! Our seasonal article this time is...well, different. See for yourself!

Next, Else Christensen, mother of our movement, speaks to us about the nine Gods she likes the best. And when mother talks, you're well advised to listen! We're proud to have her thoughts in our pages, and we know you'll be stimulated by what she has to say.

Then it's time for your letters, and our replies - after a few comments from Maddy about the letters we get, and the individualistic style in which you open and close them. Speaking of closing, that carries us to the end of issue number seven. To get there, just turn the page, and start at the beginning!

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Wotan's Warriors

Worldwide,

By Steve McNallen



Here's a widely held opinion that the warriors of Odin and Thor are extinct. Supposedly, the last of this bold breed marched off to their personal Ragnaroks about a thousand years ago. Like a lot of other widely held beliefs, it is false. I know, because I've met these men on three far battlefields scattered around the Earth.

Now, when I say "warriors", I mean exactly that. Not metaphorical "Earth warriors" or "peaceful warriors", but the real thing - guys who stand up when the lead content ward to deal armed enemy. cent encour- latter-day forced me to and to think their existence Asafolk.

When I say warriors, I mean exactly that. . . guys who stand up when the air has a high lead content and move forward to deal with an armed enemy.

air has a high and move forward with an My most reter with these vikings has see a pattern, about what means for

The first such man I met was a friend in college who had a Thor's hammer amulet made so he could wear it as a chopper pilot in Vietnam. This was before any of us knew where to buy factory-made hammers, so he borrowed mine (which was custom made) to use for a pattern. I mentioned this incident in one of the very first issues of **THE RUNESTONE**.

Then, just a couple of years ago, I wrote in **VOR TRU** about a German who was helping the Karen people of Burma in their fight for independence. He, too wore Thor's hammer on a cord around his neck - and no doubt he was startled to see me wearing one, too!

Most recently, my wanderings took me to Bosnia, where the Tomislav Brigade has a group of foreign volunteers assisting the Croats in their fight against the Serbs and Muslims. Americans, Germans, assorted Australians and Rhodesians had come from their respective homes to lend a hand. I had hardly been with the brigade for a day when I saw that one of the Germans was wearing a hefty bronze hammer around his neck. When I asked about it, I was told that one of the Swedes had left it. The Swedes?

THE RUNESTONE

Yes, half a dozen of them had been in the habit of reading the had shared a ritual quaff of mead with themselves vikings, and some wore horned helmet.

Wandering into the troops fa-zines for light looked more was a German book on Teuthology, and it ously been well-Lying next to it of audio cassettes, one of which was "Wotan".

From the jungles of Bosnia, warriors that folk groups their own

As it turned out, at least one and a couple of the Germans, more were happy to draw inspiration had even scratched an ethic: more dining room (Considering the quality of defense was entirely appropriate).

In his essay on Wotan (what brilliant psychologist Carl Gustav might be in German culture - his wandering minstrels expressed Wotan lessly from one place to another, taking of music. As I trudged up a hill the soldiers, too, were reflections of Wotan their Kalashnikovs rather than piper Valhalla. Who knew what wonder senenade?

From the jungles of Burma, warriors are fighting that folk groups Whether they know it or not, these men Odin. The same forces of conformity, the New World Order, would subdue Swede and the European-American. Some come home to fight for their own people will indeed walk among us, and our

Yes, half a dozen of them had made the trip to Bosnia as a unit. Their leader had been in the habit of reading the Edda before going into action, and he shared a ritual quaff of mead with his comrades, too. The bunch considered themselves vikings, and sported a distinctive shoulder patch featuring a horned helmet.

Wandering into the barracks one night where the men sat cleaning their AK47s, I saw a thick book on the table. This was unusual, as most of the troops favored magazines for light reading, so I looked more closely. It was a German edition of a book on Teutonic mythology, and it had obviously been well-thumbed. Lying next to it was a stack of audio cassettes, one of which was by a German rock band named "Wotan".

From the jungles of Burma to the frosty mountains of Bosnia, warriors are fighting that folk groups can work out their own destinies.

As it turned out, at least one of the Americans other than myself, and a couple of the Germans, were more or less literal Asafolk. Two or three more were happy to draw inspiration from our religious symbols. Someone had even scratched an *elhaz* rune on one of the tables downstairs, in the dining room (Considering the quality of the chow, a rune of protection and defense was entirely appropriate!).

In his essay on Wotan (whom we know as Father of Victory, Odin), brilliant psychologist Carl Gustav Jung describes the workings of this mighty being in German culture down to modern times. He tells us how the wandering minstrels expressed Wotan's archetype as they traveled restlessly from one place to another, taking with them the magical inspiration of music. As I trudged up a hill the next day, rifle in hand, I mused that these soldiers, too, were reflections of Wotan's working. Far from home, playing their Kalashnikovs rather than pipes or lyres, they sounded the tunes of Valhalla. Who knew what wonders would someday come from their serenade?

From the jungles of Burma to the frosty mountains of Bosnia, warriors are fighting that folk groups can work out their own destinies. Whether they know it or not, these men serve the freedom-willing spirit of Odin. The same forces of conformity and homogeneity, under the guise of the New World Order, would subdue alike the Croat and the Karen, the Swede and the European-American. Someday, though, the warriors will come home to fight for their own people and culture. On that day Wotan will indeed walk among us, and our foes will quake to see our determination.

Prayer without Pleading

Do Asafolk have a Prayer? By Maddy Hutter

Lasked an Asaman whose opinion I respect about prayer the other night. His answer was a tirade against kneebending, dependence and begging. Nervously, I continued: But what about communicating with the Gods? What about that impulse many of us have to "talk" to Odin and Frigga and the others, as comrades, perhaps, or guides? "Well, that's OK," he reconsidered, "just don't call it prayer. Prayer is for sycophantic whiners cringing before the Dead White God who never answers them anyway."

Clearly, when I decide to write about prayer, I'm on touchy ground! Nonetheless, since I am a person who prays, and since we are publishing a new book of prayers for Asafolk, it makes sense to take a risk, and discuss the whole tricky subject.

Let me make my case for prayer. Then, I promise, I'll deal with the kneebending issue.

Generally speaking, prayer (spoken aloud, silent, in ritual or not) serves several pur-

poses: **First, simply naming Gods and Goddesses gives them life.** When we call on Thor he is made real by our very words. Tyr's courage or Sif's gentleness are shadowy virtues unless we shine the light of declaration on them. Praying, or talking, to Balder, Skadi, or any of the characters in our wonderful pantheon, draws them closer to us; in our artificial, Godless world we badly need deities as models and inspiration. Prayer can help.

Talk, or pray, to the Gods, and you talk to your deepest self.

Second, prayer gets us away from the one-sided, rational track we can so easily get stuck in. Everything is being over-explained these days: the biochemistry of love, the psychology of grief and so on. I like to switch off the logical, analytical brain from time to time and allow the spiritual and intuitive some space. There's truth to be found in meditation, and a spoken or silent receptivity to the messages of our Gods within us makes sense to me.

And what about that need for "bigness", for something beyond our daily burdens? **Prayer gives us an opportunity to trans-**

scend ordinary life, to reach out to whatever it is that calls us to greatness. Call it escape from reality, or a stretch to the *albermensch* (*albermensch* in my case!). Anyway, my regular "visits" with Odin and the rest remind me that I am different, that I have "break-a-high places" and a part to play in this world-changing endeavor.

Our prayers, spoken with will, intention and passion, in language of love...

Last, talking to others, Gods included, gives most of us a chance to clarify our own feelings, thoughts, and desires. Even though we sometimes want our Gods to tell us what to do, perhaps it is just as well that they usually don't. Their quiet allows us to hear ourselves speak, and provides us the room to decide for ourselves, in our own time, whenever it is we need. Human friends seldom, Frigga-like them, speak of advice, hardly hearing our dilemmas before they spit out an action plan. Talk, or pray, to the Gods, and you talk to your deepest self.

Why, with all this said, do we sometimes feel isolated and distant from our Gods? Why can't we seem to cry out to them in need and feel ignored? I think it's got to do with language—Christian versus "that" language. Most of us seem to know how to pray as Christians. We get down on your knees to

scend ordinary life, to reach out to whatever it is that calls us to greatness. Call it escape from reality, or a stretch to the *ubermensch* (*uberwench* in my case!). Anyway, my regular "visits" with Odin and the rest remind me that I am different, that I have "friends in high places" and a part to play in a truly world-changing endeavor.

Last, talking to others, Gods included, gives most of us a chance to clarify our own feelings, thoughts, and desires. Even though we sometimes want our Gods to tell us what to do, perhaps it is just as well that they usually don't! Their quiet allows us to hear ourselves speak; and provides us the room to decide for ourselves, in our own time, whatever it is we need. Human friends and kin, Freya bless them, are full of advice, hardly hearing our dilemmas before they spit out an action plan. Talk, or pray, to the Gods, and you talk to your deepest self.

Why, with all this said, do we sometimes feel isolated and distant from our Gods? Why is it that we can cry out to them in need and feel ignored? I think it's got a lot to do with language - Christian versus "Asa" language. Most of us learned how to pray as Christians. You get down on your knees to

Our prayers must resound with will, independence and passion. This is the language of the Aesir and Asafolk.

beg, bargain, and beat your breast. You mention how difficult your life is and you snivel for a while about how you have done your best, but the problems are just too big for you to handle. Then you ask "GOD" to help you out, perhaps with a promise that you'll do the

same for him some time in the future. Yeah, right! I'm no expert on God psychology, but I'm convinced that this kind of whimpering bores Odin, Thor and Frey silly. Sure, the Gods need us, but they don't need servile desperation. Asatru really is a "creed of iron". We cannot declare with the vikings of Hrolf Ganger that "we have no master" and then plead with our Gods to take care of us when the going gets tough. Our prayers must resound with will, independence and passion. This is the language of the Aesir and Asafolk.

So what does Asa-prayer look and sound like? To my mind, the best prayer is right action. A deliberate demonstration of any of the virtues we hold sacred such as strength, honor, loyalty, or honesty will attract the attention of Gods and men. This kind of prayer reinforces folk values while adding great potency to our personal *orlog* (fate). The Well of Wyrd is enriched by every act of courage, and by each declaration of truth. Let these be our prayers.

But life isn't all struggle and the Gods are with us even on less active days. In what other ways can we connect with the holy powers? How about sharing with them our strongest emotions? Don't all societies ritualize times of great joy (marriage, birth) and grief (death, loss)? We can do this too, in smaller ways. Let us thank Frey when we bask in the scents and sun of summer, and praise noisy Thor when the thunder crashes around us. Isn't Berkano beside us as we comfort our children? Pray to her, easily and without formality. When prayers express your surges of delight, exuberance or even sadness, the Gods will understand.

Although we Asafolk think of ourselves as hardy, action-oriented types, there is a place for quiet contemplation. Our world is busy and overstimulating. Unless we deliberately make time for silence, the Gods will have to compete with the clamor of people, machines and the media for our attention. Arrange a time each day and listen to your inward voices. A different kind of prayer will emerge.

Having stressed the need for independence and confidence in our dealings with the Gods, what do we do when we truly are at a loss, when we don't have the will to act with decision, when we don't know what is right? Must we

Prayer, for Asafolk, should not mean craven supplication or helpless entreaty.

avoid prayer? Ignore the power of the Gods just when we need it most? Of course not. Even in times of trial, we can still look our Gods straight in the eye. Consider them, not as dictators with the power to grant or deny benefits at will, but rather as coaches cheering us on from the sidelines; the Gods are like us, but they've played the game a lot longer than we have. So don't cry out to Thor to crush some enemy of yours. Evoke him; visualize him striding into giant-foiling action, his magnificent arms raised and mighty thighs moving, and pray with all your heart that you will do the same. Even when our path is not clear, we can summon the patience of Frigga, the independence of Freya, or embrace the creative chaos favored by Odin. With so many Gods and Goddesses, we have more options than the Christians. Our prayers should demonstrate both our versatility and our freedom to choose our own destiny. We simply don't have to submit or go to hell.

Prayer, then, doesn't have to be on bent knee, with lips pressed against some master's feet. Prayer, for Asafolk, should not mean craven supplication or helpless entreaty. For us, prayer can be part of the bright game of life, a sharing of the battle and the bliss, with characters who know and wish us well. Hail the Aesir! Hail the Vanir! Hail the Folk!

thunderseed
the cool Northern
fall like
cleansing
kisses
from
Asynjur lips
ripe and
tender

Lady
Sweet Freya
whisper
your secrets
on the
wandering wind-
let free your secret
to bathe my
senses and
to fill
my lover's heart.

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BITS & PIECES

lization section. Call 800-424-7962 for information.

Suggested pamphlets: *The Nordic Soul, The Last Man against*

Wow! **Vor Tru**, the official publication of the Asatru Alliance (address on back cover), is certainly

graduations to Mike Murray, Bob Taylor and the others who work on the magazine. It is setting a standard for us all!

Great Film! In **Into the West** Irish gypsies (the Travelers) with a love of myth and movement are set against city dwellers with their mistaken desire for a settled, predictable future. The film is a touching portrayal of two boys searching for a miracle; it's also a vision of another European culture slipping into the mists, but not without a spiritual fight of beauty and poignance. Take the children, and your handkerchief.

Wotan's Kindred reports a highly successful **Yule Fest** complete with boar, oath making, ritual, singing and dancing and Cathy's famous glogg! If you live in the Portland area and would like to connect with these active and dedicated Asafolk, write 8117 N.E. 32nd St., Vancouver, WA 98662

A subscriber reminds us of the availability, through the PBS Video Catalog, of the excellent series, **The Vikings**, narrated by Magnus Magnussen. Other viking videos are listed in the Early Civil

MIMIR'S MARKET

Something to sell? Asatru-related items may be listed here (space available basis) as a service to our readers. No endorsement or guarantees implied by your editors.

T-Shirts

Odin and Thor - Unusual and dramatic Icelandic designs, \$13.. Write Mark Rippetoe, c/o Wichita Falls Athletic Club, 3000 Kemp (Side), Wichita Falls, TX 76308

Freya - Wielding a sword with viking ship in background - \$15, Sweatshirts \$20. Sizes S-XL. Various colors. Write Reinhold and Cathy Clinton, 8117 N.E. 32nd St. Vancouver, WA 98662.

Books

The Saga of Frithiof the Bold, translated from the Icelandic by George Stevens. Photocopy of the original 1839 publication - 40pp, \$5. **Index to the Saga**, 50pp \$5, Both for just \$8. Write L. Miller, P.O.Box 472, Cambridge, MA 02139

THE RUNESTONE

8



opinion, the strangest are those who with t
cate a philosophy of strength, and with the
philosophy of weakness.

I have seen a lot of people in my association with
groups who need to spend a lot less time sitting down
at more time getting up and doing something physical
honor strength and courage and toughness, but it is qu
seek to develop those qualities in oneself. Some peo
merely talk about these virtues, as if the lip service will

Yes, it is true
leave these qualities
But if you call yourself
cally a hard exercise
neglecting a very important
through the attainment
physical goals can

Life in its
nature most fully
that of an active animal
physical stress, since
hasn't been that long
the way we modern
existed when we were
stresses we are all

So, boys and girls
Running, slowly at first
by itself. Play a sport
weights - this is a good
things like cycling, diving
to get started with some
performance. This is
yourself Asatru, it is

STRESS *for* STRENGTH

Walkin' your Asa-talk. . .

By Mark Rippetoe

There are a lot of strange people involved in Asatru. In my opinion, the strangest are those who with their mouths advocate a philosophy of strength, and with their butts promote a philosophy of weakness.

I have seen a lot of people in my association with the AFA and other groups who need to spend a lot less time sitting down and thinking and a lot more time getting up and doing something physical. It is one thing to honor strength and courage and toughness, but it is quite another thing to seek to develop those qualities in oneself. Some people are content to merely talk about these virtues, as if the lip service will cause the strength to develop. This is at best immature and at worst hypocritical.

Yes, it is hard to become strong and healthy. It is much easier to leave these qualities with the Gods than it is to bring them into our own lives. But if you call yourself Asatru, then you must incorporate strength, specifically a hard exercise program, into your routine. If you don't, you are neglecting a very important, a pivotal, aspect of life as Asatru. For it is only through the attainment of physical improvement and the achievement of physical goals can we know what warriors know.

Life in its most elemental form is physical. We are by our very nature most fully alive when we are at our peak physically. Our biology is that of an active animal, and is only normal under conditions of hard physical stress, since these are the conditions under which we evolved. It hasn't been that long since the Pleistocene, in biological terms. Exercise is the way we modern humans simulate for our bodies the conditions that existed when we were evolving; it allows us to artificially apply the physical stresses we are at our best when adapted to.

So, boys and girls, it is now time to get up and do something hard. Running, slowly at first and gradually faster, is a good start, but not enough by itself. Play a sport, preferably in a competitive context. Train with weights - this is a good addition to any other sport activity. Do outdoor things like cycling, climbing, distance hiking, or winter sports. The idea is to get started with something you enjoy. Never be satisfied with your performance. This is your connection to strength and courage. If you call yourself Asatru, it is your responsibility.

Lifetide Rising

Springtime

As springtime breaks through the icy overcast of waning winter, the sun warms the frigid fields - and we at **The Runestone** warm to the task of writing another piece glorying in Nature's wondrous awakening. But this year I don't feel like composing another bunny-and-flower piece. How about something a little different for a change?

Jarl Hakon was a fierce leader who wrenched western Norway from Christian control and restored the worship of our Gods and Goddesses. His story is an inspiration to us today, which is why we honor him on his Day of Remembrance, on April 9th. To his contemporaries, though, he was much more than a heroic role model - his actions had profound effects on the daily life of the Folk.

Oh, there was his restoration of political liberties and his overall goodly guidance - but the sagas mention something else, a detail that we of modern rationalistic minds might tend to dismiss unless we give it a good hard think. I am referring to Hakon's effect on the weather and on the crops. If you've forgotten, let me remind you: The anti-Asatru sacrileges of Harald Greycloak and others were said to have brought on the bad weather and the crop failures which plagued Norway after the bloody conversion from our old religion to the imported, alien creed. Conversely, when Hakon rebuilt the temples and honored the Gods once again, the skald Einar Helgason could say what others saw:

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

It's easy to dismiss this as superstition. After all, how could the religious practices of a people affect the harvest, or determine whether rain would fall, or the hailstones spare the tender shoots? A little science goes a long way toward stripping us of our naive, native, unrationalized paganism. Grown conservative, we mutter reassuringly that "We no longer really believe, of course...".

Disconcertingly, nature refuses to cooperate with our scepticism. The weather should be the *last* thing to be affected by human rites and rituals; no

one has yet hypnotized a cloud or altered a pressure system. Yet, those who keep weather magic works. Try as we Whitefolk rain dances have produced some spectacular power of our own ancestors have been

It may be that the American Indians never forgotten something that Brian issue of **The Runestone**. In terms "Asatru recognizes that nature is alive. It is besouled and reacts intelligently

This interaction between Folk and seasons" and the seasons, blood and soil, proper observance of religious duties, balance of nature. At springtime, we celebrate the return of visible life, and its reappearance. Cause and effect become a quantum physicist, a cosmologist,

When Jarl Hakon restored the Gods, the crops to flourish and the weather to become the blessings of springtime, of life triumphed in Norway. As you honor him on the Day of Remembrance it is that his Day of Remembrance falls, your part in the cosmic circle, so that Einar Helgason the skald, that "Earth bestows

But this isn't just an article about Northern heathendom. Did you notice the raise the horn of remembrance in March, springtime sacrifices? True to the spirit are born again every time we speak he paid with his life. Then there's Ostara herself, the Saxon Goddess of spring where bunnies and eggs and flowers are associated with her glorious life-giving power.

Springtime isn't just Bunnies anymore . . .

By Steve McNallen

one has yet hypnotized a cloud or acted on the subconscious of a high-pressure system. Yet, those who keep tabs on such things assure us that weather magic works. Try as we White folks might to ignore the fact, Indian rain dances have produced some spectacular successes. Why should the power of our own ancestors have been any less?

It may be that the American Indians and other indigenous peoples have never forgotten something that Brian Regan reminded us of, in the last issue of **The Runestone**. In terms of our own religion, he declared that "Asatru recognizes that nature is alive - and not just in a figurative sense: It is souled and reacts intelligently to human prayers".

This interaction between Folk and place, between adventurous "sea sons" and the seasons, blood and soil, is what lies behind the belief that proper observance of religious duties is somehow essential to maintain the balance of nature. At springtime, this correlation is as valid as ever. We celebrate the return of visible life, and in our celebration we help bring about its reappearance. Cause and effect become intertwined in a way that only a quantum physicist, a cosmologist, or a shaman can understand.

When Jarl Hakon restored the Gods to their rightful place, he helped the crops to flourish and the weather to become clement. In short, he brought the blessings of springtime, of life triumphant, back to the fields of western Norway. As you honor him on the ninth of April, consider how appropriate it is that his Day of Remembrance falls during this time of the year. Play your part in the cosmic circle, so that more than ever we can say, along with Einar Helgason the skald, that "Earth bestows bounty as before...".

But this isn't just an article about Hakon and his spring-like warming of Northern heathendom. Did you notice that the martyr Olvir, to whom we raise the horn of remembrance in March, was killed for his role in organizing springtime sacrifices? True to the spirit of rebirth, his courage and loyalty are born again every time we speak his name and perform the rites for which he paid with his life. Then there's March 21st, Ostara itself, named for Ostara herself, the Saxon Goddess of springtime and of the dawn. This is where bunnies and eggs and flowers truly come in, for these are all symbols associated with her glorious life-giving powers.

Continued on Page 20

A Gallery of the Gods

The Folkmother Speaks!

By Else Christensen

Nine is our holy number and I like to use it whenever possible; it therefore seems a good idea to list nine gods who, at least to me, are most important, along with their special attributes which in my judgement are the most striking. It is easier to relate to and commune with the gods when there is some kind of frame of reference around them. Maybe some of you will share my entirely personal choices, or, if nothing else, be encouraged to make your own selections.

The first three gods come directly from our Norse heritage, regardless of whichever names they may have locally acquired: the sky father, the thunder god, and the warrior god. Next are those gods pertaining to the home - folk, food, family - immediate and necessary concerns; followed by those gods whose domains are of social or spiritual nature.

ODIN: Our main deity of course stands for knowledge; but knowledge by itself is not enough; it must be tempered by reason, then acted upon, to bring us the wisdom we need both in our personal lives and for the continued existence of our Folk. But Odin also reminds us that without adding a touch of Magic, of inspiration, we will never understand the wonders of Nature, the cosmic processes, or the paradoxes of everyday life itself. Through knowledge, modified by reason and activism to gain wisdom, and adding magic, we may begin to comprehend, and perhaps even assimilate, something of All-Father's personality.

THOR: Next in line must come the Thunder God with his mighty hammer. Thor exudes strength; he is first when it comes to protecting the honor of the Aesir and holy Asgard. But Thor is also the friend of the common man, of the farmer working the soil and the fisherman braving the waves of the ocean. Thor brings the violent storms that strike fear in the hearts of mankind, yet it is he, too, who sends the mild rains that make flowers and crops grow. He has snow and ice up his sleeve, but also gives the beautiful blue sky and warm days when the smell of newly cut hay fills the air. Indeed, we cannot do much without Thor being close.

TYR: Our most ancient god, possibly going back to the times of totems and animism, first and foremost stands for courage. The legends say

that he alone realized the imperativeness of the task, aware of the danger by the Fenris wolf which threatened the world. He was well aware of the risk in binding the wolf, but he was willing to do so and never flinched in the face of the inescapable responsibility to the cosmos, regardless of the perils involved. Tyr was willing to take calculated risks; but he was not willing to take unnecessary risks, or to waste life or limb.

FRIGGA: Mother of gods and goddess of love, Frigga is an important building block of a sound world, and support we seek for all matters, for efficiency and competence *par excellence*. Frigga is the goddess of midwives and help, and without the supportive powers of Frigga, the world would be in danger.

NJORD: The sea has always played a place of mystery, a ready but sometimes inexhaustible source of food. Never forget the god of the sea; his realm is most closely associated with the ocean - our forefathers' power of the sea - our forefathers' power of ocean waves whipped up by storms, various ways of harnessing the brisk sea, the first wave of the ocean, and will be here again.

FREYA: Freya and brother Freyr are our main fertility deities; Freya comes from the spring, of procreation; her beneficence represents the receptive, feminine aspect of the potent masculine power of Frey as an essential life will appear. We need both facets to grow family, the seeding and harvesting of crops, the complicated organisms need the blessing of Freya reproducing in the continuous chain of life. Freya is passionate love - she being the goddess of love, his sword because of love, reminding us that love can stunt people while cautioning that love can

GAIA: I've chosen the more common Mother; Jord or Erda are the Nordic names, but that we are only a small part of the tremendous universe conveys this perspective. Her domains include

that he alone realized the imperative of halting the evil forces represented by the Fenris wolf which threatened the very survival of the Folk itself. Tyr was well aware of the risk in binding the vile wolf, but he saw it as his duty to do so and never flinched in his task. We must learn from Tyr our inescapable responsibility to the community of gods and men- to fight evil regardless of the perils involved. Tyr is a true warrior god: He is realistic, willing to take calculated risks; but he would never condone bravado or unnecessary waste of life or limb.

FRIGGA: Mother of gods and men, center of the family, an important building block of a sound society. Frigga's the one whose help and support we seek for all matters dealing with house and home. She is efficiency and competence *par excellence*; health and proper nutrition of man and beast are within her domain as well as care of young and old. She is the goddess of midwives and helps ease the birth of future generations; without the supportive powers of Frigga the well-being of our families would be in danger.

NJORD: The sea has always played a dominant role in our history as a place of mystery, a ready but sometimes treacherous highway, and an inexhaustible source of food. Never can a people of European heritage forget the god of the sea; his realm includes lakes and rivers as well, but he is most closely associated with the ocean. Njord reminds us of the tremendous power of the sea - our forefathers knew well the devastating potential of ocean waves whipped up by storms, but they also came to know the various ways of harnessing the brisk sea winds. Njord is as ancient as the first wave of the ocean, and will be here until the end of time.

FREYA: Freya and brother Frey, children of Njord, are, together, our main fertility deities; Freya comes first - she is our beloved goddess of spring, of procreation; her beneficence touches all living things. She represents the receptive, feminine aspect of the creative act, but without the potent masculine power of Frey as an essential part of the process no new life will appear. We need both facets to guarantee the growth of flock and family, the seeding and harvesting of crops, fruits and berries; even the less complicated organisms need the blessings of both gods to keep their species reproducing in the continuous chain of life. As well, the gods represent passionate love - she being the goddess of all lovers; he is the one who lost his sword because of love, reminding us that without love we would be a stunted people while cautioning that love can also create problems.

GAIA: I've chosen the more commonly used name for our Earth Mother; Jord or Erda are the Nordic names, but I want to emphasize the fact that we are only a small part of the tremendous cosmic process - Gaia conveys this perspective. Her domains include ecological concerns: the

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FREYA: Freya and brother Frey, fertility deities; Freya comes first, the goddess of procreation; her beneficence, her receptive, feminine aspect of the power of Frey as an essential element will appear. We need both facets to guarantee the seeding and harvesting of crops, but the most complicated organisms need the blessings of Freya in the continuous chain of life. She is the goddess of love - she being the goddess of all love because of love, reminding us that we are not alone while cautioning that love is a

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THE RUNESTONE

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growing awareness of our frivolous waste of non-renewable natural resources, organic farming and gardening, the necessary survival of all living organisms whose life and welfare are vital to the cosmic balance. We are all responsible to Gaia for our actions regarding these matters, for we are each a strand in the cosmic web that encompasses all.

BRAGI: The word-smith, god of poetry, of verbal communication and tribal lore; his concerns include the legends expressing in powerful language folk memories of past events, ancient wisdom and deep-seated instincts. He promotes talents that use words wisely, clearly, without hurt or insult. The instruction of the young carried out with love and understanding, upon which folkish education our tribal destiny depends, is within his powers. Without a growing generation which has a thorough knowledge of the past, an unadorned picture of the present, and a clear vision of the future, our folk will go this way and that, bereft of direction or purpose. The power of Bragi will help clear our minds of all mental cobwebs so we may comprehend the essential and leave all petty considerations behind.

FORSETI: All our activities, however, will count for naught if they are not based solidly upon the powers of this often overlooked god, the god of justice. To Forseti fall the concerns for fair laws that are designed to build communities, to create trust and solidarity among individuals and peoples; laws that will not set one person against another but instead will express a common purpose of communal peace and assure the safety of life and property. Without just laws accepted by common consent no people will remain a folk for long. The activities of all gods and men will have no lasting effect unless they are based on the powers of Forseti.

The more we keep in mind these very real powers of our gods, the easier it will be to use their inspiration and wisdom when we have to make a choice - if we don't, it is all too easy to lose direction and slip into the comfortable but immobilizing habit of sloth. As always, contemplation and will are the first steps to action, but it's the doing that counts. **Hail to the Gods!**

THE CHRIST MYTH By Nicholas Carter

How did Christianity really start? What actually happened in western Asia two thousand years ago? Why did the West reject the ideals of classical civilization for the mysticism, dogma and faith of a Levantine cult?

To find out, read . . . **The Christ Myth**. Written by an Asaman; 192 pp; \$10; available from Steve McNallen/Maddy Hutter, P.O. Box 445, Nevada City, CA 95959.

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We DO

Greetings

By [Name]



don't know when I first began to notice the way Asatruarar end their letters, but I've been delighted by the variety and creativity of those closures for several years now. It occurred to me recently that since I have a privileged position, answering mail from subscribers so long, perhaps it would be fun to share some of my favorites.

Pagans in general and Asatruarar in particular don't start their letters with "Dear" or end them with "Sincerely". Most folks who write begin with "Greetings" or "Heilsa", and that's fine with us, but it is at the letter's end that the fun begins. I don't know how the alternatives originated, but there are hundreds. I've gone so far as to categorize the types! First there are standard praises for the Gods: **Odin Lives!**, **Hail the Gods**, **Freya Smiles**, **Thor Protect**, and so forth. These work well under any conditions.

Also common are "good thoughts" or friendly affirmations. There are plenty of these, too, proving that we really are a warm-hearted and positive bunch: **Go with the Gods**, **Live True, Uff da**, **In the Odinic Destiny!** I'm

We DO read your letters!

Greetings and Salutations

By Maddy Hutter



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always charged up by these cheery testaments.

Seasonal salutations show up pretty regularly, though of course their message is less personal. We all know **Glad Yule** and **Wassail**, but more obscure references suggest a deeper knowledge of the calendar: **Praise Raud on his Day! May the Dark Elves Guard your Burial Mound!**

The warriors among us have their own set of letter closures that clash and strike at us assertively! **Far Heil, Wolf Coats!, Ulf Hedin, By the Hammer**; they all conjure a motif of male strength truly integral to our religious way.

Then there's the kith and kin category: **Hail the Folk! Faith, Folk and Freedom; Heritage, Freedom, and Truth; In Defense of the Kindred**. I'm just giving you a taste here. You can imagine the possibilities.

Finally, there are the rune mystics. They love to close letters with a rune series, significant to them, but incomprehensible to their readers! Some writers do keep things simple with a basic

↑: **Be with You, or Raido!**. Others present complex ideographs with runes worked in together. I'm always impressed, and spend more time working out the runes than I do in answering the letter.

All these letter endings point to our self-reliant individuality. We don't feel tied to rules, and we want to say things in our own way. As the seasons and our moods change, so do our letters. So why stop here? For the entertainment, let's go further and deliberately introduce some creative affirmations that we could use in letters, or skywriting for that matter. How about this for a friend about to embark on a journey? **May Thor's goats guide your chariot.** Before a test or examination? **Hugin and Munin be with you.** For someone in trouble: **Let the new light of Dagaz shine soon;** or perhaps: **Seek Odin, God of Madness, God of Wisdom.**

And of course, for the not so amiable acquaintances (those of you who might consider letting your **Runestone** subscriptions lapse... ? Just a joke folks!): **May the legs of your horse buckle; Let the wind blow always in your face; May Loki pack your chute;** and so on. You can do these for yourself, I'm sure!

In any case, Asa writers, keep up the creativity and imagination. Every mention of our Gods, heroes, values, and runes strengthens their power in the world. Your

letter endings prove your nonconformist attitudes, and they are fun. **Bragi Bless!**



THUNDER FROM THE NORTH

The Way of the Teutonic Warrior
By Stephen McNallen

For those who'd rather be wolves than sheep, this is an exploration of Western martial philosophy (and practical techniques) for today's warrior.

Available from **Steve McNallen and Maddy Hutter**
(\$4) P.O. Box 445, Nevada City, CA 95959

M

RUNE NAME: *Mannaz*

KEY CONCEPTS: A rune of balance and wisdom, *mannaz* combines the human and divine, rationality and intuition, memory and evolution. In this rune lies the organizing principle of the group (brotherhood) and the individual (intelligence).

AFFIRMATION: Mimir's wisdom guides me, for the Gods live in me and in my kin.

Y

Sveinbjorn

1925 CE

He dwells in the mountain...
that circles Grettir's...
Gods are praised...

The life of a single hero...
thing, that one person...

A Book of Uncommon Prayers

Do Asafolk have a Prayer?

Well, if you mean cringing and whining, no. But if you just want to talk to the Gods, you'll find our **Book of Uncommon Prayers** may give wings to your words and words to your deepest thoughts.

This booklet is an inspiration for those who raise the horn but never bend the knee! \$4 available from **Steve McNallen and Maddy Hutter**, P.O. Box 445, Nevada City, CA 95959

Living...
by Stephen...

A Complete Guide to Lively...
Three sections (Asatru at Home;...
Spiral Bound;...
P.O. Box 445, Nevada...

In Memory

Y Sveinbjorn Beinteinsson Y

1925 CE - 1994 CE

He dwells in the mountain with Thor, and on the wind
that circles Grettir's rugged haven, and wherever the
Gods are praised and horns are hefted.

The life of a single hero reminds us, in spite of every-
thing, that one person can make a difference.

A

Book of Uncommon Prayers

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PORTRAITS FROM THE PAST

Men, Gods, and Runes
By Maddy Hutter

A gallery of robust saga characters linked with the Gods and runes that express important lessons for us today. Look deep into these **POR-TRAITS** and find... a reflection of yourself. (Some material previously published in the 1986 Asatru Free Assembly Calendar.) 24 pp, \$4, from *Maddy Hutter and Steve McNallen, P.O.Box 445, Nevada City, CA 95959*

Living Asatru by Stephen McNallen

A Complete Guide to Lively and Informal Celebrations of Asatru.
Three sections (**Asatru at Home; Rites of Linkage; A Year in Midgard**)

Spiral Bound; 52 pages; \$8.00

P.O. Box 445, Nevada City, CA 95959

Moot Point

Moot Point Guidelines: *Although space limitations mean we can't promise to print your letters, and we may have to edit them for length, we do want to offer several pages of **The Runestone** as a forum for discussion, and we hope you'll contribute. Send us your thoughts, addressed to **Moot Point**.*

Heilsa Steve and Maddy!

. . . Here on the Nordic front we are now preparing for our December 18th Yule gathering which will include many activities along with a live 750 lb. boar to set the atmosphere along the proper course. It is Freyja's will! So be it!

. . . We did the interview with Ailo Gaup and it was a great experience. Ailo is a fascinating individual. Until quite recently, I was unaware that his family produced the movie "Pathfinder", an excellent movie that all Asafolk can appreciate. We have not received copies of the interview at this time, but we will send you one once we have copies made. We are doing our part here to promote Asatru as best we can and will keep you up to date on our progress.

By the Hammer of Thor!
"14 words"
Ron McVan

Heilsa Ron!

*Word of Wotan's Kindred's very successful Yule feast has reached us, and we're proud to send you our hearty congratulations! We're looking forward to the tape of Ailo Gaup; Sami shamanism is of great interest to us, and we definitely want to know more. While I haven't seen "Pathfinder", I promise to track it down and review it in a future **Runestone**.*

*Odin Lives!
Steve and Maddy*

Dear Maddy:

Your article "A Visitor to the Desolate Market" (Winter, 1993) really hit home to me. I am currently serving a one year sentence in the

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county workhouse so needless to say, tragedy, isolation and uncertainty. With the recent death of my mother in these harsh times and he has been. Some of his lessons may be hard to it.

Unfortunately, not all of them be job-holding, law-abiding folk, as well as attend college, but sometimes "Kerry the Incurable" for nothing.

Greetings Kerry,

Glad you liked the article. Please do stay with us. . . Best of luck.

Dear Steve,

I need some answers please.

When I butcher my animal, what used for this?

When my son goes from home, what thing we can do with him for the summer?

How do I go about getting a copy of Reinhold Clinton several times. I'll be at Viking Days next year so I'll get a copy.

Interesting that there is a copy of **Yggdrasil** at the local library.

I need more guidance to help me this year this yule.

Heilsa Curtis,

*I've never written a blessing for someone who has, on occasion delivered **de grace** to goats, I can see the need for such a rite. Things to keep in mind: the*

county workhouse so needless to say I have been dealing with grief, tragedy, isolation and uncertainty. Not only with incarceration but also with the recent death of my mother. I have called on the Allfather often in these harsh times and he has always helped me to weather the storm. Some of his lessons may be harsh, but the benefits of growth are worth it.

Unfortunately, not all of us "biking Vikings" are always able to be job-holding, law-abiding folks. But I do try; on the outside I work as well as attend college, but sometimes. . . whoops! Well, they don't call me "Kerry the Incurable" for nothing!

Hail Odin!
Kerry

Greetings Kerry,

Glad you liked the article; Odin's a brutal teacher, but his lessons do stay with us. . . Best of luck within and without the walls!

Æ:
Maddy

Dear Steve,

I need some answers please. . .

When I butcher my animals for meat, is there a blessing to be used for this?

When my son goes from boyhood to manhood, is there a special thing we can do with him for the transition?

How do I go about getting a group together? I've talked with Reinhold Clinton several times but he is five hours away. I'm going to Viking Days next year so I'll get to see more Asafolk.

Interesting that there is a long waiting list for **Leaves of Yggdrasil** at the local library. Must be some interest out there!

I need more guidance to books etc. I've been doing blots for one year this yule.

Hail Odin!
Curtis

Heilsa Curtis,

*I've never written a blessing for the butchering of animals, but as someone who has, on occasion delivered the Norse equivalent of the **coup de grace** to goats, I can see the need for one. I recommend you compose such a rite. Things to keep in mind: the fact that life feeds off life, blood*

as the carrier of the life energy, and the importance of food not just as sustenance but as communal ritual for the family and clan. If you want to get really ceremonial, offer the beast to the Gods, inviting them to share in your meals. In the old days, the animal's blood was drained into a bowl, then sprinkled about to transfer the divine energy to the participants and the surroundings. The symbolism will give you an idea of the concepts underlying sacrifice as practiced by our ancestors. Remember that anything written in poetic form - with alliteration, rhythm, and rhyme - will be especially potent. If you put something together on this, do share it with us!

The rite of passage to manhood should involve temporary isolation in an all male environment, followed by a new status for your boy/man which clearly carries with it new responsibilities and corresponding privileges. Just how far you want to make this overtly religious will depend on your relationship with your son and his acceptance of Asatru. There's been a body of useful information on rites of passage developed by the men's movement, and I'd suggest taking a look at it.

We're working on the issue of groups. Look in our next issue.
Steve

Continued from Page 11

Even Ragnar Lodbrok Day, March 28th, has a link with the seemingly more pastoral and peaceful themes of this season. After all, it was then-Easter Sunday in the year 845 C.E. - that this most renowned of viking chieftains attacked Paris and sacked three churches, among other things. If liveliness, and a forceful assertion of one's existence, are key elements in the spirit of spring, then Ragnar's feistiness has as much to do with this time of year as do the greening meadows. Sumarsdag/Sigrblot share this aggressive, power-oriented aspect of life's renewal, focusing as they do on the extroverted life of the ancient vikings.

With Walburg/May Day we are back to a more comprehensive, and more traditional, interpretation of the mysteries of this season. Oh, to be sure, the complexities of Walburg go far beyond blooming flowers, diving into the secrets of death and rebirth as they apply to the individual - but the ideas of germination, transformation, and rebirth are all there.

The surging life force, then, permeates this time of year, from Olvir's Day of Remembrance to the somber, then joyous, observances of Walburg and its odd twin, May Day. Common throughout is the idea of connection - our connection as a Folk with the soil, and the sun, and the flowing forces unseen around us. By honoring the Gods and heroes, we *participate* in the grand drama, both celebrating and bringing to pass, as our ancestors did for millenia before us.

(Calendar continued from front cover)

April 9 - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE. Hakon restored the worship of the Christian kings. Recall his untimely works, or by vigorously exercising your Rights.

April 15 - SUMARSDAG/SIGRBLOT. In the Icelandic calendar. It falls on the day to Odin, for success in the coming months, and make an offering to the gods.

April 30 - WALBURG. This is the day who sleep in the burial mound, and liberation to the bold ones awaiting death will live beyond you.

May 1 - MAY DAY. From the goddess May Day. Think on Freya, take a friend.

May 9 - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE. A martyr spoke out against the tyrants and urged others to resist. For the Asa-friend today - use your imagination.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

You mentioned certain virtues in Asatru. What are these?

We believe in strength, loyalty to kin, realism, vigor. Virtue consists of expressing these and striving to do this. Their opposites are dogmatism and the like - virtues and minimizing one's own.

This code of conduct reflects the heroic ideals of our people.

(Calendar continued from front cover)

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

You mentioned certain standards of behavior taught in Asatru. What are these?

We believe in strength, courage, joy, honor, freedom, loyalty to kin, realism, vigor, and honoring our ancestors. Virtue consists of expressing these things in our lives, and we strive to do this. Their opposites - weakness, cowardice, dogmatism and the like - are vices and are to be avoided. Proper behavior in Asatru consists of maximizing one's virtues and minimizing one's vices.

This code of conduct reflects the highest and most heroic ideals of our people.

- adapted from *What is Asatru?*
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