

THE RUNSTONK

Celebrating the Indigenous Religion of European Americans

USA \$4.25
CANADA \$5.25

SPRING 1996
ISSUE #14



Sail on a Viking Ship! • Choosing an AFA Symbol
The Kindreds are Coming! • Working with the Earth
AFA Song Contest Winners ... and more!

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

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

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.

Advertising rates are available upon request.

Submissions of articles and artwork are invited. Deadlines are as follows:

Issue: #15	3/15/96
#16	5/15/96
#17	8/1/96
#18	10/15/96

Publisher and Editor:	STEPHEN A. MC NALLEN
Production:	SHEILA EDLUND
Publicity Coordinator:	STEFFANIE SNYDER
Marketing Consultant:	CATHY CLINTON

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 Ostar celebrations, he killed him. Olvir's fellow Asafolk were murdered, mutilated, exiled, or fined depending on their degree of complicity. Honor this Asatru martyr by observing Ostara, thus affirming that Olaf, in the long run, did not succeed.

MARCH 20 - OSTARA is when we praise the Saxon Goddess of spring 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 traditional symbols usually found on this holiday.

MARCH 23 - EARTH WORK '96! Join us in seeking the friendship of the powers inherent in the land. See the article in this issue for more information!

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

UP FRONT

Springtime comes, and life runs riot! Greenery breaks through the barren landscape, and animals that have been in hiding all winter emerge to hungrily forage for food. In the Viking Age, our ancestors were busy, too - preparing for the raiding/trading season. Sails were stitched, hulls caulked, swords sharpened, and offerings made to Odin for success and victory.

This Runestone captures a bit of that energy. You'll read about Earth Work '96, designed to put us in better balance with the environment by getting in touch with the spirits of the land. As I see it, this is a uniquely Asatru approach to ecology. It's non-hysterical, non-bureaucratic, and decentralized. Earth Work '96 depends on individuals and small groups working voluntarily, without government decree, to simply do what is right in relation to the natural world around us.

However, too much self-congratulatory harmony and tranquility isn't good for us Eurofolk. We need to stir life's cauldron from time to time, to introduce a bit of excitement - hence the raiding and trading aspects of springtime! How about a real, no kidding Viking ship to rouse those predatory instincts? Check out the Viking Ship Guild's ambitious projects, as described in these pages. Once you've done that, sign onto their crew and lend a hand. You just might find yourself on the deck (or, to be honest, at the oars) of a real, dragon-prowed longship. This is a chance to live an adventure, not just dream about one!

Another important article in this issue deals with kindreds, or local congregations, of the AFA. Kindreds are the next logical step in the evolution of the Asatru Folk Assembly, and form the core of the alternative systems that will fulfill our folk's spiritual and material needs. With your help, we can change the world! The first step is to become an AFA member - then, join in fellowship with others to make a difference.

Alongside these major themes we've got lots of other good reading for you. You'll find writing on the mundane uses of runes, the brewing of mead, book reviews - and of course there are the usual hoards of information stashed in our news departments. There should be plenty of material here to last you until midsummer!

DEPARTMENTS

06	FLASHES FROM THE HAMMER	22
07	AFAGUILD NEWS	22
08	PUBLICATIONS	22
09	FRONTLINE	23

SPRING 1996

THE RUNESTONE • A journal of evolutionary Asatru

FEATURES

KINDREDS, the AFA's Next Step	3
by Stephen McNallen	
SHIP AHOY! The Vikings Sail Again	5
by Stephen McNallen	
A SYMBOL FOR THE AFA	7
EARTH WORKING	8
Land Wights: Allies of the Earth	
by Stephen McNallen	
Book Review	11
LOST BELIEFS OF NORTHERN EUROPE	
by Lisa Bryant	
MUNDANE USES OF RUNES	12
by Charles Spratling	
THE MOOT MEETS!	14
by Greg Stinar	
PROFILES IN ASATRU -- <i>Thor Sannhet</i>	16
STORING NATURE'S BOUNTY	18
by Cathy Clinton	
FINE TUNING - AFA Song Contest	20
MEAD - Inspiration or Indigestion?	21
by Derek Skouler	

ASATRU

AN OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kin

Kin Kin

Kin Kin

Kin

KINDREDS

by STEPHEN A. MCNALLAN

I couldn't believe it had only been a year since we started the AFA, so I pulled down my back issues of The Runestone, just to check. Sure enough - issue #10, Winter 1994, was when we blew the war horn, banged the drum, and started marshaling the troops for the Asatru Folk Assembly's next big step.

One year...holy Harbard! What a lot we've done - A Declaration of Purpose and other basic documentation, lots of successful gatherings, an expanded Runestone, guilds, membership...It's quite wild. Only in the last couple of months have the winds of change died down to mere gale force, and we can look at the next task before us.

Our membership program gave individual seekers a chance to connect with the movement. Isolated followers of the Gods could sign on as Associate Members, and those who were in a position to benefit from the fellowship of a kindred were eligible for Regular Membership. People who wanted to contribute in an extraordinary way had the option of Supporting Membership - there was a way for everyone.

However, it's not enough to provide memberships; Asatru is at its best when shared with others, and this means - *kindreds*. The time has come to nurture and develop local AFA "congregations" from one end of the country to the other. So what does this mean to you?

If you're happy as a lone practitioner of Asatru, fine. No one is going to insist that you change what you're doing, or demand that you fall into step with the rest of us. On the other hand, belonging to a kindred offers advantages that are

hard to beat - companionship, shared skills, wider resources, intensity, protection from the storm, and help in the daunting task of making the world a better place.

Exactly what do people in a kindred do? Well, they honor the Gods and Goddesses, but that's only the start. A kindred can be an extended family made up of Asafolk who interact socially and perhaps even economically. It might host a potluck, brew mead, play games, share books, tell stories, bake bread, go skiing, study Asatru, take in the Scottish games, sing songs, network for goods, services, and jobs, soak at a hot spring, or goodness knows what.

Sounds pretty good - so how do you get involved? Well, the first step is to join the AFA, assuming, of course, that you find our fundamental documents to your liking. Then, find a kindred. But, you say, you don't know of one close to home? No problem. We can network you with other AFA members in your vicinity, and together you can start one! (In fact, we've published a booklet on how to go about it! Send us \$3 and we'll rush it to you).

Oh, a note on AFA kindreds: Your kindred can belong both to the AFA and the Asatru Alliance. That was one of the points we wanted to make when our own Calasa Kindred, the "AFA Headquarters," joined the Alliance. We do not consider this to be an "either/or" situation, or some sort of competition.

Kindreds are a logical extension of individual AFA membership. They're the next step in building a viable, permanent, growth-oriented Asatru community in Vinland. And you can play a part in this adventure!

Ship Ahoy!

THE VIKINGS SAIL AGAIN!

by STEPHEN A. McNALLEN

Last issue, we described how Wotan's Kindred built a mockup of a Viking boat, and set it ablaze on a pond for their Midsummer celebration. The spiritual effect on all who saw it was unforgettable. However, it was just the beginning of a still-evolving idea - one which may bring thousands of men and women back to the religion of their forebears.

The boat we reduced to soggy ashes was all of sixteen feet long. It was made of plywood, in the general shape of a Viking ship; a proud dragon head topped the prow, and a jaunty tail curled behind. The little craft was born to die, and, in dying, to bring us closer to the Gods as it crackled and smoked its way into eternity.

This Yule, Reinhold Clinton and the rest of the WK crowd sailed a boat half again as long as that one. It was propelled by oars, and shields hung along the sides. This vessel, too, met a fiery end but before the ritual, Reinhold and friends rowed it around the pond - and the sensation of pulling on those oars, and feeling the boat move and flow like the water that supported it, gave birth to a yet more ambitious plan.

Why not build a boat, and NOT burn it? Now, I am sure that Wotan's Kindred will be ceremonially igniting dragon-prowed craft for many years to come, but they also want to build "real" Viking boats, and eventually, ships. Their vision has expanded from tiny mockups to larger "pondworthy" vessels, and it's time for the next jump. That's why they formed the Viking Ship Guild.

Building a real Viking ship is something that I have wanted to do for twenty years or more, and I suspect quite a few of our readers have had the same desire to skim over the water in a fierce *drakke*. We read, green with envy rather than seasickness, as Boy Scouts in Denmark, and other enthusiasts here and there, replicate the skills of the legendary Northmen. We dream of following in their wake - but building ships takes money, and there's always something else to do, and besides it's time to get the next Runestone to the printers...but now we don't have to learn to build a wooden ship, because the Viking Ship Guild is going to do it for us - or rather, with us! Of course, we must help, and there are benefits to doing so, as we will mention later.

The Guild's next project is a 30-foot long craft, lapstrake rather than plywood, built with a lot more attention to authentic detail than was seen with its two predecessors. It will be fitted with a sail as well as oars. We are talking about a true Viking vessel here, albeit on a more modest scale than a full-fledged warship. Maybe next time...

So what does the Guild want to do with a Viking ship, once they've got it? Here's where Reinhold gets really enthusiastic: Few images of our traditional culture are as captivating or as well known as that of a longship under sail. It conjures Norse fighting prowess, and reminds us of the intrepid men of legend and saga. This is Nordic might made visible. Because of this image's power, it is a "wake up call" to both the personal unconscious and to those deeper levels that merge into the Folksoul. We desperately need this.

Yule 1995
Wotan's Kindred,
Camas, Washington



It doesn't take a private investigator to see that our European-American brothers and sisters are missing something, spiritually. Many of them are so short on group identity and long on guilt that they think the very term "European-American" is marginally racist. Some of our people display a self-loathing that is dangerously close to a death wish. Our pitifully low birth rate, and our ongoing political and cultural dispossession, are symptoms of this spiritual illness. Might not the magic of these ships, proud and dauntless, break through the brainwashing and help awaken the slumbering spirits of our people?

But reviving an atrophied pride is an extremely broad goal. What would this ship, and others like it, actually do? Well, the very building of it is newsworthy, and will get the AFA some attention. Launching it will be nothing sort of spectacular - an extravaganza of fanfare and drama! Once it's in the water, the potential is limitless. The Columbia Rose Festival, various West Coast sailing events, the annual Blessing of the Fleet in San Francisco Bay all come to mind. Why not a Viking landing on Leif Erikson Day, well attended by the public and media? How about a Viking festival on Lake Tahoe? And don't forget, there are miles and miles of sandy beaches up and down the coast just waiting for our prow to slide up on the sand and surprise the sunbathers! I have always tried to avoid giving the impression that modern Asatru was stuck in the Viking Age, or that we were a historical reenactment society. However, the psychological power of the dragon ship just might make some sort of "heritage troop" worthwhile, even if it was only a score of men and women in authentic garb to put the ships in the proper setting.

Considering the enthusiasm in Wotan's Kindred and in the Viking Ship Guild, it is unlikely that the 30-foot craft will be their final product. Some locals want a full-scale replica of the Gokstad ship, which would indeed be a major undertaking. I foresee a time when there will be a veritable fleet of Norse vessels, each one a reminder to our kin that they haven't always been sheep, fleeced daily by business, government, and church!

The Viking Ship Guild is a sign of the synergy that increasingly characterizes the Asatru Folk Assembly. Previously, we've contemplated

projects of this sort, and rejected them because there were just too many other things to be done with our resources. But now, that's changing. Some of our motivated members have simply decided to make it happen, and they're bearing the burden of time and energy to carry this to completion.

How about you - have you ever wanted to stand on the deck of a Viking ship, with the wind in your hair and sunlight glinting off the waves? Well, you can! But you have to make the ship happen, first. While every attempt is being made to raise funds outside the Asatru community, the fact remains that this is no small ambition. Contributions - tax-deductible, of course - are being accepted. Little ones help, and big ones help more. The Guild has devised some incentives to help you open your wallet, and they're described in the box that accompanies this article. Write the Viking Ship Guild and get involved, with a contribution, or information, or time. This could be a chance for you to live an adventure, instead of just dreaming about one!



HELP FLOAT OUR BOAT!

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

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

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

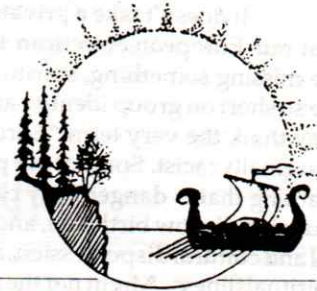


RUNE NAME: *Tiwaz*

KEY CONCEPTS: *Tiwaz*, rune of the sky-god Tyr, stands for justice, courage, and self-sacrifice. It is the column supporting the sky, and pointing to the pole star. From the honor and discipline of the Tyr-like individual springs law and stability for the society as a whole.

AFFIRMATION: Fearless and proud, I stand firm to protect my kin. The front of the fight is my chosen place.

NORSE style BOATS



Assorted sizes and styles, in plywood or lapstrake construction. Designed to your needs --

- **display**
- **sailing**
- **ritual burning.**

**16' to 24', prices start at \$400,
FOB Portland, Oregon.
(Prepared for shipping)**

Gryphon Enterprises

4518 N.E. 24th Ave.
Portland, OR 97211
(503) 287-4492 [10 am-4pm, PST]



F•L•A•S•H•E•S

from the Hammer

Two very important projects are shaping up for this year! The first one is **Earth Work '96**, scheduled for March 23. On that day, we ask as many Asafolk as possible, regardless of their organizational affiliation, to ritually declare their cooperation with the forces inherent in the land, which our Norse ancestors called the *landvaettir*. The reason? This is *our* approach to environmental activism - one that does not depend on government regulation or an anti-technological bias. Help Mother Nature, without feeding the bureaucracy or going back to the caves! See details in this issue.

The other project is a secularized version of **Yule**, for all our European-American brothers and sisters. Just as Kwanzaa was invented in the 1970's to give African-Americans an alternative

Christmas, Yule will be a way for our people - regardless of their religious belief - to affirm our identity at this all-important celebration. It will utilize the traditional symbols of the season. Establishing this custom will make thousands, and eventually millions, of our people aware of their ancestral heritage!

Two articles in The Camas-Washougal Post-Record have given Asatru and the AFA publicity in recent months. The pieces, arranged by Reinhold Clinton, treated us with fairness and reasonable accuracy. Both were accompanied by photographs showing, respectively, Wotan's Kindred's stone circle and their 24-foot Viking ship. Way to go, Wotan's Kindred!

Speaking of Reinhold, he reports that nearly thirty inquiries have been received concerning the **Gothi/Gythja Course** to date. Most of these were from people expressing a strong

desire and having good reasons for wanting to take the course. The program of instruction requires a lot of hard work, and is not offered free of cost, but the result is a thorough grounding in Asatru lore and leadership. Interested persons should write to Reinhold and Cathy Clinton, 8709 N.E. Winters Road, Camas, WA 98607.

Frigga's Web is an umbrella organization that integrates the efforts of several (non-AFA) guilds and rings dedicated to the practical work governed by Frigga. Clothes making, midwifery, the environment, mediation, and household arts are their specialties. It is open to men, women, and young folk who honor Frigga's ways and her gifts to humankind. Membership is \$15 yearly, which includes four issues of *Lina*, their journal. Send check or money order payable to Alissa Sorenson, or for more information write to Frigga's Web, P.O. Box 12012, Champaign, IL 61826.

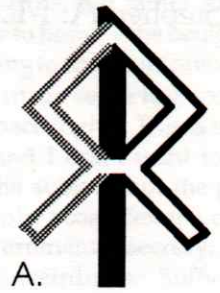
A SYMBOL *for the AFA*

Every organization which aspires to touch its follower's hearts needs a symbol, a sign which proclaims its nature and provides a standard around which to rally.

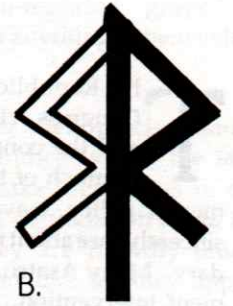
In the old Asatru Free Assembly, that symbol was the *raido* rune. We chose it because, first of all, it was used in the old days to designate our religion. It denoted harmony with the cosmic order, and the path to wholeness. Moreover, superimposed in it are the runes *ansuz* and *wunjo*. *Ansuz* represents the reception, transformation, and re-expression of spiritual might. Since our goal is to receive the power of the Gods into our lives and then manifest it in the world around us, this rune seems very appropriate. *Wunjo* means fellowship, and the bonds that tie together a clan or tribe; that's pretty descriptive of both the old AFA and its new incarnation.

We could, I suppose, just use the *raido* rune for the new AFA's symbol. But would that really be right? We're not exactly the same organization, and since we want a different *orlog*, or fate, than the old AFA, maybe we need something different to represent us.

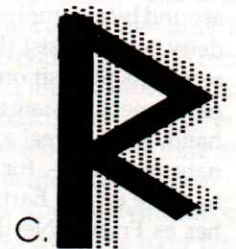
Here's where we need your input. Here are some bindrunes that have been proposed - essentially, combining the "ancestral heritage" of the *othalaz* rune with all the aforementioned attributes of *raido*. What do you think? Which of these is the best choice, and why? Or should we adopt something altogether different? What about color schemes? We'll consider what you have to say, and announce a decision in the next issue of The Runestone!



A.



B.



C.

Living Asatru

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**

AFA KINDRED BOOKLET

Useful information on membership and outreach; planning meetings, study groups, and gatherings; networking -- plus much more! **\$3.00**

A RUDIC INSPIRATION

Bring the power of the runes into your everyday life! 24 runes, key concepts, affirmations, and poems. Spiral bound, **\$5.00**

How well-stocked is your Asatru library?

VIDEOS

STEVE McNALLEN ON ASATRU

A dynamic and impassioned plea for the restoration of our ancestral faith. Includes an overview of Asatru and anecdotes of Asatru's rebirth in the U.S. (about 90 minutes) **\$15.00**

WARRIOR RUNES

A detailed inquiry into the power of nine runes, and how they can be utilized by the Western warrior. Presented by Steve McNallen. (about 2 hours). **\$15.00**

Asatru Folk Assembly

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

Add \$1.50 for S/H. California residents must add 7.25% sales tax.

earth WORK '96

Approaching Nature Anew

The Republican "revolution" in Congress, with its drastic cutbacks and the consequent dismantling of much of the nation's environmental policy, leaves those of us who sincerely care about the ecology in a quandary. Many Asatruar don't like government intervention, as a matter of principle. Just as we resent being shoved around by an omnipotent Middle Eastern deity, so we resist the dictates of the bureaucrats who sit on the Potomac, and in our respective state capitols. On the other hand, we also feel a deep concern for the natural world - for everything that goes to make up the Earth. Whether we deify her as Frigga, Nerthus, or Jord, the fact remains that we love her as all good children love their mother, and we want to help her rather than bring her grief.

Unfortunately, attitudes toward the environment in our country tend toward two extremes. One camp says to not worry about it. I have read a newsletter from one prominent fiscal conservative which says that landfills loaded with disposable diapers are a sign of an advanced civilization. Generally, the people who hold this view believe that there is no ecological crisis, and that the whole movement is an excuse to promote socialism and one-world government. Others admit that there is a problem, but they are confident that market forces in a free economy will solve it.

At the opposite end of the philosophical spectrum are those who hold that we have so abused the Earth that drastic measures must be taken, *now*. These remedies start with sweeping legislation, coupled with immense funding and the virtual dismantling of American industry in a highly controlled, even dictatorial society. I have personally heard one ecological enthusiast urge the return of human society to the Neolithic hunter-

gatherer stage which most of us left behind many thousands of years ago.

The way I see it, there's got to be something in the middle - something which will sustain a desirable environment without reducing us to a subsistence economy, or subject us to a draconian government where every act is controlled by the eco-police. And that something can be found, I claim, in the outlook of our ancestors.

Boiled down to its essence, the spiritual advice of our forebears would be this: Accept responsibility for your actions, take what you need without wasting what you take, and give something back in return. Finally, we have some important allies on this planet that we have overlooked, and we should enlist their aid. Let's look at each of these ideas more closely.

Asatru teaches us that we make our own fate, or *orlog*. We can't shove blame onto someone else, and we mustn't expect the Gods, the government, or benevolent beings from outer space to get us out of a jam that results from our own stupidity or laziness. Freedom implies responsibility. If we don't like the situation, it's up to us to change it by imposing our will on the universe in an effective and enlightened way.

Then there's the matter of proportion, of meeting our own needs without squandering resources. We Northfolk have never been bashful about manipulating and modifying our environment. Even in pre-Christian times, we cut down trees to build fleets of Viking ships, and we hunted game for food and for fine pelts to trade for southland goods. When we submitted to Christianity, something inside us ran askew, and we lost all sense of proportion. The industrial age - for all the undeniable good it has brought - has

seen a lot of genuine abuse of the natural world from greed and from misplaced personal and societal priorities. Perhaps nothing sums up this attitude better than the case of former Secretary of the Interior James Watt, who stated that the environment didn't matter very much because Jesus was returning soon! We needn't feel guilty about taking what we require from Nature, but we must remember to take only what we need, and not waste what we take. Always, we should think of the larger picture and adjust our actions accordingly.

Related to this is the idea of giving something back. If we want to cooperate with Nature, we should heed the words of the "Havamal," and remember that "a gift looks for a return." Fair exchange is as important in our dealings with the environment as it is in getting along with the people down the street. This has both material implications and spiritual ones. In the most physical sense, it means things like recycling and the planting of new trees in the forest. On a more metaphysical level, it implies a ceremonial attitude toward the plants and animals with whom we share Earth. An example is the Indian who thanks the spirit of the deer he has just slain. Such actions spring from, and nourish, an awareness that humans are part of Nature, too, and that we are not exempt from her laws. Some of us, at least, are ready to spiritualize our relationship with the environment, and the resulting change in action and attitude can only be beneficial to us as individuals, and to the world in which we live.

Finally, we need to think a little more about just what, or who, receives the gift that we have just mentioned. The very choice of wording implies a second party, someone who gets the gift - and that in turn suggests the possibility of a friend, an ally.

So-called primitive peoples, anthropologists tell us, invest the landscape with an array of (usually) unseen beings who live in trees, rocks, waterfalls, and similar features. This belief, easily dismissed by scientists as "animism," often coexists with a more ordered devotion to Gods and Goddesses. Alongside Odin and Idun and all the other Powers of Asgard and Vanaheim, our ancestors revered *disir* and *alfar*, as well as other entities more at home in rural folklore than in the myths that have come down to us. Even today, Icelanders re-route highways rather than move the boulders where the land wights live, and in Ireland the "little people" are not entirely the stuff of children's tales.

Now, I can see the rationalists among you rolling your eyes, and I don't blame you. So let's consider it from another angle: Might there not be energies associated with the geometry of landscape, with the flow of water and the power of growing things, and with large crystalline masses (rocks) that we simply do not understand? And might not these energies present themselves to humans in a personified form? Consider the Chinese art of *feng shui*, which deals entirely with such energy flows and how they can mean "good luck" or "bad luck" for people living on a certain plot of land, or in a particular house.

Our ancestors may not have technology degrees or been plugged into the Internet, but they weren't fools. They were keen observers and interpreters. We'd do well to take a second look before deciding that the world is so often locked away from us, and that we, necessarily, know better.

So, let's look at the land wights!

First, consider the name. Some call them "land elves," but *disir* and *alfar* are a classification all to themselves, and it's not hard to see how the confusion. Our ancestors would have called these beings "spirits." When we of Calasa gather for our gatherings, we pour a libation to the "spirits of this place," but the word "spirits" makes one think of something ethereal, and even

insubstantial things. I'm not sure that really describes entities which, I speculate, may live in a sort of parallel universe alongside our own. "Wight" is just an old word for any sort of being or creature, which leaves their nature open to further investigation - and besides, it sounds neatly archaic.

As we mentioned about two paragraphs back, the land wights are said to inhabit boulders, rock outcroppings, waterfalls, and the like. They are, in short, guardians of the land. They protect it from invaders and like to be advised of any plans to change the landscape - after all, they live there. Making friends of these beings traditionally brings good luck to the human involved; these secret inhabitants of the land are inclined to be loyal, helpful, and generous to people



who win their trust. Country folk say they can be called on for advice and for knowledge of the future, as well.

Land wights show themselves to us as animals or as human-like beings. Some investigators think the land wights may have been taking a more unusual, and much more modern, form in recent times. Shortly after the end of the Second World War, witnesses began to report encounters with tall, Nordic humans from what seemed to be flying saucers. The mysterious visitors expressed a concern with nuclear testing, claiming that our activities were "disturbing the balance of the universe." Few people believed the stories told by the witnesses, and their particular brand of UFO encounter is seldom seen nowadays. What if these weren't

hoaxes, or hallucinations, or even "Space Brothers" from Venus, but rather something much closer to home - the beings of the land itself, trying to communicate with us in a form that made sense to a society on the verge of space flight? This is not a UFO magazine and I don't want to get sidetracked on the subject, but the phenomenon seems to be a complex one, compounded by governmental secrecy, fakery, and genuine weirdness. Suffice to say that some components of the mystery, such as the often-reported "grays," do NOT appear to be anything as benevolent as land wights.

Whatever their precise nature, traditional lore indicates that the land wights would make ideal allies in our efforts to stop the degradation of our environment. They are friendly unless crossed, and like us, they apparently want to live in a world which is unpolluted, healthy, and in balance. Why not enlist their aid? The traditionalists among us will recognize this as a logical move that our ever-pragmatic ancestors would have suggested. Those one step down on the literalness ladder can think of it as working with energies in the Earth. Even the hard-nosed materialists have to admit that if we can motivate people to think of the environment in a more positive way, they are more likely to engage in ecologically positive actions that will affect the real world.

Actually, there is nothing new in the idea of making friends with the hidden powers in the local landforms. Not only is it recounted in the sagas and in the folklore of our people, but it's found in modern Asatru. There's a ritual in *Living Asatru* designed for just this purpose. I've been doing occasional ceremonies in the wilderness (and beaches, and public parks) seeking the friendship of the land wights since about 1982 or so.

Some of us have been sporadically honoring these beings, but the present situation calls for more systematic action. The environmental crisis is, more and more, on people's minds. One school of thought says the whole thing is blown out of proportion, an excuse to centralize government and usher in more socialism. I'm not prepared to make a judgment on that, but I believe that a major threat to the biosphere, or the per-

ception of such a threat, will be used to expand governmental powers, pass more coercive laws, and erode our rights as individual citizens. All the more reason, then, that we should take matters into our own hands and demonstrate that we do not

need Washington, God, extraterrestrials, or anyone else to do the job for us. We are in charge, we acknowledge our *orlog*, and we will solve our own problems!

So what's the plan? Subject to refinement between now and execution, here's what we've got:

Saturday, March 23 - just after the spring equinox - will be the day for **Earth Work '96!** We will mobilize as many people as possible to honor the land's subtle beings, or unknown powers, however you choose to think of it. To participate, this is what you need to do:

1. On three occasions prior to the 23rd, visit the area where you will try to contact the land wights. Attune yourself to the place, absorb its sights, sounds, smell, and *feel*. Choose the exact location where you will make your offering of friendship. A boulder, stream, waterfall, hilltop, or rock outcropping is excellent, but I personally think every natural spot has its wights. If you are really motivated, you can approach the beings of more than one location. Priority should be given to the place you live, if at all appropriate. Literally, start in your own back yard so you can reap the good luck from a friendly relationship with the land wights.

2. On Saturday, March 23, take food to the spot you have chosen. Eat some of it, then offer the rest to the wights. Say something to them like "My name is _____. I come to you in friendship, as one who lives on this land with you. Let there be peace and good relations between us. Together, let us work to make this place better for us both, and for the good of the Earth." Sit in silence for a few moments, mentally reaffirming your intent, and listening. Leaving the food behind as a gift, go on your way.

3. Follow through with a deliberate act to promote the natural order. This signifies your seriousness, and adds weight to your words. You might plant a tree (at the site or elsewhere), pick up litter, contribute to an environmental organization that meets your criteria, or perform any other act that will demonstrate your sincerity while actually making a difference, however small.

4. Write us and tell us what you did. **For a stamped, self-addressed envelope, we will put you on the mailing list for Earth Works, which is a project administered by the AFA but open to anyone.** In return, we will send you a summary of the project, to include samplings of individual experiences that resulted. If enough of you take part, we'll do this again next year! It would be wonderful if this became an activity that would make a significant improvement in the environment, but that depends largely upon your response.

After the 23rd, of course, you should cultivate your relationship with the land and the beings that hide in it. Go, every now and then, to leave them gifts - and be open to the idea that they may reciprocate. Be alert for peculiar coincidences! Don't forget to back up your spiritual impulses with solid action, in whatever form suits you best, to foster a healthy environment. Deeds, not fancy words, count.

This is the plan so far. Our intention is to expand it as widely as possible. In addition to our readers, we want to approach all other Asatru groups, even those who have shunned us. This concept is too important to allow differences of opinion to stand in the way. In addition, we will encourage the participation of alternative religious groups, and we will also publicize this endeavor in the general media. The more people who take part, the more good we can accomplish, and the more individuals we can introduce to the might that resides in the land!

You can help by spreading word of Earth Work '96 to groups and individuals in your area. If you have any special experiences involving the land wights, or insight into how to cooperate with their creative force, we'd like to hear about that, too.

More to come in the next Runestone!

The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe

Hilda Ellis Davidson

Davidson opens the first chapter of her book with this quote from Beowulf:

*"Many such ancient treasures
lay within
that house of earth, the vast
heritage of a noble race,
hidden there by someone
in times gone by,
with deliberate intent."*

Its application to the purposes of her book is clear. There is ancient treasure here, in the form of physical evidence, myth, and folklore. It was left behind very deliberately by the pagan forebears of those who would follow after them in the centuries to come.

As a specialist in the field of early Northern religion, Davidson stresses the possibilities and difficulties in investigating pre-Christian faiths. Reconstructing a religion that has left no recorded creeds, no written rituals, and no history of its founders or its evolution over time would seem almost impossible. Even the simplest questions about its use in day-to-day life would seem to be destined to remain mysteries. But the

purpose of Davidson's book is to show just how much material is left for us to study. The danger, however, is in assuming too much, especially for those of us who are looking to our ancestors for a happy alternative to the servitude of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

Relying on archeology, folklore and mythology, as well as what little written material remains from Roman and medieval times, Davidson emphasizes predominant patterns in both artifacts and oral traditions. She draws on the rich cultures of the collective northern people, which includes not only Scandinavians, but also the Germans and the Celts. Their ritual burials contained the symbolic items connecting them to their deities and to the Otherworld. Engravings of ravens and eagles, for example, suggest that the buried person was a follower of Odin's cult and was an aristocrat or a warrior or both. Folklore and myths emphasize the importance of the World Tree or the concept of the "sacred center." Again, this is associated with Odin - "I hung on that windswept tree for nine long nights," the mysterious God tells us in *Havamal*. The sacred center was the heart of the local community or, on a larger scale, the center of the tribe. This idea is of great age and extends from Northern Europe across northern Eurasia and on to the Americas. Tacitus, the Roman historian, wrote that the "barbarians" had holy places in woods and groves, and gave these places the names of their deities.

From these examples, two things become clear: (1) The old religion was for the whole community, which worshipped in forests or forest clearings, and (2) their relationship with the land was of a spiritual nature. This displays itself in the tribes' oral traditions of land spirits and guardian spirits. These beings were generally of a practical nature, and were associated with certain local geographical features such as springs, caves, lakes, or hills. [See "Earth

Working" elsewhere in this issue - Editor.] They were sometimes linked with specific families as well, and remained with them for generations, bestowing blessings on children, livestock, and crops.

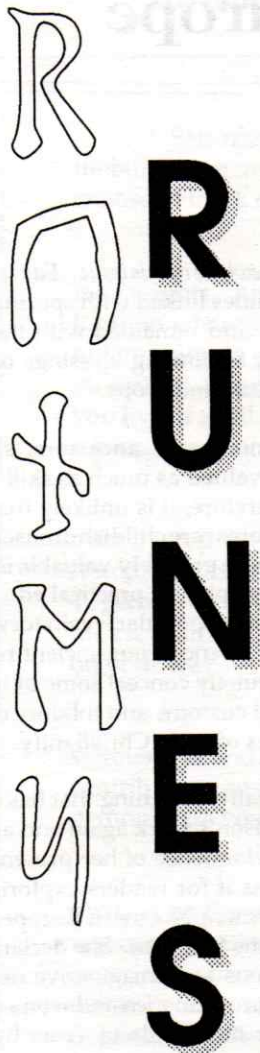
Among our ancestors, skill in words was valued as much as skill with a sword. Therefore, it is unlikely that their myths and lore were childish amusements; they were more probably valuable instruction in philosophy, or practical education. Even on the most popular level, storytellers and poets influenced our ancient religion and could quietly conceal some of its wisdom in local customs and folklore despite the tyrannies of early Christianity.

Finally, one thing that has drawn me to Davidson's work again and again is the simple eloquence of her presentation. She writes as if for readers exploring the nature of ancient Northern European paganism for the first time. She declares that the aspirations and imaginative needs of Northern European men and women were satisfied for thousands of years by their native wisdom and sense of the numinous, and that these qualities held communities together in a way that the Judeo-Christian tradition has failed to do. Surely, this is worth investigation, however difficult it may seem with what's left of our ancient religion.

"Germani" in Latin means "children of the same parent." Germans, Celts, and Scandinavians have had their ancient religion, along with their tribes' sacred centers, obscured or destroyed outright. Centuries of cultural and religious influences have been interposed between us and our pagan beliefs. Davidson carefully, consciously restores something that is necessary and precious to us all.

(Routledge Press, London and New York, softcover \$20 from Ogham Stone.)

MUNDANE USES OF



By CHARLES SPRATLING,
AKA Carl the Wolf's Head

*I wot that I hung on the wind-tossed tree
All of nights nine.
Wounded by spear, bespoken to Odin,
Bespoken myself to myself,
Upon that tree of which none doth tell
From what root it doth rise.*

*Neither horn they upheld nor handed me bread;
I looked below me - aloud I cried
Caught up the runes, caught them up wailing,
Thence to the ground fell again.*

Havamal, 138-139, Hollander

If you've been long in Asatru, you know that runes are an important part of our faith and heritage. They can be used for meditation, magic, and divination. It's easy to forget just what runes are - not just mystical symbols, but a working alphabet. Runes communicate information across time and space, without relying on memory or even having to be physically present yourself! This is the function of the written word, and no doubt this function in and of itself seemed "magical" (in the sense of "unknown technology") to the illiterate, no matter what their innate intelligence.

Other cultures, such as the medieval Greeks, also assigned mystical meaning to their respective alphabets (Look up the word "abraxas" in your encyclopedia). The Hebrew Kabbala is another example. While most sects of modern Judaism now reject this as a medieval superstition, it's still taken seriously by the Hassidim.

Similarly, many Asatruar today take rune magic seriously, and I myself

am of two minds about it. But the focus of this essay is on the mundane, that is, how our ancestors used runes in their daily lives, for ordinarily messages.

Most of us are familiar with the twenty-four character Elder Futhark, or alphabet. The actual number of characters used varied with time and place, from as many as thirty-three in Anglo-Saxon England to as few as sixteen in post-Viking Scandinavia. This makes sense, as each rune represented one phonetic sound (sometimes two, in the Viking era), and different languages had different sound elements. The differences are interesting, but didn't affect how the runes were actually used, so I'm not going to list the different systems and their phonetic values. If you need to know them, look them up. In all cases, though, a series of runes represented sounds of a spoken language.

Knowledge of the runes made our ancestors literate. That's an important but neglected aspect of Odin's sacred gift. Remember, Odin is the patron God of knowledge and wisdom, as well as

and magic. He suffered grueling pain for these qualities, which he then willingly shared with his Chosen Folk. Compare this with the Christians' myth in their Bible, wherein Adam and Eve steal knowledge from Yahweh, and all mankind must suffer eternally for that "sin."

The particular form which runes possess reflects the divine genius of Odin or, if you are less credulous of mythological explanations, of the Teutonic Folk themselves. Look at the Futhark; you'll notice that runes contain no horizontal lines. This is because runes were especially designed to be carved on wood. Horizontal lines would be hard to read, being lost or obscured by the grain of the wood. Curved lines, since they are difficult to carve, are also absent. This is true of all runic systems, and anyone today who employs curved or horizontal lines is doing it wrongly.

Rune carving was a cheap, simple, and convenient method of communication. Every Teutonic man and woman would carry a belt knife, and a stick of wood could be picked up anywhere. What could be easier than scoring a few lines on a stick? This was much easier than the Christian method of writing, which involved killing and flaying an animal, preparing and stretching the skin, cutting it into pieces, making a pen from a goose quill, preparing ink from lampblack mixed with gums, and only then writing the message. Is it any wonder that the vast majority of Christendom was illiterate?

Corrections are also more easily made with runes. If you make a mistake, shave it out with your knife and carve in the correct runes. Ink on parchment must first dry, then be rubbed off with pumice stone, all the while taking care not to rip or rub through the document. In a semi-literate age, think what a convenience easy corrections would be!

Few runestaves have survived the ravages of time, but most of those which have, were used for mundane purposes. Runestave nametags have been found in bales of merchandise from sunken ships. Another surviving stave requisitioned a ship for the king's use. Runes were used for love notes and other messages. Even as simple an object as a bone comb carried a little advertising for its maker: "A good comb Thorfastr made."

Staves contained everything from shopping lists to financial records. Our ancestors wrote numbers using the "scoring system," whereby three vertical marks stood for the number three, and so forth. This isn't so handy for large numbers but then, there wasn't much need of them. Money comes in various denominations, making large numbers unnecessary. Similarly, the size of an army could be calculated in terms of companies or ship's crews (120 men). In those days, even a large army would consist of only a few thousand men, for reasons both of logistics (feeding them all locally) and population (All of Scandinavia had only about a million people).

The design of runes adapts them particularly for carving on wood, and no doubt most runes were scored on this material. But only under ideal circumstances will wood survive for centuries, so many surviving runic inscriptions are found on things like bone, ivory, metal, or stone (hence, runestones). Since ivory and metal are likely to be re-used, and bone deteriorates, most medieval runic inscriptions which have come down to us are found on stone.

No records or artifacts show that runes were written with slate and chalk, with stylus and waxed tablets, or embroidered onto fabric. [Actually, if memory serves well, the hithir or cloth headbands described in the sagas may have had runes sewn into them - Editor.] But there is no reason to think that they were not. The literacy rate was much higher in lands where Asatru reigned than in Christian kingdoms during the Dark Ages. Why erect runestones or advertise on a comb if only a select few can read?

Even common soldiers could read among the Asatruar. Many swords are inscribed with names, either of the smith, the owner, or the sword itself. One Varangian went so far as to carve his name, Halfdan, into a marble balustrade in the Hagia Sophia cathedral in Constantinople. It's still there today.

By contrast, Christian nobles had to employ clerics to write for them. That's the origin of our word "clerk." It is interesting to note that the two Christian kings with the most Heathen contact, Alfred and Charlemagne, are the two who attempted to revive literacy among their subjects in their vernacular language. Perhaps illiterate "civilization" didn't look so good compared to literate barbarity!

Runic character books were only made in Sweden, however. Why should they be so rare? Because not only was parchment quite expensive, but so were candles and lamp oil. There just wasn't enough light to write by at night, and during the day a Viking would be engaged in more vigorous and practical pursuits. Anything really worth remembering would be memorized, as were entire sagas for dozens of generations.

I hope I've dispelled any notion that runes were used exclusively for divination or magic. They had mundane uses, and Northern society was at least semi-literate. The practicality of the rune forms represents a stroke of creative genius, a common-sense inventiveness. Additionally, the few hundred surviving runic inscriptions tell us much about the everyday life of our ancestors forty or fifty generations ago. We today can draw pride and inspiration from both the runes and our ancestors who used them.

GOthi/GYthiA

COURSE IS READY WHEN YOU ARE!

REGULAR and SUPPORTING MEMBERS of the AFA can contact:

REINHOLD & CATHY CLINTON
86709 N.E. Winters Road, Camas, WA 98607

Y : O : T : H : R : C

The Moot Meets!

Saturday, November 11 marked a very special day in London as the Odinic Rite celebrated both the solemn festival of the Einheriar and the festive annual National Moot.

By GREG STINAR

Gathering together with the members of the Rite were representatives of several European nations including Belgium, Germany and France, a transplanted American or two, as well as friends and associates of the attending Hearths. A quick scan around the meeting room of the rather posh hotel told a story in itself, revealed in the faces of the rough and ready young men providing security, in the bearing of the elder members, and in the demographics themselves. Men and women of all ages were assembled to remember, to celebrate, and to plan the future course of the Nation of Odin, as some think of the Folk.

Hardrada served as master of ceremonies. He is a powerfully built, booming-voiced member of the Warrior Hearth, home to the security men who regularly box and lift weights together at their base in London. Following Hardrada's opening commentary, Stormerne, a tall, distinguished, and articulate computer professional, performed the opening blot, reminiscent of that used by the AFA to honor the fallen heroes. Riding on this powerful opening note, he presented a program to encourage individual action - to develop proactivity as opposed to reactivity, in which the other calls the tune and the shots. How? By evaluation, courage, will and sacrifice, the latter being not surrender, but rather an intelligent relinquishing to obtain a future or greater result. Specific measures focused on making accurate information available on the Internet, on which one or two other groups with different views have more or less cornered the current market. The solution: strong words to awaken the Folk!

Next up was Siegfried, a young teenage scientist and martial artist who is the son of Wolf, founder of the martial arts guild of the OR. The youngest speaker to ever address the Moot, young Siegfried mastered a bit of nervousness to make the key points that Christian missionary activity sped the demise of indigenous craft and technology, by spreading the notion that products from home were by definition inferior. He then spoke of fascinating inventions and tech-

nological methods that seem to have been suppressed to maintain the current status quo around the planet.

Various people contributed to the Forum, a timelier internal and business affairs. The Internet was discussed as well as regionalism, in which the OR will put energy and effort into taking local tradition and sentiment into account in its organizational matters. The aim is to build community in harmony with already existing custom, and with the innate energy of the land itself.

Following a liquid lunch at a nearby pub and an interview with Heimgest, Director of the OR, we returned to the now-warm and thick-aired meeting room to hear Oswin's impassioned address on "Deep Ecology," which unlike the New Age "green" mentality, does not play into the coils of the Corporate Jormungandr. The solution lies in humility in the face of Nature, and a drink from ancestral springs of wisdom. Moreover, we require a relationship with our animal spirits, and community founded on Nature-based economic and religious principles.

The Moot saved the best for last, in the form of an elaborate yet vital and energetic ritual to "Raise the Fallen Warrior." Part drama, part rune ritual, part musical and entirely captivating, this hour-long ceremony created an emotion of regeneration as well as a sense of our origins and what they really mean.

Heimgest then gave the closing address, which could be summed up in two concepts: sacrifice; and the sobering thought that if you can't hold on to what you have, it will be taken from you. A good speaker, Heimgest - deliberate, confident, and filled with substance, he closed the Moot until next year.

Most of the company relocated to a London pub for a buffet and beer, while sharing the premises with the Vampire convention and a wedding party with unidentifiable language and accent. The night went on...

Wolf Age

This publication of the AFA's Warrior Guild is dedicated to martial artists, soldiers, policemen, adventurers, soldier of fortune, and wandering barbarians. We combine the spirit of the ancient European warrior with the needs and interests of those who follow the warrior's way, today!

Published quarterly, 24 pages. \$12.00/year



SOUTH AFRICANS
PREPARE FOR WAR

THOR'S HAMMER
STRIKES AGAIN

KI FOR NORDICS
Did Vikings know
about KI?

WAR IN THE
FOURTH WORLD

CLIMBING GYMS
A New Fitness "High"



Asatru Folk Assembly • P.O. Box 445 • Nevada City, CA 95959

BOOKS

that make a difference

A HISTORY OF PAGAN EUROPE

by P. Jones and N. Pennick

The authors show that representative government, modern science, and our love of the arts can be traced to our pre-Christian ancestors in Europe. Combined with The Age of Reason (see below), this makes for a powerful one-two punch against cultural ignorance! Hardcover, 288 pages, \$26.

THE AGE OF REASON

by Thomas Paine

In this day of the "Christian Right," we need the words of the genuine Founding Father and hero of the American Revolution. With precise logic, he demolishes the idea of Biblical authority. Give copies to your friends who think America should be a "Christian nation!" Paperback, 190 pages, \$10.

THE LOST BELIEFS OF NORTHERN EUROPE

by H. R. Ellis Davidson

Hilda tells how ancient beliefs were incorporated into folklore and Christian traditions, about the "sacred center," land spirits, burial customs, and more. This is the perfect companion to her other works! Paperback, 181 pages, \$20.

THE PROSE EDDA of Snorri Sturluson

translated by Jean Young

Here are the myths from ancient Iceland. This popular edition sets our lore in the context of a question-and-answer session between King Gylfi and three mysterious beings who are none other than Odin himself! Paperback, 131 pages, \$12.

ELEMENTS OF THE RUNES

by Bernard King

From the history of the runes to their modern uses, King's book is a trustworthy guide to our Folk's runic lore. King is a priest of Odin, and offers a detailed and useful study by someone with both feet in traditional Odinism. Paperback, 138 pages, \$10.

THE WAY OF WYRD

by Brian Bates

Written as a novel, this enthralling story tells the adventures of a Christian missionary as he accompanies a Saxon shaman. The author (a professor at the University of Sussex, England) includes an invaluable bibliography for anyone interested in Anglo-Saxon studies or Germanic shamanism. Paperback, 208 pages, \$11

OGHAM STONE

P.O. BOX 1334 CEDAR RIDGE, CA 95924

Please include \$3.00 P&H for book orders. California residents must include 7.25% sales tax.





Thor Sannhet

IN ASATRU

Having a Norwegian mother doesn't guarantee instant ethnic awareness! When young Thor Sannhet showed an interest in the "old country," his Bergen-born mom told him to "forget about learning Norwegian...you should just worry about being an American!" In other words, as Thor puts it, "I was supposed to melt in the melting pot."

But the quest for roots wouldn't rest there. Many years later, as an adult, Thor found himself producing a documentary on how native Hawaiians link the old Kahuna religion with grass-roots activism to stop harmful development on their islands. Using this indigenous Polynesian faith and the enthusiastic application of the Native American Religious Freedom Act, the Hawaiians were able to create a sense of ancestral identity and unity among their people. The experience of making this video, coupled with living

revitalizing their own indigenous religion as well.

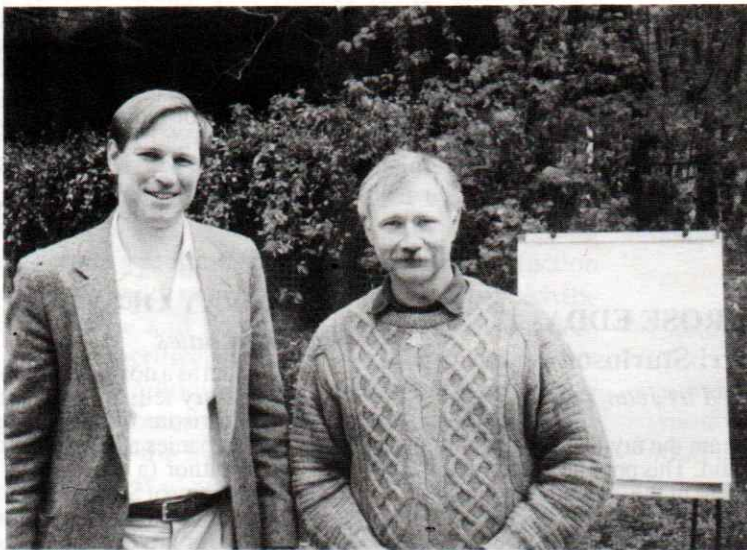
However, it wasn't until 1988 that Thor became aware of "Odinism" as a real religion, practiced by living people. On the basis of a chance remark, a teacher referred him to Wilmot Robertson's book *The Dispossessed Majority*, and from there the chain led to Else Christensen of the Odinist Fellowship. She in turn told him about the Asatru Alliance. At the time, Oak Thorgeir was living an hour and a half away, and Thor called him up and arranged a rendezvous. The two of them engaged in several projects in service to Asatru - speaking before the New York chapter of the Leif Erikson Society in 1991, and arranging a dramatic reception for the Viking ships that sailed over from Norway for the "Vinland Revisited" celebration. Soon, he was writing articles for *Vor Tru*, to include interviews with Else and with Freya Aswynn.

Eventually Thor moved to Portland, and involved himself in Asatru activities there. Despite a busy work schedule he still manages to contribute his time and energy to the cause of our Gods and Folk.

Thor, now forty years old, is an investment consultant with a nationally-known securities firm. His career has been enhanced by an MBA from Harvard Business School, and by his brains. He has been known to hang out with the Mensa crowd. If that isn't enough to keep him busy, he also has a "second career" as a military officer. Although that's on the back burner at the moment, it's given him a chance to travel and to have experiences that the average financial advisor has never dreamed of.

When his life settles down a little, Thor wants to write about how Asatru relates to the very practical matter of making money. In his opinion, "Just as the Protestant ethic saw a linkage between good values and material rewards, I think that the Asatru ethic promises an abundance of both material and spiritual rewards."

Sounds good to us!



Thor Sannhet and Steve McNallen at the AFA Leadership Conference, April 1995

among the ancestor-conscious Japanese on Hawaii and an encounter with Sioux religious activists in New York, showed him the galvanizing power of an ethnic belief. Moreover, as he says, "It occurred to me that my own people could probably benefit from

GUILD NEWS

VIKING SHIP WARRIOR AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY SEITH ORGANIC GARDENING COMPUTER

Remember our story about the small Viking ship Wotan's Kindred burned last midsummer, and how neat it was? Well, someone up there got the idea of building a 24-foot lapstrake vessel for Yule, and some other enthusiast thinks it would be really outrageous to build a one-half scale replica of the famous Oseberg ship. Now we've got people who want to construct Viking ships and race them against Chinese junks (It's a long story...), so there's a **Viking Ship Guild** to make all that happen. No one is really sure just where it's heading, but this has all the makings of a wonderful mania! If you want in on the fun, write contact man Reinhold Clinton at 8709 NE Winters Road, Camas, WA 98607.

The **Warrior Guild** finally got the magnum-size Wolf Age in the mail, and those of you who are subscribers should have received it by now. Believe me, wrapping up this project was worth popping a bottle of champagne - so we did!

On other fronts, the WG is making material available from our ancient past - that is to say, the 1980's. This **archival WG literature** includes old issues of Wolf Age (#1-#43!), the original WG handbook, and copies of Mjollnir, the Martial Arts Guild publication. Resurrecting this part of the Guild's history is a significant accomplishment. You don't have to be in the Guild to order these; see our ad elsewhere in this issue. There are also **Warrior Guild T-shirts and hats** for WG members. So...join the Guild!

Guildmaster Steve McNallen has passed requirements for the "**Gestr**" skill level, and urges all other Warrior Guild members to join him in this system of self-development! [After all, if an old guy like him can do it, anyone can! - Editor] Far from being some sort of elitist or pseudo-Rambo thing, the Guild is set up to help the average person better realize his or her potential. On the other hand, there's challenge enough for the toughest! You can reach the WG through the AFA.

The **Aerospace Technology Guild** has issued number three of its newsletter, Sleipnir. Articles include information on the "Thor" ballistic missile from the 1960's, details on the German anti-aircraft rocket "Taifun," and the usual news updates. The lead article is titled "Vikings, Values, and the Vertical Frontier." The ATG can be contacted by writing Steve at the AFA.

The **Seith Guild** is trying to get land where seith-workers can go and concentrate on shamanism in a natural environment. Guildmaster Rangar Schuett reports that he has been getting enthusiastic response from our readers, particularly from Valerie and Richard, both of whom have proven quite helpful. Issue #2 of their newsletter, Earthways, is now available. If you want to join in on all this, contact Ragnar at P.O. Box 2366, Loveland, CO 80539 for more details.

The **Organic Gardening Guild** is all about getting your hands dirty in Mother Earth, and reaping the rewards of your labors.

As it turns out, the Guild is looking for a little input from people like yourself, inside or outside the Guild. See Cathy Clinton's comments on page 18, regarding "Storing Nature's Bounty." You can contact the Organic Gardening Guild by writing her at 8709 NE Winters Road, Camas, WA 98607.

WANTED: SOMEONE TO TAKE OVER THE COMPUTER GUILD! One of the principle tasks is the time and ability to post our material on the Internet. There's more to it than that, but if you're interested, write us and we'll talk about it!

STORING NATURE'S BOUNTY

CATHY CLINTON

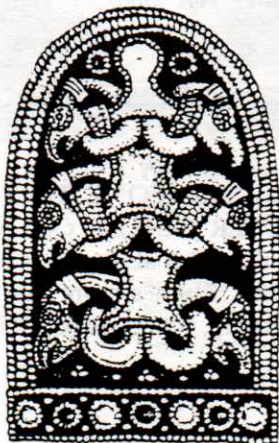
HEY, ALL YOU GARDENERS OUT THERE! Yes, that means you, with the nitrogen-rich dirt under your nails. Do you have a unique solution to that perennial problem, "What do I do with all this extra food?" After you've eaten all you want, and shared more with your friends and family, you preserve the surplus for later - you freeze, can, and cold-store, right?

Well, here's your opportunity to share those methods of preserving your bounty. The Organic Gardening Guild is in search of unique and effective ways to preserve garden produce - ways that best retain the food's original flavor and texture.

To share your ideas on successful produce preservation with your friends in Asatru, please send them to OGG, c/o Cathy Clinton, 8709 NE Winters Road, Camas, WA 98607.

If we get enough responses, the results will be compiled, published, and mailed to each contributor. This will be a useful resource for us all!

Plus, if any of you have other subjects you would like to hear about, or contribute on, please don't hesitate to let the OGG know. Let's keep growing!



Publications that deserve your attention!

S

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

Z

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

O

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

I

T

Our Hammer, c/o Odinist Prison Project, P.O. Box 6088, Harrisburg, PA 17112-0088. Covers activities of the O.P.P. in their struggle to get religious freedoms for Odinists/Asatruar. Issued irregularly. No mailing list - request on an issue-by-issue basis. Free, but of course the honorable thing to do is to send a buck.

A

C

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

I

L

Runestar, from Richard Clarkson, 205 Durban Avenue, Hopatcong, NJ 07843. Combines Asatru, shamanism, and astrology in a never-boring brew. Definitely not tradition-bound! A monthly, \$18 for 6 months or \$30 for 12 months.

B

U

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

R

Vor Tru, P.O. Box 961, Payson, AZ 85547. Journal of the Asatru Alliance. Increasingly professional appearance and lots of content. Steadfastly tribalist/folkish in orientation. \$16 per year.



FRONTLINE!

Activism is important here at the AFA. We aren't content to let our movement just drift along; we are committed to making a difference! To do that, we need your participation.

Take a look at the suggestions for involvement listed below. Several of them are sure to be just right for you. There's work enough here for everyone, so don't hold back! **THE FOLK NEEDS FIGHTERS!**

Some things you can do to help further the cause of the Aesir and Vanir are...

JOIN THE AFA! See the opposite page for details on how you can officially become a member of the Asatru Folk Assembly. Step forward and demonstrate your commitment - people like *you* are what this organization is all about!

START AN AFA KINDRED! That's right! Now kindreds, or local groups, as well as individuals can affiliate with the AFA. If you have three or more members of the Asatru Folk Assembly in one area, you're ready to go! What's more, we'll help you get in touch with Asafolk who live near you. Send us \$3 for a copy of our Kindred Organizational Handbook.

TELL A FRIEND ABOUT THE AFA! It's a cliché, but word-of-mouth truly is the most effective form of advertising. Let a buddy know we exist! Better yet, buy him or her a gift subscription.

GET US INTO THE LOCAL BOOKSTORE. Either The Runestone or Wolf Age might be just right for a store in your area. Even better, get a magazine *distributor* in your town to carry them! Show dealers copies of our magazines, and if they like what they see, they can write us and we'll work out the details with them.

ADVERTISE IN THE RUNESTONE, or in Wolf Age. If you've got a product or service that might appeal to our readership, let's do each other a favor! Write us for a rate card.

WRITE AN ARTICLE! Anyone who can think and talk, can write. Ask for our writer's guidelines so you'll know just what we need.

HELP US GET A SECOND COMPUTER! We desperately need another computer so we can lay out our publications more efficiently. Your contributions will be matched by two of our stalwart members. Contributions are tax deductible!

BE A TEXTBOOK ACTIVIST IN CALIFORNIA OR TEXAS! The content of most American schoolbooks is determined by the texts adopted in these two states. We need volunteers to represent the AFA before the respective selection committees - Asafolk who will review proposed books and ensure that they are fair to Asatru, and to European-Americans in general. A background in education, language arts curriculum, or social studies curriculum is a plus, but you can get by just fine if you're intelligent, committed, and presentable. *This is a chance to make a BIG difference!*

JOIN A GUILD! We have several special interest groups, listed elsewhere in this issue. Supporting them gives the AFA more energy and more life. Check them out!

HELP US FORM A GRANT WRITING TEAM to promote Asatru-related activities. Tasks include selecting appropriate projects, targeting possible sources of funding, and following through with requests.

**This should be enough for the most energetic and dedicated among you!
Why sit on the sidelines when you can help make history?**

Fine Tuning

The AFA Song Contest

Two issues back, we announced the AFA Song Contest. Over the weeks and months that followed, we received a flurry of entries, and not a piece of junk in the lot! Judging them was made more difficult by the great stylistic range of the songs - most were new words set to old tunes, but some were original compositions. They ran the spectrum from folksy-sounding ditties (even a lullaby!) to the frontiers of industrial music. I began to wish that I had specified one type of song or the other, to better do justice to all the contestants.

In the end, we chose TWO winners. One was Reinhold Clinton's "Odin's Folk," set to the tune of "Garry Owen." The other was "Reign I Forever," an original song by Michael Moynihan using Longfellow's poem on Thor ("Saga of King Olaf") for lyrics. Both winners will receive our tape "Thunder from the North" and a year's subscription to The Runestone.

Our congratulations to the winners, and a sincere thanks for all who entered!

REIGN I FOREVER

by Michael Moynihan,
words by Longfellow

I am the god Thor,
I am the War God,
I am the Thunderer!
Here in my Northland,
My fastness and fortress,
Reign I forever!

Here amid icebergs
Rule I the nations;
This is my hammer...
Giants and sorcerers
Cannot withstand it!

These are the gauntlets
Wherewith I wield it,
And hurl it afar off;
This is my girdle;
Whenever I brace it,
Strength is redoubled!

The light thou beholdest
Stream through the heavens
In flashes of crimson,
Is but my red beard
Blown by the night-wind,
Affrighting the nations!

Jove is my brother;
Mine eyes are the lightning;
The wheels of my chariot
Roll in a thunder,
The blows of my hammer
Ring in the earthquake!

Force rules the world still,
Has ruled it, shall rule it;
Meekness is weakness,
Strength is triumphant,
Over the whole earth
Still it is Thor's-Day!

I am the god Thor,
I am the War God,
I am the Thunderer!
Here in my Northland,
My fastness and fortress,
Reign I forever

Available on CD (\$17 ppd) through
STORM, PO Box 3527
Portland, OR 97208-3527

ODIN'S FOLK

by Reinhold Clinton
(Tune: "Garry Owen")

Let Odin's folk be not dismayed,
But join with us each heroic blade;
Come work and fight, and lend your aid
To help us with the Restoring.

CHORUS:

*Instead of sloth we'll build our folk,
And swear our oaths before the oak.
Let's grab an oar and hoist the sail
With Odin's folk to glory*

CHORUS.

The ancient fires have been lit,
Our folkish charter has been writ,
The call's gone out with strength and wit,
To be answered by us all.

CHORUS

Our will so strong shall carry fame
The folk returning whence they came
We all sing out in Odin's name
To Odin's folk and glory.



Mead

INSPIRATION OR INDIGESTION?

by DEREK SKOULER

Mead ...the word conjures up images of horned-helmeted heroes, laughing and boasting, with fists and weapons held high...and the exploits of the Gods!

Well, *my* first experience with mead brought to mind grocery store garbage cans, fruit flies and over-ripe produce. Despite our disappointment with commercially-made mead, my friends and I pounced on every bottle as soon as it touched the shelf at our local liquor store. "Perhaps it's an acquired taste," I thought. Yet at the same time I couldn't help wondering if the legendary gift had been worth all the trouble Odin underwent to win it in the first place!

We've all watched as television characters barge into taverns and shout "Waiter! Bring me a beer!" Does the patron expect a Bud Light or a Guinness Stout? Like beer, which can range from a ginger ale-like playfulness to something akin to beef gravy, "mead" can mean many things. I discovered this when I first began to encounter home-brewed meads. After making my own, I realized the extent to which the brewer controls the characteristics of the finished beverage. The meads I fell in love with were readily superior to the swill I'd first encountered, while my worst brew was more like cough syrup aged in a tractor tire. Yet I was able to recognize and correct the mistakes I'd made, and go on to create fine and inspiring meads. Inspiration is, after all, a word often connected with our ancestors' honey-drinks.

Working under conditions which would be unthinkable to most modern brewers, they must have had a large percentage of foul concoctions. Yet ancient brew-masters obviously persevered, creating meads of which legends are told. Their efforts should inspire us today, and we should take heart that our technology and accumulated knowledge gives us an immense head start. Those of us involved in Asatru have a unique advantage as brewers: We probably know someone who's done it before. Look to that kin.

Mead-making instructions range from the abominably simple (spit in the pot add honey, *voila!*) to the mind-bogglingly complex. Avoid both. I first purchased a competition-style mead brewer's book from a local wine

shop. It intimidated me into a kind of deer-on-the-highway state of inaction. Later, Steve McNallen's recipe in Living Asatru boosted my confidence, and the Mead-Making Handbook from Worldtree Publications informed me of the hows and whys of the process as well as the importance and simplicity of sterilization. Bam! I was off and brewing! If for any reason you've been put off by mead or the idea of making it yourself, take heart! You're in control. So put that pot on the stove and continue an ancient and treasured custom of the Northern European peoples!

"...and drank Sif's mate three tuns of mead."
- Poetic Edda

"Making Mead"

from LIVING ASATRU

Pour 3 pounds of honey into a large pot. Add enough water to make a gallon and put it on the stove. Heat it and stir until the honey is dissolved. Don't let the mixture come to a boil! Skim off the top and let it cool. (This will take quite a while.)

Strain, then pour the mixture into large fermenting vessels (such as 1 1/2 liter or gallon wine bottles) within a couple of inches of the top. Pour in a teaspoon of wine-making yeast. (Champagne yeast works very well.) Cover the top with cheesecloth or gauze to keep impurities from falling in. Wait about a month; then bottle it. The taste improves if you let mead age for another month after bottling, but you can drink it sooner than that.

There are fancier recipes for mead, but this formula will get you started. Try adding some fruits or spices (citrus, apples, cranberries, and cinnamon) during the heating process.

BITS & PIECES

For battle-ready historical arms and armor, you can't beat Museum Replicas Limited! Their catalog contains scores of swords, axes, shields, daggers, helmets, and items of clothing ranging from the Celtic era up through the Viking Age and into the Middle Ages. *All their armor and weapons are combat-grade; they don't make wall-hangers.* Prices are reasonable for what you get, which means that a Viking sword will run about \$300 - but those of you on a budget can add a spear to your arsenal for under \$30. Write to Museum Replicas Limited at 2143 Gees Mill Road, Box 840, Conyers, GA 30207.

If it's **modern knives and combat blades** you're after, you might investigate Uncle Thorr, editor of Uncle Thorr's Magazine. He and Audrey have added cutlery to their line of Nordic products! The last page of his most recent issue lists several "classic battle blades," and he's got a huge Bowie knife for \$15! His address is P.O. Box 080437, Staten Island, NY 10308-0005.

The Norseman is a new publication "dedicated to the incarcerated Othinist." The content is vigorous and impassioned. They accept subscriptions and donations, but since The Norseman is published by an inmate in a prison, I can't list that address here - many of our subscribers behind bars would not be able to receive this issue of The Runestone if we included it! If you wish to contact The Norseman, write the AFA and we will put you in touch.

An Asatru catalog of books, leaflets, and more was recently sent to us by Wodan's Kindred of Britain. They offer everything from introductory leaflets to custom mead labels, and their graphics are superb. More significantly, they have reprinted "The Sayings of the Havamal" from Hollander's Prose Edda; you can get it by sending them \$3.50 in U.S. funds, plus \$2 for shipping. Checks or money orders should be made payable to E. K. Hyatt. Their address is P.O. Box 190, Union Bay, BC, V0R 1S0, Canada.

In keeping with the regionalist emphasis gaining ground in England's Odinic Rite, The Likeminders Link focuses on the Midlands and points north. It is published by the O.R.'s outreach foreign correspondence clerk, so it's a good way to make contacts in Europe. Likeminder's Link is almost two years old and has fourteen issues to its credit. The address to write to is 37 Kilverstone Avenue, Leicester LE5 6XN, England.

A supporter sent us the article "Avoiding Legal Judgment: The Submission of Disputes to Arbitration in Medieval Iceland" which he found recently while researching Teutonic governmental systems. It's from the April 1984 issue of the American Journal of Legal History, and we recommend it as an antidote to those who claim that the Vikings were lawless barbarians.

We had never heard any **industrial music**, until someone sent us a tape by Jagd Wild, and frankly, we liked it. The tone is post-apocalyptic, with an appeal to Odin's "Wild Hunt" - hence the name. One cut features a reading of the "Prophecy of the Seeress," describing Ragnarok. They've got a CD coming out soon from KSM Records in Vancouver.

CONTACTS/ASSISTANCE

- Rob Heidrich, 20706 S. 84th Avenue, Frankfort, IL 60423, would like contact with fellow Asatruar in his area.
- E. Crabbs, P.O. Box 149, Farmington WV 26571, would like contact with kindreds located within 2 hours of her.

A TIP OF THE HORN...

A TIP OF THE HORN TO...Herb and Hardy, who proved the courage of their Asatru convictions by standing with your otherwise solitary editor in demonstrating against Winnie Mandela - convicted criminal, wife of Nelson Mandela, and apologist for murder. As it was, there were no incidents, but given the volatile emotions that surrounded her visit to a local campus, anything could have happened.



AND, THE OTHER TIP OF THE HORN



AND THE OTHER TIP OF THE HORN TO...columnist Maggie Gallagher, who, in October, wrote "I hate the idea of being white...I never think of myself as belonging to the 'white race'...I can think of few things more degrading than being proud to be white."

MOOT POINT

Dear Steve,

Your "Fire on the Water" article is very interesting. I have tended to associate ship burial with the Vanir and ship burning with the Aesir; anyhow, I can relate to your account of the Viking ship burning and the powerful emotions it can ignite.

In 1991 I took the family to the millennium celebrations of the Battle of Maldon, after which a full-size representation of a dragon ship was burnt. Although it was a rough, brushwood, symbolic ship with an artificial corpse on a bier, the scene was unforgettable.

Although many Odinists took part, the celebration was not organized for Asatru. The majority of folks attending were tourists attracted by the town council, which sponsored the event.

Throughout the weekend the public remained seated in stands on three sides of the arena and browsed amongst stalls, beer tents, and a Viking village constructed for the occasion until the boat burning on the last night.

As the fire took hold, people spontaneously left their seats to join the enactors around the blazing ship. The atmosphere of novelty and sarcasm I had sensed in much of the crowd during the day left. There seemed to be a brief moment of kinship around the vessel as it illuminated the night sky and warmed those watching into respectful whispers.

Enclosed are a few copies of snaps taken at the time. Unfortunately the camera being used was not designed for night pictures, but those taken during the day give some indication of the scale. My children Chad, Heather and Erik are in the foreground.

Finally, it is good to know there is no strife between the Asatru Folk Assembly and the Asatru Alliance. Long may this situation last! Best wishes for the coming issue and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours for Folk and Freedom,

N.C. Ford

Dear Mr. Ford,

Thank you for telling us of your experience! As anyone who has ever seen a ship burning knows, its spiritual impact puts one very effectively in touch with the ancestors. Perhaps we should host hundreds of ceremonial ship burnings, all across our respective countries, and shake our kinsmen out of their lethargy!

The idea of using a brushwood ship instead of one constructed of planks is very practical. From the photos you sent, it gives the appearance of a real vessel even when seen from a moderately close distance.

Hail Odin!

Steve

Heilsa, Steve!

...I remember, twenty years ago, slouching in the back row of high school English class reading Easyriders magazine and seeing a small item in their classified section. At that time, I was heavily involved with the Christian Identity movement (and the less said about that phase, the better), so I blew the ad off, consciously and predictably, as the ravings of a "false prophet." But the gist of it, particularly the first sentence, burrowed into my brain: "A religion for Wolves, Not for Sheep!" I'm sure it was an Asatru or Odinist group, and while I won't swear to 100% accurate memory after two decades, the name "Viking Brotherhood" rings a bell.

I have to ask - was that you?

Hail the Gods!

John L.

Heilsa, John!

Yes, that was us! The Viking Brotherhood became the Asatru Free Assembly in 1977 or so, and we did run ads in Easyriders. We have been in this movement for a long time!

Odin Lives!

Steve

Greetings, Runestone:

...I am a 20-year old college student who has been a staunch believer in the gods for a while now. I live in a house by a river. I was lifting weights on the back porch, which faces the water, and thinking about Thor. The more I thought of Thor, the harder the wind would blow. Then it started raining and the huge trees were blowing around like grass. Suddenly I felt a great spiritual awareness of the power of nature. As I said "I can feel you, Thor!" lightning flashed and thunder crashed. Although it was dangerous because of falling limbs, I stood in the rain without my shirt on and felt the wind on me, and I truly believe I felt Thor's presence!

Hail the God of Thunder!

Shane S.

Dear Shane,

The experience of the Gods comes in many forms, but it is always mighty in its own way. Sometimes it is gentle like the breeze, but that breeze has a power to touch our souls. Other times, the Gods come to us with the blast of a thunderbolt! May Thor continue to shout to you, and you to him!

Hail Thor!

Steve

APRIL 10 - 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 11 - SUMARSDAG/SIGRBLÖT. This was the first day of summer in the Icelandic calendar. It falls at about the same time as the annual sacrifice to Odin, for success in the 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

What is Asatru?

Long before Christianity came to northern Europe, the people there - our ancestors - had their own religions. One of these was Asatru. It was practiced in the lands that today are Scandinavia, England, Germany, France, the Netherlands, and other countries as well. Asatru is the native religion for the people who lived in these areas. Although its specific practices no doubt differed from place to place and century to century, the basic outlines are clear. For the sake of simplicity, you might think of Asatru as "the religion of the Vikings" since they were its main followers in the years just before our ancestors were forced to adopt Christianity.

How is Asatru organized?

Asatru is non-authoritarian and decentralized, expressing our love of freedom in its very structure. While we do have definite tenets, we have little dogma. There is no all-powerful spiritual leader whose word is law; no "pope" of Asatru to dictate truth. No guru or priest has the one-and-only direct line to the Gods. The Gods live in you!

The Asatru Folk Assembly is a registered, organized nonprofit religious corporation, or church. But it is much more than that. It is virtually a "tribe" of Germanic people, in the sense that it provides an unmatched degree of support and fellowship for its members, while still permitting the freedom needed by creative and intelligent individuals.



HANS FAIK
SWEDEN 95