

SPRING 1995

NUMBER 11

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 mail, payable to Stephen A. McNallen.

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.

Submissions of articles are invited. Deadlines are as follows:

Spring - January 15  
Fall - July 15

Summer - April 15  
Winter - October 15

Cover Art: Thanks to Ron McVan

## CALENDAR

**MARCH 9 - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR OLVIR.** Olvir was a Norwegian who organized sacrifices to the Gods in defiance of King Olaf Trygvasson. When Olaf caught him planning Ostara celebrations, he killed him. Olvir's 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

The past three months have been wonderfully chaotic. As much as I have complained in the ear of anyone who will hold still long enough, it has been exciting to watch the Asatru Folk Assembly take shape before our eyes. Trying to activate all these systems at once has been frustrating, but I know we are building something that can make a difference - a big difference - in the years to come.

With this issue of THE RUNESTONE we are continuing the forward march. First comes an article on the "Declaration of Purpose" of the Asatru Folk Assembly. It is designed to say just who we are and what we will accomplish. We hope you will like it - and actively throw your support behind it.

Elsewhere, in "News from the AFA!", you'll find an update on all the systems we have put into place to achieve those goals, from membership to guilds to leadership training. More pieces will be added to this structure, but the general shape is there and the whole thing is functioning.

But there's more than just organizational chat here. Try "Staudicca" for sheer inspiration - who better than the queen of the

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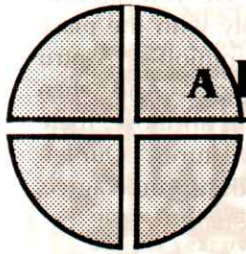
Iceni to fill us with fighting spirit? How about "Drengskapr" for thoughts on right conduct and nobility of spirit? Or you can connect more deeply with the place you live with Gunthiof's "Asatru and Sense of Place." And when you're done with all those, there are our regular features. Our letters section, we think you'll agree, is spicier than usual!

These are exciting times, and this issue is a reflection of that ferment. We have a destiny - let's live it!

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## WHERE the AFA is GOING --



### A DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

Every organization must have a clear vision of where it is going and what it will do when it gets there. It's easy to say that the purpose of a religious body is to practice its religion, and of course that's true - as far as it goes. But every faith, from Christianity to Wicca, carries with it a view of the world which suggests many things other than ritual and devotion. In general, Christians want a world brotherhood under Jesus, where they would be able to feed, clothe, and house the needy. Many Wiccans desire a social order featuring ecological awareness, nonviolence, a greater emphasis on the female principle, and (again) world brotherhood. These are generalizations, of course, but I believe they are fair ones.

We Asatruar, too, need a clear image of just what we want. While the Asatru Folk Assembly obviously cannot speak for all who follow the Gods and Goddesses, we feel that the following declaration is a decent indication of the kind of world we would like to see - one of vigor and delight, of exploration and true diversity, of ideals and their concrete expression in people's lives. But let it speak for itself. Here are the purposes to which the energy of the Asatru Folk Assembly will be directed:

#### **THE PRACTICE, PROMOTION, DEVELOPMENT, AND DISSEMINATION OF THE RELIGION OF ASATRU:**

We are a religious organization dedicated to practicing and spreading Asatru. Furthermore, since that religion lives and grows, its development is a continuing process.

#### **THE PRESERVATION OF THE PEOPLES OF THE NORTH (TYPIFIED BY THE SCANDINAVIAN/GERMANIC AND CELTIC PEOPLES), AND THE FURTHERANCE OF THEIR CONTINUING EVOLUTION:**

Ours is an ancestral religion, one passed down from ancient times, and thus tailored to us. It is inherent in us as a people. If the People of the North were to lose their Asatru, it would be no longer. It is our will to thrive, and continue our upward evolution to infinity.

#### **THE ISSUANCE OF A CALL TO ALL BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE PEOPLES OF THE NORTH TO RECLAIM THIS, THEIR NATIVE RELIGION AND CULTURE:**

We would impose Asatru on no one. But we would urge those whose heritage it is, to return to the beliefs and practices of their ancestors as blood and bone.

#### **THE RESTORATION OF COMMUNITY AMONG THE PEOPLES OF THE NORTH, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JUST RELATIONS AMONG NATIONS:**

Our ancestors had religious and social ties that gave them a feeling of continuity and community, and a sense of mutual rights. We can and will reestablish these ties. Let us have an "Ingathering of the Tribes" where we can meet and share our common heritage.

#### **THE PURSUIT OF HARMONIOUS RELATIONS AMONG ALL BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE PEOPLES OF THE NORTH, REGARDLESS OF THE NATION OF THEIR ORIGIN, AND THE AVOIDANCE OF FRATICIDAL WARS:**

The tragedy of war is worst when kinsmen fight. We are not served by brother-slayings, and the limits of survival and sensibility, such as they are, are not served by brother-slayings, and the limits of survival and sensibility, such as they are, are not served by brother-slayings.

#### **THE PROMOTION OF DIVERSITY AMONG THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH, AND THE AVOIDANCE OF GLOBAL MONOCULTURE:**

Ours is an ancestral religion, one passed down to us from our forebears from ancient times, and thus tailored to our unique makeup. Its spirit is inherent in us as a people. If the People of the North ceased to exist, Asatru would be no longer. It is our will that we not only survive, but thrive, and continue our upward evolution in the direction of the Infinite.

**THE ISSUANCE OF A CALL TO ALL OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH TO RETURN TO THIS, THEIR NATIVE RELIGION AND WAY OF LIFE.**

We would impose Asatru on no one. But we earnestly invite those whose heritage it is, to return to the belief that is a part of them as surely as blood and bone.

**THE RESTORATION OF COMMUNITY, THE BANISHMENT OF ALIENATION, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATURAL AND JUST RELATIONS AMONG OUR PEOPLE:**

Our ancestors had religious and social folkways that gave them a feeling of continuity and community, yet jealously preserved individual rights. We can and will reestablish this natural order among our people. Let us have an "Ingathering of the Folk"!

**THE PURSUIT OF HARMONIOUS RELATIONS AMONG OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH, REGARDLESS OF THE NATION OF THEIR BIRTH, AND THE AVOIDANCE OF FRATICIDAL WARS:**

The tragedy of war is worst when kinsmen fight each other. The Gods are not served by brother-slayings, and the Folk is weakened. Within the limits of survival and sensibility, such fratricide must be avoided.

**THE PROMOTION OF DIVERSITY AMONG THE PEOPLES AND CULTURES OF THE EARTH, IN OPPOSITION TO GLOBAL MONOCULTURE:**

The world should not be one uniform, unvarying mass. All peoples should be allowed to be different, to relish that difference, and to work out their own destinies. Only in our uniqueness can our respective Gods fully manifest.

**THE FOSTERING IN OUR PEOPLE OF A DEEP LOVE OF FREEDOM AND A HATRED OF ALL FORMS OF TYRANNY:**

Asatru implies strong, vigorous, free people who do not grovel before other humans, the state, or the Gods themselves. Our Gods are not slavemasters, but rather want us to grow in freedom and responsibility that we may better imitate them.

**THE USE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR THE WELL-BEING OF OUR PEOPLE, WHILE PROTECTING AND WORKING IN HARMONY WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH WE LIVE:**

Technology and science are part of our intellectual inheritance, and we can use them to make life better for ourselves and our children. However, greater freedom has the price of greater responsibility. We must use our abilities wisely, keeping the balance of the natural world from which we sprang.

**THE EXPLORATION OF THE UNIVERSE, IN KEEPING WITH THE ADVENTUROUS IMPERATIVES OF OUR KIND:**

We are a wide-faring Folk. Odin is a wanderer, and those who follow our Gods have typically been horizon-seekers. The longship has been replaced by the spaceship and the electron microscope, but the spiritual exploration remains the same.

**...AND THE AFFIRMATION OF THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE AND STRIFE OF LIFE, THE WELCOMING OF THAT STRIFE AS A CHALLENGE, THE LIVING OF LIFE WHOLELY AND WITH JOY, AND THE FACING OF ETERNITY WITH COURAGE.**

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# N · E · W · S

*From the AFA !*

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Since the last issue of **THE RUNESTONE**, the fledgling AFA has been busier than Harald Handrada at Stamford Bridge. Unlike Harald, however, we seem to be winning our battle, or at least gaining ground in our determined assault!

In short, we've been forced to create the infrastructure of the AFA all at once. It's a little like building the roof, walls, and foundation of a house, simultaneously. Challenging, to say the least! Luckily, we're not exactly starting from scratch - we have the old framework of the Asatru Free Assembly for building material, which we're arranging in new and exciting ways. Here are some of the things happening:

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the AFA is available for those who feel truly committed to what we are doing. Several steps are involved. First, request an information packet. You can get one from us here. It includes the defining

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### MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the AFA is available for those who feel truly committed to what we are doing. Several steps are involved. First, request an information packet. You can get one from us for \$2. It includes the defining

documents of the AFA and a membership application. Read the material carefully, and if you agree with what you see, fill out the application and send it in. This makes you a probationary member. After one year, if all goes well, you can become a full member of the AFA. During this trial period, we will check each other out. What do you have to offer us? What can we do for you?

Membership dues are \$25 per year, which includes your subscription to **THE RUNESTONE**. If you're already a subscriber, we'll extend your issues accordingly.

### GUILDS

A guild is a group of people within the AFA who come together to practice a particular art or skill, or to advance their interest in some subject. There are several requirements for guilds: They must be appropriate to the aims and ends of the Asatru Folk Assembly, they must stir enough interest to make them viable organizations, they must serve the AFA in some way, whether it be brewing better mead or expanding our knowledge of runes or teaching us to grow more productive gardens.

Guild officers must be AFA members, but the guild itself may be open to Asafolk in general, depending on the nature of the guild and the wishes of the Guildmaster.

If you want to start a guild, write us and tell us what you have in mind. We'll send you a copy of our "Guild Guidelines".

**Here's an update on currently functioning, or forthcoming, AFA endeavors:**

**The Warrior Guild** is accepting inquiries from interested persons. The WG is neither a paramilitary unit, a male drumming and hugging society, nor an offshoot of the Society for Creative Anachronism. We encourage the development of warrior skills and warrior spirituality by our members. The WG is open only to AFA members. For information, write to Steve McNallen here at THE RUNESTONE.

**The Computer Guild** is organizing AFA members with experience and interests in: archiving, BBS operation, business, computer communication, data entry, email correspondence, Internet activities, network administration, programming, security, synthetic intelligence, writing, and the acquisition of hardware and software. Contact them via THE RUNESTONE.

**The Aerospace Technology Guild's** goal is to stimulate an awareness and interest in the aerospace sciences among Asafolk, particularly the youth. Other tasks are to collect information, to investigate the feasibility of AFA involvement in space industry, and to explore space travel's religious implications. The ATG is open to non-AFA members. Write to Steve McNallen at THE RUNESTONE for details.

**The Organic Gardening Guild** exists to encourage Asafolk to grow vegetable, herb, and decorative gardens. Cathy Clinton is Guildmaster, and although she's new to the field, she has all the dedication of the newly-converted green thumb. Write her at 379 N.E. Winters Road, Camas, WA 98607 and she'll tell you all about it.

**The Teaching Guild** is designed for those who want to homeschool their children, rather than the tender mercies of the Establishment's educational training. It's also a resource and refuge for teachers. [As a teacher myself, I can testify to the value! - Editor.] Contact Ragnar Schuett, THE RUNESTONE.

**Seithr Guild...** If you want to explore states of consciousness and the Otherworld, work with animals, and focus spiritual energy towards the future, contact: Ragnar Schuett, P.O. Box 276, THE RUNESTONE.

**NEW CLERGY/LEADERSHIP**

We need a program to train our leaders. We will use the titles gothi and gythja, meaning "priest" and "priestess" respectively. The terms usually imply secular leadership; these were capable of doing things, and also took charge of ritual activities.

A gothi/gythja course has been designed. It involves a program of study under a designated teacher for one year. Prospective students must be at least 18 years old, and must have the endorsement of three current members. The cost is \$125 for the course, excluding texts, postage, and other expenses.

**KINDREDS**

We are producing a booklet to aid those who are new AFA kindreds. Since we hardly even have our own membership, this doesn't seem like a high priority. Nevertheless, we are moving forward on this, as we know that kindreds around the country have expressed an interest in it.

You can see that we have come a long way since the formation of the AFA was proposed three short years ago. We will continue to work for further developments - and better yet, to make history!



**The Teaching Guild** is designed to serve the needs of Asafolk who want to homeschool their children, rather than turn them over to the tender mercies of the Establishment for the "proper" ideological training. It's also a resource and refuge for Asatruar who are teachers. [As a teacher myself, I can testify to the need for a guild like this one! - Editor.] Contact Ragnar Schuett, P.O. Box 2366, Loveland, CO 80539.

**Seithr Guild**...If you want to explore the limitless boundaries of consciousness and the Otherworlds, connect with totem animals; and focus spiritual energy towards the well-being of our Folk, contact: Ragnar Schuett, P.O. Box 2366, Loveland, CO 80539.

#### **AFA CLERGY/LEADERSHIP**

We need a program to train our leaders. In the old days, our folk used the titles gothi and gythja, meaning roughly "priest" and "priestess" respectively. The terms usually implied both religious and secular leadership; these were capable people who could get things done, and also took charge of ritual observances.

A gothi/gythja course has been designed for the AFA. It involves a program of study under a designated tutor, and should last about a year. Prospective students must be at least probationary AFA members, and must have the endorsement of their sponsor. There is a cost of \$125 for the course, excluding texts, payable in installments.

#### **KINDREDS**

We are producing a booklet to aid those of you who wish to form AFA kindreds. Since we hardly even have the apparatus in place for membership, this doesn't seem like our number one priority. Nonetheless, we are moving forward on this, as several independent kindreds around the country have expressed an interest in affiliating with us.

You can see that we have come a long way since the formation of the AFA was proposed three short months ago. Stay tuned for further developments - and better yet, pitch in and help us make history!

# Drengskapr

## A Code of Honor by Stephen McNallen

Christ's disciples wanted to know how to pray, and their master gave them the Lord's Prayer. Asatruar, on the other hand, want to know how to live - and the answer from Asgard is not a prayer for the bended knee, but rather a code for the fearless and fair: *drengskapr*, in the ancient tongue of the Northlands.

To understand this concept, we have first to grasp the root word from which it springs. A *dreng* was a gallant lad, a young man who was a member of a warrior band or some other relatively small group where one had to be able to depend on others for livelihood or even for life itself. The ship's crew, the merchant guild, the military unit - all these were examples of this tightly knit in-group. From the nature of these bands, we can infer a lot about what *drengskapr* must have been in the days of our ancestors, and what it must be to us today.

The *dreng* must be strong and courageous, but that pretty much goes without saying. These were expected during the Viking Age. Beyond bravery, there were other traits, most of which seem to revolve around how the individual related to the others in the group. Honesty, even to the point of bluntness, was preferred because in the war band or the ship's crew there was no place for hidden animosities that might boil over at a crucial moment and bring disaster to all. Likewise, a certain cheerfulness or at least a stoic acceptance of hardship helped to maintain morale when times were tough - when the group's endeavors were not prospering, when the ship had to be hauled over long portages, or when rations were short. Generosity, always admired in Norse society, was even more important for the *dreng*. One who shared with his fellows - a meal, a knife, a bowstring - furthered the survival of all.

All of these characteristics spring from the dynamic of small teams surrounded with threats to their safety and success. The idea of *drengskapr* uses these very practical survival traits as a springboard to a larger nobility, a highness of mind, the opposite of all that is lowly or niggardly or petty. It is contrary to the viking stereotype of a cruel, blood-soaked savage with no moral code. True, not every viking followed the high standards of the *dreng*, but the ideal was there, and all could aspire to it.

*Drengskapr* implies certain duties to a friend, but also to a foe. The Germanic tribesmen amazed the Roman soldiers by picking them up and dusting them off after a skirmish. Today, we might well consider this as going too far; the survival of the group has to be considered. But it does raise the question of just what we owe our enemies.

## A TIP OF THE HORN

A TIP OF THE HORN to Harry Harrison, for writing *The Hammer and the Cross* (Tor Fantasy, 1994). In case you haven't read it, this is a novel that asks what might have happened if the Asatruar, and not the Christians, had won in Northern Europe. Set at the time when Ragnar's sons were invading England, *The Hammer and the Cross* is a gripping action tale which champions the ideals of Asatru. It's highly recommended!

AND THE OTHER TIP OF THE HORN - - -



The Christians say we should love our enemies. We don't owe them love - but we owe them respect. The valor and skill of our ancestors honor them in return.

In the mainstream culture which surrounds us, we can find vestiges of it in the football team and the police officer. We live in a world that has turned its back on noble values and may have to await tougher times, when the emphasis may be more a part of daily life. And it may be that we need a special group, an adventurous elite. But what is the model of fairness, generosity, and bravery? How do we live as we go about our lives each day?

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A TIP OF THE HORN to Harry Harrison, for writing The Hammer and the Cross (Tor Fantasy, 1994). In case you haven't read it, this is a novel that asks what might have happened if the Asatruar, and not the Christians, had won in Northern Europe. Set at the time when Ragnar's sons were invading England, The Hammer and the Cross is a gripping action tale which champions the ideals of Asatru. It's highly recommended!



AND THE OTHER TIP OF THE HORN to the entire Mexican government, for their campaign to defeat Proposition 187 here in California and for their aggressive boosting of the illegal alien cause. As European-Americans, we note that from January through October 1994, Mexico deported 60,000 aliens. That's 55% more than the United States deported in the same period.

AND THE OTHER TIP  
OF THE HORN...



The Christians say we should love our enemies, and this is where they go wrong. We don't owe them love - but we owe them respect in the measure they deserve it. The valor and skill of our foes does us honor, and we should honor them in return.

In the mainstream culture which surrounds us, drengskapr is rare. You can find vestiges of it in the football team and the Army unit, but in general we live in a world that has turned its back on noble conduct. Its widespread revival may have to await tougher times, when the exigencies that called it into being are once more a part of daily life. And it may be that drengskapr was always for a special group, an adventurous elite. But who can deny that our world needs this model of fairness, generosity, and bravery? And where can it start, if not with us, as we go about our lives each day?

*"Boudicca! Boudicca! Boudicca!" chanted the warriors, shaking spears aloft and grimacing with freshly-painted faces as their red-mailed ruler worked them into a frenzy of hatred for their Roman overlords...*

You'll be cheering, too, after watching Boudicca: Queen of the Iceni, produced by Castle Communications of England.

This video is packed with information, much of it delivered in the form of spirited battle reenactments. Castle Communications seems to have free access to "living museums" and historical societies whose members bash at each other with Iron Age weapons. The result is an excellent production that will entertain as much as it educates.

It's true; we seldom review videos in THE RUNESTONE. But this one hits some really big philosophical points - the folk against the state, freedom versus bondage, Gods of the North against Mediterranean deities grown degenerate and overcivilized. Beyond that, it pulls at the heart. And why shouldn't it? Surely we can see some of our own predicament in the sad tale of the Iceni-led uprising against the power of Rome.

This story is one which was movingly told in Pauline Gedge's novel, The Eagle and the Raven. The Celts are invaded, then oppressed, and resistance is disorganized. The whole saga of rallying the tribes, with all its setbacks, glory, and ultimate tragedy, is a tale

# BOU DICCA

## Queen of the Iceni

By Stephen McNallen



for our own time. Is it any coincidence that it is the Roman confiscation of weapons that pushed a proud people over the line into open revolt? Is the slickness, the honeyed compromise of Roman advance any different from the modern politician pushing the America-destroying agenda?

I don't remember who first made the observation that when Rome collapsed, its blood-stained mantle was picked up by the Church. The Christian establishment became the new Rome, and we tribes have fought ever since we attempt to retain bits of our native freedoms. Today, the modern state carries the Roman

role - and the spirit of the original Roman domination.

We must resist. We must resist our own gods, and we have lost every man from the world other than the new Rome.

lose our identity in the same nightmare of the

Some would say in resisting, and pointing proof. To be sure, the loss paid for losing was great. We were being bested in the Romans time, money, and regions never conquered. We never quite subjugated. We have Boudicca and her

Videos like this purpose beyond mere entertainment is guaranteed to show the resistance in your heart.

*dicca!" chanted the warriors, shaking  
rcefully-painted faces as their red-maned  
hatred for their Roman overlords...*

# Boudicca

## the Iceni

by McNallen



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eathen freedoms. To-  
ate shares the Roman

role - and, increasingly, we face  
the spectre of a controlling, ho-  
mogeneous, supranational gov-  
ernment that aspires to world  
domination.

We tribalists will continue  
to resist. Although we fight for  
our own people, our own ances-  
tors, and our own descendents,  
we have beside us tribalists of  
every race and religion, living  
from one end of the Earth to the  
other. All of us are threatened by  
the new Romans; all of us would  
lose our identity in the produce-and-con-  
sume nightmare of the New World Order.

Some would say that there is no use  
in resisting, and point to Boudicca's defeat as  
proof. To be sure, the Iceni lost, and the price  
paid for losing was great. But even as they  
were being bested in battle, they cost the  
Romans time, money, and troops. The le-  
gions never conquered all the British Isles,  
never quite subjugated all the Celts, and we  
have Boudicca and her warriors to thank.

Videos like this one serve a noble  
purpose beyond mere education. Boudicca  
is guaranteed to stoke the fires of folkish  
resistance in your heart. I recommend it.

# Hengist, Horsa, and THOMAS JEFFERSON

By Stephen A. McNallen

The following excerpt from page 109 of The World of Washington Irving, by Van Wyck Brooks (E.P. Dutton and Company, 1944) is relevant to the often-heard assertion that the spirit of American government derives from the Bible:



Hengist

"In his youth, [Thomas Jefferson] had studied Anglo-Saxon, and while he also followed the suggestions of Montesquieu, Locke and various others, he based his affirmation of human rights on the laws of the Saxon forefathers. For he found that the Anglo-Saxons, when they settled in England, were fully aware of the natural rights of man and that their common law proclaimed the principles of liberty which he proposed to vindicate as a racial birthright. They had established these principles indeed before Christianity

appeared in England, and Jefferson conceived American freedom as a restoration on a new soil of the 'happy system of our ancestors,' as he called it. This was the reason why, as John

Adams remembered later, Jefferson's seal of the country should bear the names of Hengist and Horsa [The Saxon people in England]."

The errors of the last century have done havoc on this ideal, but the original inspiration was inspired by Asatru and Asatru.

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by Stephen A. McNallen

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today's warrior. (\$4)

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Continued on next page

Adams remembered later, Jefferson suggested that the great seal of the country should bear on one side the images of Hengist and Horsa [The Saxon leaders who settled their people in England]."

The errors of the last couple of centuries have wrought havoc on this ideal, but the original design of America was one inspired by Asatru and Asafolk!



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NEVADA CITY, CA 95959



RUNE NAME: Laguz

**KEY CONCEPTS:** Laguz is the dark and mirroring lake of the unconscious, through which we move to light and to initiation. It is also the springing waters of life, the primordial energy animating us and all the world. Repository of the past, might for the present, laguz is the water on which the ship of the spirit sails.

**AFFIRMATION:** I will dive down deep to find my soul. From the waters of chaos comes life.

PLACE  
PLACE  
PLACE

## ASATRU and

# A SENSE OF PLACE

By Gunthioff

There has been mention in recent issues of **THE RUNESTONE** of several books which are relevant to Asatru and to a Northern philosophy, even though superficially they might have nothing to do with Asatru. Another such book is A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold, written way back in 1949. In his chapter entitled "Wilderness," Leopold makes a statement which hits the nail right on the head:

*"Wilderness was never a homogeneous raw material. It was very diverse, and the resulting artifacts are very diverse. These differences in the end-product are known as cultures. The rich diversity of the world's cultures reflects a corresponding diversity in the wilds that gave them birth."*

*"For the first time in the history of the human species, two changes are now impending. One is the exhaustion of wilderness in the more habitable portions of the globe. The other is the world-wide hybridization of cultures through modern transport and industrialization."*

If this strikes a chord with many of you, it should. The developing global monoculture is going hand in hand with the destruction of wilderness, because it was the diversity of nature which gave birth to the diversity of cultures in the first place. Once again, this may not seem to have anything to do with Asatru, but consider that our ancestors' relationships with the Gods were intertwined with their relationship to nature. No, I am not talking about fuzzy-wuzzy New Age thinking here, complete with crystal worship and the like, but a very real relationship our ancestors had with nature. Thor, for example, was often represented by thunder and lightning; Frey by rain; Ullr by snow and bitter cold; and Odin by a strong wind. Consider that Christianity ripped our ancestors out of their nature-based culture, and stuck them in an alien system which promoted a fear and hatred of the very natural forces which were equated with the Gods.

Returning to the worship of the ancient Gods of our folk is an obvious step in the right direction; another is to regain a sense of place within nature. I recently saw a helpful quiz entitled "Where Are You At?"

See if you can answer the following questions:

1. Trace the water you drink from precipitation.
2. How many days are there until the next snow?
3. What soil series are you standing on?
4. What was the total rainfall in your area?
5. When was the last time a wildfire burned in your area?
6. What were the primary subsistence activities of the people that lived in your area before you?
7. Name five edible plants in your region based on their availability.
8. From what direction do winter storms come in your region?
9. Where does your garbage go?
10. How long is the growing season where you live?
11. On what day of the year are the shadows longest?
12. When do the deer rut in your region? What is the sex ratio of the born?
13. Name five grasses in your area. How are they used?
14. Name five resident and five migratory birds in your area.
15. What is the land use history of where you live?
16. What primary geological event/ process/ feature shaped the form where you live? What's the evidence?
17. What species have become extinct in your area?
18. What are the major plant associations in your area?
19. From where you're reading this, what is the wind direction?
20. What spring wildflower is consistently in bloom where you live?

### SCORING

- 101 Hello! Time to wake up!
- 107 It's hard to be in two places at once where you live.
- 112 A fairly firm grasp of the obvious.
- 118 You're paying attention.
- 124 You know where you're at.
- 131 You not only know where you're at, you know why.

Difficult? In our fast-food global monoculture, we've lost track of not only *who* we are, but *where* we are. We're already on the way back to where it's at. The more you know, the more you approach, don't run inside cursing the weather. Call on Asa Thor! Get to know the seasons and the land. You will not only find yourself closer to nature, but that you have transcended another set of boundaries on us.



See if you can answer the following questions and then score yourself:

1. Trace the water you drink from precipitation to tap.
2. How many days are there until the moon is full?
3. What soil series are you standing on?
4. What was the total rainfall in your area last year?
5. When was the last time a wildfire burned in your area?
6. What were the primary subsistence techniques of the culture that lived in your area before you?
7. Name five edible plants in your region and their season(s) of availability.
8. From what direction do winter storms generally come in your region?
9. Where does your garbage go?
10. How long is the growing season where you live?
11. On what day of the year are the shadows shortest where you live?
12. When do the deer rut in your region, and when are the young born?
13. Name five grasses in your area. Are any of them native?
14. Name five resident and five migratory birds in your area.
15. What is the land use history of where you live?
16. What primary geological event/process influenced the land form where you live? What's the evidence?
17. What species have become extinct in your area?
18. What are the major plant associations in your area?
19. From where you're reading this, point north.
20. What spring wildflower is consistently among the first to bloom where you live?

#### SCORING

- 0-3 Hello! Time to wake up!
- 4-7 It's hard to be in two places at once when you're not anywhere at all.
- 8-12 A fairly firm grasp of the obvious.
- 13-16 You're paying attention.
- 17-19 You know where you're at.
- 20 You not only know where you're at, you know where IT'S at!

Difficult? In our fast-food global monoculture we have completely lost track of not only *who* we are, but *where* we are. As Asafolk, we are already on the way back to where it's at. The next time a thunderstorm approaches, don't run inside cursing the weather. Stand outside and raise a horn to Asa Thor! Get to know the seasons and cycles of nature in your area. You will not only find yourself closer to our Gods, but you also will find that you have transcended another set of artificial limits our society places on us.



## "Oak Thorgeir"

by Valgard Murray

### in Asatru

Steve Schless was born on Yule 19, 2212 Runic Era - that's December 19, 1952, for the non-initiated - in Montreal, Canada. While still an infant, his parents moved to Connecticut where he grew up and went to school. After graduation he pursued his career in the outdoors. While working in a leading retail store which sold sporting equipment, he also started his own business, know as Mountainman Sports, where he taught climbing skills to the adventurous.

At an early age he was attracted to our ancestral Gods, and while reading a copy of Thor comics noticed a letter to the editor written by Carleen Volden, mentioning the existence of Thor-worshippers in the Asatru Alliance. Steve contacted me, and I invited him to Althing 8, hosted by the Asatru Alliance. There we became friends, and I utilized his enthusiastic help with World Tree Publications at the Althing. After the Thing, we continued to correspond. He and some friends founded Vinland Kindred, which has been a solid member Kindred of the Alliance ever since.

While at Althing 10 in Ohio, Steve asked me if I would bestow an Asatru name on him. After careful thought that weekend, I and Alice Karlsdottir adopted Steve as our foster son in Asatru and gave him the name of Oak Thorgeir, which he has used with honor and pride ever since.

Oak worked tirelessly to build Asatru in his home state. He was empowered by the Thing to act as our goodwill ambassador to Ragnar Thorseth, commander of the viking fleet visiting Newport, Rhode Island in 2241 R.E. (1991). After a lively discussion about Asatru in Vinland, Oak presented Ragnar with a bottle of Valgard's mead as a goodwill gift. Oak and Thor Sannhet visited with the crews of the three magnificent viking ships, as decribed in Vor Tru #42.

In the summer of 2243 R.E. (1993), Oak moved to Payson, Arizona where he said he "could be with family." I invited him to stay with us until he could get a good job and find a home of his own. During his stay I taught him the many chores required to maintain the outreach ministry of World Tree - printing, collating, binding, dubbing tapes, making chains for Hammers, as well as filling orders and answering mail. Keeping this ministry going takes a lot of help, and Oak is the person for the job.

## BEES & PIECES

Did you see the article on Egil Skallagrimsson in the January Scientific American? It was a nice little piece by Jesse Black, who's written quite a bit on old Icelandic literature. His argument, based on a close reading of the sagas, is that Egil had something called Paget's disease. For Asafolk, the implication is clear: The sagas can contain accurate detail about events that happened long before they were written down.

Looking for traditional musical instruments? From bagpipes to bodhrans and flutes to fiddles, you can get them from Lark in the Morning, a musical shop located in Mendocino, California. Call them at (707)964-5569, or fax to (707)964-1979.

At kindred gatherings he can be depended on to take at hand, and he never complains or complains. Anyone who has organized gatherings knows the value, and how important it is to have willing help. He is a part of the Althings, where I place him in charge of conducting the Viking Games.

I am proud to have him as a friend.  
Hail, Oak Thorgeir!

# BITS & PIECES

Did you see the article on Egil Skallagrimsson in the January Scientific American? It was a nice little piece by Jesse Byock, who's written quite a lot on old Icelandic literature. His argument, based on a close reading of the sagas, is that Egil had something called Paget's disease. For Asafolk, the implication is clear: The sagas can contain accurate detail about events that happened long before they were written down.

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Three cheers and still another to the **Odinist Prison Project**, P.O. Box 6088, Harrisburg, PA 17112-0088. They have put together a very well done informational packet for prisons, with the idea of getting recognition for Odinists/Asafolk behind bars. Thanks to the efforts of people like them, the prisoner scene in Asatru is not nearly what it was a few years back. Credit also goes to Else Christensen, for her years of patient work in the prisons, for bringing about this transformation.

The AFA needs a **lawyer** who is willing to donate his or her services to the cause. A knowledge of California law is essential. If you are an attorney, or if you can fix us up with one, don't hesitate!

Runestar is a new publication with a stimulating blend of runes, shamanism, & astrology. We don't have room to review it in this issue, but you may order a sample copy (\$2) from The Runestar, 205 Durban Ave., Hopatcong, NJ 07843.

At kindred gatherings he can be depended on to help with the many tasks at hand, and he never complains or shirks his duty at gatherings. Anyone who has organized gatherings knows how many things have to be done, and how important it is to have willing and skilled hands. This includes the Althings, where I place him in charge of setting up and conducting the Viking Games.

I am proud to have him as a friend and foster son.  
Hail, Oak Thorgeir!

# Moot Point

This issue's "Moot Point" is particularly entertaining. In one letter, I have to defend myself for being "racist;" in the other, for not being "racist" enough! I don't know whether to laugh or cry! Actually, I am not interested in "defending" myself (I much prefer the offense!) - but I will state my position clearly for all to see.

Hailsa Steve!

...I also make the modest proposal that we drop the race issue on the grounds that it is ultimately unnecessary...I don't think the white race is dying. We've expanded tremendously at others' expense over the past 500 years. It had to end, at least temporarily, sooner or later, so why not now? The present "retreat" could be just a minor twist in our collective Wyrd. Nevertheless, moves by countries such as France to increase its birthrate and limit immigration from countries with very different cultures are appropriate. So much for the race problem...

Wassail!

Jordsvin

Heilsa, Friend of the Earth!

...I personally believe that Eurofolk are in danger of extinction within, say, the next century or so. Without getting too involved, or writing a treatise on demographics, here are some of the facts that have led me to this dreary conclusion:

(1) Throughout Europe, the White population is not reproducing itself - that is, we are shrinking in absolute numbers as well as a percentage of the whole. The only exceptions that spring to mind are Ireland and perhaps Iceland. With the legalization of abortion in Ireland, that, too may change.

(2) Similarly, the White population in the United States is shrinking. Chin Long Chiang, a health statistician at the University of California at Berkeley, says our numbers are decreasing at the rate of 3.6 % per decade.

(3) In California, according to a study by demographer Leon Bouvier, the percentage of "White, non-Hispanics" may reach 34% within 25 years. This is NOT his extreme scenario, I might add.

(4) Perhaps as worrisome as the possibility that the average White person grows to be replaced in our homelands by other peoples. China remains overwhelmingly Asian. I mentioned the United States in general, and "What's theirs is theirs, and what's ours is ours." When the Chinese settle millions of people there become a minority, that is commendable. (And rightly so; I have actively assisted in this.) Whites are being overwhelmed in their own lands, except it.

(5) The Dutchman's comment that we are replaced in our homelands by other peoples. China remains overwhelmingly Asian. I mentioned the United States in general, and "What's theirs is theirs, and what's ours is ours." When the Chinese settle millions of people there become a minority, that is commendable. (And rightly so; I have actively assisted in this.) Whites are being overwhelmed in their own lands, except it.

There is a point at which Whites will be a minority. What will it be like when we are less than 10%? Fantasy? On the contrary, it will be a nightmare.

Dear Runestone:

...I am very disappointed to see you mention a non-White as in the letter section of Wyrd.

Either we are exclusive or we are inclusive. We are a part of Western civilization trying to play by its rules, though we are supposed to be exclusive. It is our race, religions, and the future of our civilization.

Never mind what the White supremacists say that should not drive you to embrace the most limited thinking! We cannot maintain and support an exclusive to other peoples!

We must remain exclusive and we must remain our religion!

(4) Perhaps as worrisome as these statistics is the lack of concern with which the average White person greets the problem. In 1989, the Dutch Minister of Education and Science stated "I think that the Dutch will in the long run disappear. The [immigrant] ethnic groups' population growth is much faster than that of the Dutch...The white race will in the long term become extinct. I don't regard this as positive or negative. Apparently we are happy with this development."

(5) The Dutchman's comment brings up the next point: We are being replaced in our homelands by other peoples. Africa remains overwhelmingly Black. China remains overwhelmingly Asian. Mexico is as brown as ever. I've already mentioned the United States in general, and California in particular. In short, "What's theirs is theirs, and what's ours is negotiable."

When the Chinese settle millions of their own into Tibet and the natives there become a minority, that is condemned by human rights groups as genocide (And rightly so; I have actively assisted the Tibetan cause when I could). When Whites are being overwhelmed in their native lands...well, they're just supposed to accept it.

There is a point at which Whites will simply cease to exist as a viable population. What will it be like when we constitute not 34% of California, but 20%, then 10%? Fantasy? On the contrary, inevitable, given a shrinking population...

Hail the Gods

Steve

Dear Runestone:

...I am very disappointed to see you willing to sell a subscription to a non-White as in the letter section of Winter, 1994, #10.

Either we are exclusive or we are not. I am so sick of the preservers of Western civilization trying to play Nice Guy and welcome all even though we are supposed to be exclusive. I consider these Nice Guys traitors to our race, religions, and the future of our children.

Never mind what the White corporation ecology destroyer does; that should not drive you to embrace the rainforest dweller! What convoluted thinking! We cannot maintain and support our White race and be all-inclusive to other peoples!

We must remain exclusive and let the non-White go elsewhere for his religion!

M.G.

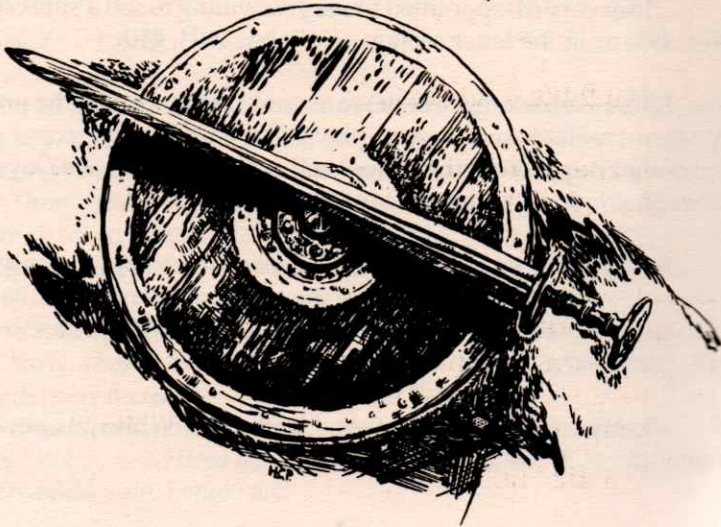
Dear M. G.:

I stand by my position: It is within the bounds of propriety to sell a subscription to a non-White. Should we never sell our publications on the news stand, for fear someone who is not of the Folk might buy it? Perhaps we should ask for a detailed genealogy of each subscriber? Maybe we could hire people to wait by the post office, and snatch **THE RUNESTONE** from the hands of non-worthies? It seems to me that people read **THE RUNESTONE** for all sorts of reasons. Maybe they're Asafolk, or maybe they just like some of the things we have to say about the world in general. I don't think that makes us "all-inclusive to other peoples"!

Now, let's talk about the denizen of the rainforest. A White internationalist, a corporation executive who believes in his heart of hearts that profits matter more than cultures, is not one of us! He can have the whitest skin and the bluest eyes, but if he promotes the global monoculture just to pick up a few lousy bucks, I won't claim him as a member of my race. The little brown guy in the rainforest can never be my true kin, but he's minding his own business, which the internationalist is not. Who will I support? No contest!

Part of the concept of *drengskapr*, referred to elsewhere in this copy of **THE RUNESTONE**, is the ability to honor and respect others, even an enemy. And frankly, it's hard to think of an Amazonian Indian, surrounded in his homeland by trees and tropical birds, as the foe. In giving him the respect he deserves, I do not ignore our differences nor do I favor him over our kin. I am simply recognizing the "raido," the "rightness" of him in his own context.

Hail our Gods and Folk!  
Stephen A. McNallen



**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 13- 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 upcoming 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 after 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 him. For this, the king had his tongue cut out. Call an Asa-friend today - use your tongue to participate in Asatru!

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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### Does Asatru have a holy book, like the Bible?

No. There are written sources which are useful to us because they contain much of our sacred lore in the form of myths and examples of conduct, but we do not accept them as infallible or inspired documents. The *real* source of holy wisdom is inside us, passed down from our ancestors as instinct, emotion, and innate predispositions. By combining this insight with the literature available to us, we arrive at religious truth. This living spiritual guidance is better than any dusty, dogmatic "holy book."