



Celebrating the Indigenous Religion of European Americans

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ISSUE #21

Fire and the Fog

Earth Work '98

Iceland's Gothar

**Kennewick Man
Update**

**Arminius and the
Cherusci**

Runes for Protection

*Plus ...
our regular features*



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

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The opinions in this publication, unless otherwise noted, are those of the author. We read all correspondence, but other commitments may prevent replies. For best response, keep your letters to one page and one or two subjects.

Submission of articles, photographs, and artwork are invited. Please enclose a SASE if you wish to have them returned.

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UP FRONT

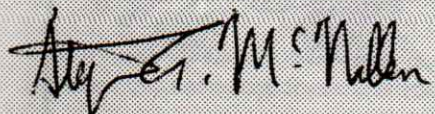
There's a whole new look to this *Runestone* - to be exact there are fewer pages, and some of the articles may be a little shorter. A sign of fatigue and low morale? Proof of an impending collapse?

Nope. Far from it! This was a deliberate decision, signifying progress in the months to come.

Over a glass of wine, a sympathetic marketing professional gave us a few hundred bucks worth of insight: *A bulky magazine is not the way for the AFA to do the things it wants to do.* Sure, there's a place for the bigger publications - but it shouldn't be *The Runestone*. It's all too easy for publishing to become an ends rather than a means.

Shocking? Yes, but it makes perfect sense. I love putting words (and hopefully ideas) on paper. Maybe you've heard the old saying - "To the man with a hammer, every problem looks like a nail." The fact that I *like* writing and publishing is not the point. There are better ways for the AFA to make things happen, and those ways will be getting a lot more of my time and attention.

This is an exciting time for the AFA. Watch for us to be reaching out to wider audiences, carrying the word to more people, and building the foundation for positive changes. *Better yet, join the AFA and lend an active hand!*



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Our special thanks to Julie Tobin and N. Ford for the cover artwork in the past two issues; and for the contributions from Canadian artist, Kevin Knight.



MEMBERSHIP IN THE Asatru Folk Assembly?



What it all means...

With your support we can remain on the activist, cutting edge of the native European religious resurgence!

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*Send for our free
Membership Packet today!*
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GUILDS

WARRIOR GUILD

...practicing warrior spirituality in today's world! Contact the AFA for details.

AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY GUILD

...taking the spirit of Asatru into the future! Write the guild c/o the AFA.

BACK TO BASICS GUILD

...simple living, self-sufficiency, and more! Write Julie Tobin at the AFA.

SEITH GUILD

...inner voyaging to recover our ancestral lore! Write Ragnar Schuett, PO Box 2366, Loveland, CO 80539.

GENEALOGY GUILD

...links to our personal pasts!
Contact Sheila at the AFA.



RUNE NAME: Raido
(riding)

KEY CONCEPTS: *Raido* represents natural order: the path of the sun across the sky, and the eternal predictability of cosmic law. A rune suggesting rhythm and movement, *raido* is reflected in music, dance, and travel. It aids right action. *Raido* also signifies the religion of Asatru.

AFFIRMATION: I ride with the Gods; I dance with the days and the seasons. My path lies clear before me.



A TIP OF THE HORN...

Tip of the horn... to Michael Moynihan and Annabel Lee (of Blood Axis and Amber Asylum, respectively) for their victorious Swedish tour, during which they exposed a lot of enthusiastic fans to Asatru-influenced music!

And the other tip of the horn... to the not-so-nice folks at *Race Traitor* magazine, whose goal is to "abolish the white race - by any means necessary." We suspect that they are NOT on the establishment's list of hate groups, for some strange reason.

AND, THE OTHER TIP OF THE HORN...



FIRE and the Fog

by STEPHEN A. MCNALLAN

When I first approached Asatru back in the late 1960's, what attracted me was the panache, vigor, and passionate assertiveness of the Vikings. Bold and free, this spirit attracted my testosterone-laden teenage soul like a magnet I...and it still calls to me, after all these years. My spiritual evolution has added to that first, formative impression.

The Way of the North contrasted sharply with the musty meekness I perceived not only in mainstream Christianity, but in the world as a whole. Underlying the insistent Viking freedom was a deeper validation of a heroic view of human individuality, and for me this was essential.

Everywhere else I turned, however, the spirit of the age cried the opposite. "Merge with the Godhead, become a drop in the infinite sea"... "Take your ego off the throne in your heart, and place Jesus on it"... "We must rise from the individual to the whole"... "Humans must surrender the swords of their willful egos to the planet as a whole." From Buddhists to Christian mystics to New Age gurus, just about everybody was saying that individuality was bad, and that the only remedy for the human condition was to blend into "God," by whatever name. This viewpoint wasn't limited to religion and spirituality, but underlay a great deal of political philosophy, as well. Marxism in particular, and various state socialisms in general, were manifestations on the Earthly plane of the same idea.

I didn't buy it, and still don't. To "become one with God" is to die.

The deniers of self, in all their forms, constitute a fog - amorphous, drifting, surrounding, non-human. Like the fog, this mass-mentality is made up

of a multitude of insignificant particles helplessly impelled before the breeze and the rules that govern chaos.

We, on the other hand, are the fire. We burn, leaping assertively from the Earth, reaching for the heavens, passionate. The fog disintegrates where we touch it and it would smother us in its clammy coldness, if it could.

But we will not let it.

The Gods and Goddesses of our Folk do not want slaves. "They want us to grow up," as veteran Asatruar David James recently put it. We are to follow in their footsteps - not on a chain, but with our walking staffs in hand, engaged in the quest to *be greater!* In that respect, I suppose my personal view of Asatru is more what Edred Thorsson would call "O dian" rather than "Odinist." I don't worship Odin in the usual sense. I don't even want to "become one with" him - I want to imitate him! I can almost imagine this great God waiting somewhat impatiently, spear in hand and hat tipped over his eye, for us to figure out that our role is to grow into freedom, might, and wisdom without end, rather than to exchange the Christian shepherd for just another master. He's ready, when we are.

Ego in Asatru

Perhaps this is a good time to reflect on the role of ego in Asatru. And while we're at it - just what is an ego, anyway?

It's easy to say, in the words of the dictionary, that the ego is "the permanent and conscious subject

of all experience" or "the self...as the consciousness of the individual's distinction from other selves." But what this means for us, philosophically, is neither easy nor simple.

In one sense, ego is transcended every time we change or grow in any way, no matter how minor. Like a flowing river, "I" am not the "I" that I was an hour ago - and that teenager in the sixties, or even the Asatru leader from the eighties, seems like another human being altogether!

You and I change, and the content of the "I" is ever-evolving, but that does not mean that the concept is invalid. We are still separate entities, characterized by "distinction from other selves."

In Asatru, we know quite well that the ego is not the sum total of our being. The unconscious lurks outside our daily awareness, yet is still part of who and what we are. Similarly, our religious lore describes the *hamingja*, *fylgja*, and soul portions or qualities such as the *ond* and the *othr*. These have been described in several books and articles, and there's no point in launching into a mini-essay on them here. Suffice to say that the ego binds these together, making them a coherent whole. Far from denying the ego, Asatru tells us that the ego has an important role to play.

Quantum Obfuscation

Ardent proponents of the fog do not like the ego, and are constantly trying to convince us that it doesn't exist. They draw material from quantum mechanics, that branch of physics that deals with the nature of things below the atomic level. True, there is a sense in which everything and everyone is interconnected. Bell's Theorem is a famous equation explaining, or at least asserting, that fact. They then tie Oriental mysticism in with science, and proclaim that the ego does not exist - and then comes the social and political implications of their ideas, which of course just happen to be the same collectivist, liberal line they've been trying to shove down our throats for the better part of a century! Is this a coincidence? Probably not; a clear ideological agenda is at work here.

Ultimately, though, the interconnectedness of things does not mean what they say it does. "Quantum nonlocality" does not mean sameness, does not mean homogeneity, and does not deny the uniqueness of individual parts in any system. A rock is still not a pillow, and a cow is still not a horse. Whatever

Asian inscrutabilities are invoked, and whatever equations are used to justify them, the evidence of our senses provides a workable description of reality once we get into the macro-world. It is noteworthy that these quantum gurus are generally firm believers in multiple realities, the equivalence of different frames of reference, and the like - until one chooses to operate in a reality that says ego is real and that all things are not, in some mystical way, all the same!

Ego is an assumption that *works* for us, just as Newton's equations work to describe motion unless one is working with the very large or the very small.

Interestingly enough, there is at least one "Eastern" school of thought which goes against the stream of ego-abnegation. In *The Serpent of Paradise*, Chilean author Miguel Serrano tells how he met the head of Suddha Dharma Mandalam, a yoga organization based in India. Its leader assured Serrano that the oldest yoga, predating Patanjali by thousands of years, taught that a strong ego was essential to enlightenment! This remarkable attitude, so different from what we find popularized in the West, indicates that we Asatruar might have some spiritual allies as we oppose the fog.

Group versus the Individual

Now, lest it need clarifying, I am not advocating unrestrained egotism, nor justifying random acts of selfishness. We northern Europeans are a paradoxical bunch. On the one hand, we are the world's great individualists, stubborn and jealous of our rights, and always on the lookout for any infringements. This caused problems even in Viking times. During military campaigns, a disgruntled chieftain might well pack up and sail for home - taking with him the men and ships needed for victory.

The whole idea of republican government sprang from us, attesting again to the value of the individual. But at the same time, we are quite capable of extensive cooperation, even when that means subordinating our personal needs and desires to the success of the larger group. Some of the world's best-known utopian cooperative movements were born of our genius. So I am not advocating irresponsibility or raising the "me, me, me" attitude to a moral pedestal. On the contrary, I understand the delicate yet dynamic balance between the individual and his or her family, clan, tribe, and nation. But the proponents of the fog have never been satisfied with that balance; perhaps it is too heroic for them. They want the individual crushed, completely.

Fire against the Fog

All of this sounds academic, but it's not. In the realm of human affairs, the philosophy of the fog has made huge headway. All the major religions of mankind seem to have adopted it, to one extent or the other. In fact, most people cannot conceive of any form of spirituality asserting a contrary viewpoint. The way of the fog favors the weak and the dim - it says we're each as good as the other, and unconditional love reigns supreme when all are accepted despite their failings. It is a philosophy for the mass, tailor-made for the non-exceptional. Followers of the fog will always outnumber the people of the fire. Fortunately, quality is on our side!

We who love the flame must understand that the fog is not tolerant. Like some soul-eating monster out of a science fiction movie, it intends to consume us. The aim is a world of fog...a world where the human ingenuity represented by the fire is smothered. They would kill Prometheus.

We are the keepers of the fire. With our enduring will and our deeds great and small, we fight for the individual, for heroic self-assertion. So long as we stand firm, the fog has no chance against us! ⊕

PRISONER OUTREACH

Due to some bad experiences and the resignation of our prison outreach coordinator, we have drastically curtailed our services available to prisoners. The AFA is no longer accepting new incarcerated members, and we have no goth training program that will work in confinement.

We have a number of prisoners on our mailing list, and several as AFA members, who have proven themselves to be worthy men of Asatru. They deserve our recognition and our praise. Their status will not change.

Sadly, others have exploited those who would help them, lied outright to us, compromised our reputation locally by mailing us envelopes covered with radical political slogans...and been the first to write insulting letters when an order is late or we don't answer them quickly enough. All in all, we decided it was time to end prison involvement other than the routine filling of orders.

BITS and PIECES

Burn a Church for Odin?

In a recent wave of terror, about fifty churches in Norway were burned in what one of the instigators claims is a holy war between Odin and Christ. But what is the real story?

Michael Moynihan went to Norway to find out. With the help of a local journalist, he visited most of the perpetrators and compiled his findings in a book titled *Lords of Chaos*.

This is a look at the "Black Metal" subculture which generated the arsons. No, not Asatru - but rather a self-styled "Satanism" turned out to be behind the attacks. So why are we even mentioning it here? Because rightly or wrongly, our religion has been dragged into this. Asatruar need the facts with which to answer the allegations.

Lords of Chaos examines Black Metal music, pathology, and philosophy, while finding correspondences between today's extreme youth culture and some aspects of Viking folklore and history. You can order it from Feral House, PO Box 3466, Portland, OR 97208-3466.

Chew on This!

Two thousand years ago, an early dentist in what is now France pounded an iron tooth into a man's jaw to replace a missing one. The metal substitute had been carefully shaped to fit, and the original tooth was probably used as a model to ensure the proper size.

Archeologists found the ancient skull, complete with the implant, in a first-century cemetery in Essonne. The artificial tooth was firmly bonded, and might even have been used for chewing, according to the January 1 issue of the journal *Nature* in which the team of French scientists made their report. ⊕

E a r t h

Work '98

*Our third annual Earth Work is upon us!
How swiftly the years pass when you're busy changing the world!*

For the newcomers, as well as for those of you who may have just plain forgotten, Earth Work is when we invite all Asatruar everywhere, regardless of our differences, to join with us in doing something about the environment. The first such effort was Earth Work 96, and this one is (not surprisingly!) Earth Work 98.

STEPHEN A. MCNALLEN

Now, let's talk about politics. Lots of people are under the impression that a concern for the environment is inherently left wing, or at least liberal. Most of the Asatruar we know are a long way from that particular end of the scale - maybe somewhat to the right, or maybe libertarian, or perhaps just undefinable!

Well, that's okay, because our approach to the environment is non-coercive, uses no tax dollars, does not require passing legislation, and is very decentralized. Conservatives can do this; in fact, in an article titled "Traditional Conservatism and Environmental Ethics," John R.E. Bliese writes that "The traditionalists [conservatives] are not materialists and are highly critical of our consumer culture. They reject ideology and stress piety toward nature, the intergenerational character of society, and prudence in political and social action." That sounds like most of the AFA people I know.

Links to the Land

For me personally, my deliberate connection with the land is an affirmation that I, as a European-

American, have a place in this land called California. It's my way of saying that I belong here, and that I want my descendants and my traditional culture to not only *survive* but to *thrive* here, between the sea and the Sierras. (Get our *Calasa Tape* for my pitch on that!) You may have similar sentiments about the place where you are, and Earth Work is one way to underscore your feelings.

How to Take Part!

Now, our ancestors believed that the landscape was inhabited by a variety of beings; the Norse called them *landvaettir*, and many of us call them "land wights." At other times and places, our forebears had other names for them. As to what they actually are, opinion varies. At the very least they are personifications of the forces inherent in the land, water, trees and other natural systems. The ideal behind Earth Work is to connect, on some level, with the land and its subtle inhabitants.

Between now and May Day (It was ours long before the Bolshies

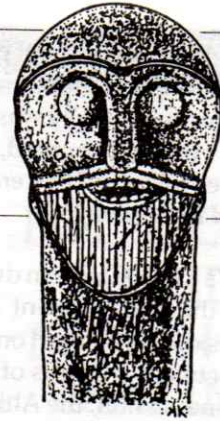
got it), spend some time on a piece of land close to where you live. It could be your back yard, or a park down from your apartment, or just about any other place where nature is trying to maintain some sort of foothold. Take your breaks from work there, or meditate there, and try to "tune in" to that location on a deeper level.

On May Day, go to that place and make an offering of food or drink to the land wights. Tell them who you are, and why you have come. Express your desire to befriend them and to work in cooperation with them to preserve that particular piece of the natural world.

Then - and this is absolutely important - do some tangible deed on behalf of the environment. If you can in some way benefit that specific place, so much the better. If not, apply your efforts to another spot - plant a tree, pick up litter, send a donation to an environmental organization you trust. Back up your talk with action!

Continued on page 12

Iceland's Gothar



By KNORR ASMUND

Scandinavians began to colonize Iceland when Ingolf Arnarson, a Norwegian, set up residence there in about 870 CE. His settlement sparked a migration period which lasted roughly until 930 CE, and is known as "The Age of Settlements." The mass exodus which took place during this period is generally considered to be the result of the Norwegian King Harald Finehair's tyrannical rule, which coincidentally lasted from 860 CE to 930 CE. Many of the immigrants to this new land were aristocrats who refused to bend to Harald's rule, choosing to flee rather than face extreme hardship or even death at Harald's whim.

Although Iceland's new population was steeped in Scandinavian tradition, their experience with Harald Finehair turned them away from autocratic rule. A monarchy in the Northlands at that time was composed of three basic elements: a king, his body of advisors and loyal attendants who made up the noblemen, and lastly a legislative assembly called a "thing."

Under the new system in Iceland, the power that had been in the hands of a king and his noblemen was now divided among thirty-six (later, thirty nine and finally forty-eight) chieftain-priests, called *gothar* (singular *gothi*, feminine *gythia*), or "ones who speak the godly tongue."

The thing tradition of the old country was kept intact, and in 930 CE Iceland was united under one legislative assembly called the "Althing." With its establishment, the era of the "gothic" republic began, during which the gothar cared for the spiritual needs of the folk and the civil administration of the land.

Under this system each gothi had a rough-hewn district called a *gothorth*, or "authority as a gothi;" it could grow or shrink with the changing loyalties of the farmers within it. A gothi could sell or subdivide his gothorth, or leave it to his children as an inheritance. Within his district each gothi was responsible for ministering to the spiritual needs of the folk.

By its very nature, Asatru is both intensely private and very communal. It was the communal aspect which was entrusted to the gothar. They maintained sacred grounds, a *hof* or temple for honoring the Gods, and sponsored a number of seasonal festivals and ritual sacrifices, the nature of which varied from gothorth to gothorth. Farmers of a gothorth helped their gothi in his mundane duties by paying a tax for the temple maintenance. They also helped the gothi in his civil administration by journeying with him on his missions to keep the law.

Delegates from all over Iceland went to Thingvellir, which is twenty-five miles east of where Reykjavik now stands, to attend the Althing. According to the custom of the *vapnatak*, or "weapon take," delegates laid their weapons aside for the Althing's duration. With the *vapnatak* complete, Icelanders went about setting up temporary residences made of stone and turf walls, with a roof and furnishings which were set up anew each year.

On the ninth Thursday of summer, about the middle of June, the *Alsherjargothi* or "every man's gothi," who was chosen annually, opened the assembly with a blot to the God presiding over law and order; some would say this was Tyr, and others, Thor. After this, the laws were read and if any amendments were needed, they were first discussed and then voted on.

At first glance this form of government seems to be more of an oligarchy than anything else, but upon closer inspection it really was very democratic. Everyone had a vote that counted, because no gothi could survive the violence of that era without the help of the farmers of his gothorth.

Iceland's judicial system during this age consisted of up to thirteen different local things, with three gothar presiding over each one. In order to deal with disputes between litigants of different local assemblies all in one session, the Althing's courts were divided into four "quarter courts." This way, litigants from different local things but of the same quarter of the country could settle their disputes in a timely manner.

The gothar had three simple methods of dealing with crime: *wergeld*, or monetary compensation, outlawry, and the death penalty.

Almost all disputes could be settled under the wergeld system. By the era of the gothic republic this custom was already ancient and fully developed. Wergeld evolved from the Germanic belief that the individual was supposed to take on the feuds and friendships of his or her kinfolk. If left unchecked, feuds raged violently out of control, dangerously destabilizing society. Wergeld was a means for stopping feuds. It was the gothars' responsibility to make sure adequate wergeld was paid.

Outlawry had two degrees, lesser and full. Lesser outlawry lasted three years, and full outlawry lasted a lifetime. Outlawry was generally applied to honorable, overt, and generally one-on-one fights to the death. The gothar used it not so much as a means of punishment, but as a way of giving tempers time to cool and disputes time to be litigated.

Sentences of death were a rarity. For the most part, the death sentence was applied to sex crimes and "secret killing" or morth. This was homicide which took place at night, or which was not openly announced by the perpetrator at the first opportunity. When the situation warranted it, the wrongdoer's back was broken on Thor's stone, a large rock sitting inside the stone circle where the Althing met.

The gothar were very independent people (just as they are today), and within their domain might well follow the spirit rather than the letter of the law. From the historical record, outlaws were not always forced from their land, especially when their dependents would have suffered terribly as a result.

Other times, murderers manipulated the law to get away unpunished - something which happens even in our modern era. On the whole, though, the gothar cared more about the welfare of the country and its people than they did their own wealth and privileges, and as long as the gothar remained steadfast Icelandic society was healthy and stable.

The king of Norway from 995 CE to 1000 CE, Olaf Tryggvason, was a fanatical Christian who used any method at his disposal to convert Scandinavians to his faith. Murder, torture, and maiming were common as he forced Christianity on the Asatruar of his time. Before the Althing of 1000 CE, Olaf took a number of hostages from prominent Icelandic families who happened to be in Norway. Then, he sent word to Iceland that if the country did not convert to his faith, these hostages would die!

The gothar were at a crossroads. Should they allow a terroristic foreign power to have control of their public policy? A debate raged for several days at the Althing, until a compromise was finally struck. Christianity would become the official faith of Iceland, but private worship of the old Gods would still be allowed. Thirty years later Asatru was banned altogether, with the penalty for its practice being death.

Christian clergy began quickly building congregations throughout Iceland, supplanting the old faith and the governmental role of the gothar. By allowing a Norwegian to dictate Iceland's internal affairs, the gothar had opened the door for the end of their civil administration. Iceland finally lost its sovereignty to Norway in 1262 CE, and then to Denmark in 1397 CE. The country did not regain independence until Denmark was occupied by the Third Reich in 1944. So although Asatru and Iceland's sovereignty did not end in the year 1000, it was the gothars' decision at that momentous Althing that effectively ended the gothic republic.

Asatru continued to live in Iceland even though the republic did not, and in 1972 CE our faith was once again a recognized state religion. Who knows what might have happened if Iceland had not accepted Christianity when it did? Could it have held out until our modern era? We do not know, nor will we ever. What is important to glean from this history is that, as we venture into the unknown but exciting era of Asatru's reawakening, we must take advantage of the knowledge of the past. Let us learn not only from the triumphs of our ancestors, but also by their losses. By knowing why they were defeated, we may now find victory. ⊕

KENNEWICK MAN GETS A FACE

After more than nine thousand years, Kennewick Man's likeness is once more among us.

Anthropologist Jim Chatters and sculptor Tom McClelland teamed up to produce a clay model showing how this ancient man might have looked, based on a plaster model of his skull.

The result is a head resembling that of actor Patrick Stewart, who plays the Captain in "Star Trek: The Next Generation" - a narrow chin, prominent

cheekbones, a long face, and a sizable nose.

Despite McClelland's comment that "he's really kind of an Everyman," even a glance at the Kennewick Man's likeness makes it obvious that this is not what one thinks of as an American Indian. The newspaper article allowed a politically correct loophole: "The reconstruction doesn't resemble modern Northwest Indians, but has some characteristics of Eastern tribes such as the Iroquois" - and like Europeans, we might add!

For pictures, see <http://www.tri-cityherald.com/bones/>

DIVERSE PEOPLING OF AMERICAS GAINS ACCEPTANCE

Although most scientists are still too cautious to openly give the ancestors of modern Europeans a role in the peopling of North America, the door to such a revelation continues to slowly creak open.

At a recent meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Dennis Stanford of the Smithsonian Institution was cited by the Associated Press as stating that the

immigrants came from both Mongoloid and non-Mongoloid groups, with fundamental racial differences in the bones of the face and the teeth. He also admitted the possibility of ancient migrations into North America across the Atlantic.

Even the most conservative researchers are beginning to accept that the incoming peoples were "culturally and biologically diverse."

POLITICALLY CORRECT SPIN IN THE MAKING?

The ideological establishment holding sway in the United States is not likely to admit that a European people made it to these shores thousands of years ago - no matter how great the evidence may become. However, it is going to be very difficult to completely hide this idea under the blanket of political correctness.

We predict, then, that there will be frantic efforts to make every other possibility more appealing. We'll read that Kennewick Man is a new branch of the human family tree...that he is descended from a South Asian population with no link to modern Caucasians...that he's "a sort of Everyman."

Since he hasn't been adequately studied, any of these statements *could* be true. Scientists are right to consider every possibility. We won't know until the research is done, and the AFA strongly supports such research. But rest assured, a European connection will be stoutly resisted - not from a scientific standpoint, but because of the anti-European bigotry that suffuses many levels of officialdom.

ARMINIUS AND THE CHERUSCI

PART 1

by HNIKAR

When the mead horn is filled at sumbel, and the heroes of our Folk are honored, the name of Arminius, or Hermann, is seldom neglected. The victory he gained in Teutoburger Wald demonstrated such a courage, a fierce will to be free and unfettered, that even today it inspires us to raise our horns before our Gods and hail him. Tacitus, writing nearly a century after the battle, wrote, "To this day the tribes sing of him" - and so should we!

And yet, for a millenium and a half, he appears to have largely been forgotten. Only with his rediscovery by classical scholars did his deeds again inspire our Folk. After centuries of Christian historical obscurantism, by the 19th Century people throughout Europe, and everywhere our Folk lived, were being drawn by a longing to know their own history, their own ancestors and heroes- just as we today seek to know our own faith.

It has been said that history is written by the victors, but of the battle of Teutoburger Wald it has just as truly been noted that were it not for the accounts of the vanquished, we would likely know nothing of it. So completely were the deeds of Arminius forgotten that Delbruck was inspired to suggest that his name survived in legend.

In his *Geschichte der Kriegskunst In Rahmen der Politischen Geschichte* he disputes the generally agreed upon idea that the name Arminius is a Latinization of Hermann. He points out that in the *Nibelungenlied*, Siegfried's father was named Sigemund, and that Arminius' father was named Sigimer, and presents a number of parallels to suggest that perhaps the German name of Arminius was Siegfried.

There are some weaknesses in Delbruck's suggestion, not least of which is the origin of the name Arminius if it is not simply a Latinized form of a Germanic name. Normally if a Roman name was adopted, it was a pre-existing one, taken either by adoption or from one's patron. Arminius, however, is not a Roman name. Additionally, as Markus Wolff pointed out in the article "The Irminsul" in *Vor Tru* #57,

the god-names Hirmin and Irmin are attested, so perhaps Arminius/Hermann has a related etymological origin.

Whatever the case, today most people outside Asatru or academia have little or no knowledge of him. Those who remember anything are often rather like the kid who, asked a question, replies, "Oh yeah, we studied that but I already took the test so I don't remember." Who, then, was Arminius?

When Sigimer's son was born around 18 BCE, the Cherusci laid claim to an extensive area. As was commonly the case in later Germanic history, as among the Saxons, Franks and Allemanni, one should think of the Cherusci as a tribal confederation. Their culture was robust and warlike, and they had extensive dealings with the Romans. While he spoke of the time after the Roman expansion across the Rhine, Dio Cassius' words are true for the years of Arminius' childhood. "[T]he barbarians soon accomodated themselves to Roman customs, came to the market centers, and carried on peaceful relations with them. Nonetheless, they still could not forget the customs of their ancestors, their local habits, their uninhibited lifestyle, and their armed power."

Indeed, raids were often

made across the Rhine into Roman territory. Just as Caesar spoke of the German raids on the Celts of Gaul prior to the Roman conquest there, these quests for glory and wealth continued. In 29 BCE and in 17 BCE, while the infant Arminius enjoyed the freedom of German children, significant raids across the Rhine into Roman territory were made by Germans.

In 12 BCE, the Roman Emperor Augustus ordered his legions across the Rhine, as far as the Elbe. Commanded by his nephew Drusus, they secured the alliance of the Batavians (who had separated from the Chatti after a civil war) and the Frisians, who provided auxiliary troops. The Batavians earned great fame in subsequent service. In 11 BCE, Drusus advanced to the Weser, defeated the Usipetes, and in 10 BCE he attacked the Chatti. In 9 BCE an altar to Roma et Augustus, the cult of the Emperor, was established at the tribal capital of the Ubii (later Cologne), and he attacked the Marcomanni, advanced through the territory of the Cherusci, and reached the Elbe.

Drusus died of an accident and was replaced by his older brother, the future Emperor Tiberius, until he was recalled to Rome in 7 BCE. Small scale operations continued as Rome established itself, although for the most part withdrawing to winter camps each season. In 4 BCE, Tiberius returned, advancing again to the Elbe and sending some troops to explore even Jutland. It was his intention to subdue the powerful Marcomanni, a branch of the Suebi or Suevi confederation, but trouble in Illyricum intervened and Maroboduus, the leader of the Marcomanni, agreed to an alliance with Rome.

The young Arminius and his brother Flavus joined the auxiliary forces of Rome, with the former apparently commanding

Cherusans. Little is known of his service to Rome, but Arminius earned Roman citizenship and gained equestrian rank. At one point he served under Tiberius in Pannonia. Arminius learned a great deal during his service.

Above all, he evidently learned to hate Rome.

Publius Quinctilius Varus had married the grand-niece of Augustus. By most accounts he had enjoyed a successful time as governor of Syria, though he was accused by some of becoming wealthy at the expense of the province. (This is a typical accusation of Roman enemies, like charges of sexual misconduct, so it needs to be taken with a grain of salt). Appointed legate of Germania, it is said that he was arrogant and treated the proud Germans like subjugated enemies, imposing harsh taxes and legal customs that were outlandish by German standards.

Whether due to Varus in particular or because of a general opposition to Roman ways, Arminius acted. The sources give some conflicting details and scholars will quibble forever about precisely what happened, but it seems that Arminius gave Varus to understand that he was a loyal ally. Arminius was entertained in the Roman camp on the Visurgis as a guest. Dio Cassius says a complex rebellion was planned in which a portion of the Germans put on a show of rebellion while Arminius pretended to march with Varus as an ally to subdue the rebels, only to fall on him when the time and place were right. Elsewhere we hear that the Romans were simply withdrawing to their winter quarters.

There are further contradictions on the length of the battle, but it is clear that the Thunderer was about. A violent storm raged around the marching Romans.

Delbruck estimates their number at 18,000 to 30,000, loaded with supply wagons, women, children, and servants. The column was spread through the forest for many miles. No precautions had been taken, it seems; no special security.

The odd thing is that Varus had in fact been warned. Segestes, a Cherusci, bore a great grudge against Arminius, and informed Varus of the intent to attack. Arminius had taken Segestes' daughter, Thusnelda, as wife, although she had been promised to another man. While Tacitus called it "stealing," Thusnelda herself proved it to be otherwise in subsequent years by her loyalty to her husband. Segestes advised that Varus arrest Arminius and others so that the ringleaders would be in check, then sort out the loyal from the rebellious. Apparently Arminius was a persuasive man, because Varus did not heed the warning or the advice.

The storm with howling winds and rain made the ground treacherously slippery. Treetops tumbled to the ground. The Germans made probing attacks on the column, and the Romans erected a camp for better defense. It was on this first day that Arminius and his allies deserted the column and joined in the attacks. In the camp that night, Varus ordered the burning of all superfluous baggage.

In close order the next day the Romans marched onward. Progress under the circumstances was slow and the harrying attacks of the Germans took their toll. Toward the end of the day, the column came once again upon a wooded area in the Teutoburger Wald near the modern Bielefeld in Westphalia. There, the Germans waited. Trees had been felled to block the path, and so once again the Romans pitched a camp.

The morning brought an-

other raging storm and a battle. In the unfamiliar forest, disoriented further by howling winds and lashing rain, unable to stand or to maneuver in the muddy morass, the Romans were easy targets for the Germans who descended from the heights. What an omen it must have seemed to the Germans as the thunder roared above the clash of weapons.

Wounded and disgraced, Varus committed suicide. Around him three legions of the mightiest power on Earth were falling to the forest floor, slain. Others retired to the camp for a final stand. The body of Varus was burned and buried, then an unconditional surrender was made. Some escaped to Aliso to tell the tale of the massacre. Of the three Eagle standards of the legions- XVII, XVIII, and XIX- two were captured. The standardbearer with the third plunged with his standard into a swamp. As one German cut out the tongue of a Roman, he cursed, "Now, snake, your hissing is finished".

On the orders of Arminius, the body of Varus was dug up and the head was sent to Maroboduus of the Marcomanni. Whether intended as an invitation to join the uprising, or a threat, or both, Maroboduus remained neutral in the war which followed. He sent the head of the fallen Varus to Augustus so that it might be buried.

Suetonius reports that the aging Augustus, worshipper of Mars Ultor, would thereafter mutter on occasion, "Quinctili Vare, legiones redde!" (Quintilius Varus, return me my legions!). The battle stopped the expansion of Rome into Germania, with tremendous consequences for European history. As such, it is considered one of the most decisive battles in history. Arminius, only 27, proved his understanding of strategic requirements and a mastery of tactics. Since a frontal assault on the Romans and a straight-for-

ward rebellion would have been futile, he lulled the Romans into complacency and then, when the conditions were right, he annihilated them.

In the years which immediately followed, a vigilant Roman presence on the Rhine prevented the Germans from exploiting their victory. But the story does not end there for Arminius or for the Cherusci. Segestes, the unhappy father-in-law of Arminius, had been drawn into the battle with his tribe due to the near unanimous will of the Cherusci to fight Rome. Still, his grudge against Arminius festered.

In 14 CE, Augustus died, and was succeeded by Tiberius. The following year, the son of Drusus and nephew of Tiberius, Germanicus, commenced operations against the Chatti (his son, Gaius, nicknamed "Little Boots"- Caligula- was raised in the frontier camps...though nothing he was likely to have experienced was any worse than a horrible, and horribly false, movie made about him a few years ago!). His general, Aulus Caecina Severus, meanwhile attacked the Marsi. The Cherusci thought to aid the Chatti but Caecina's maneuvers kept them in check. Tacitus wrote, "Germanicus completely surprised the Chatti. Helpless women, children, and old people were at once slaughtered or captured."

One of the ploys used to intervene in the affairs of others throughout history, particularly Roman history, has been to receive an appeal for help from someone more directly involved. Political justification had its place then even as it has now. In this case, it was Segestes who asked for Roman intervention, as he was besieged by Arminius. His envoy was his son, Segimundus, who in the year of the uprising had taken off the insignia of his Roman priesthood at the

Ubian altar in order to join the Cheruscan uprising. Nonetheless, of course, he was well received by the Romans. Germanicus then rescued Segestes from the siege.

In the party of Segestes was Thusnelda, the pregnant wife of Arminius, and daughter of Segestes. She remained loyal to her husband and would not beg the Romans for special treatment. A son was born to her- Thumelicus- and raised at Ravenna. It seems that husband and wife were never to see one another again.

And so, the war was renewed..

To be continued in the next Runestone!



Earth Work '98 Continued from page 6

Finally, write and tell us what you did, and relate any significant experiences that resulted.

It's Our Earth, Too

The Earth doesn't just belong to the professional environmentalists, as I hope they would all agree. You don't have to be a liberal tree-hugger, a matriarchal Great Goddess worshipper, or an advocate of the hunter-gatherer phase of human culture. You can be a meat eating, leather-wearing, gun owning Asatruar (Thank you for the phrase, Kevin!) and still take enthusiastic part in Earth Work 98. In fact, we hope you will! ⊕



RUNES

for

PROTECTION

by JAMES CRAIG

Mailbox bashing is the winter "sport of choice" for a lot of young people where I live in the rural Midwest. It has a lot going for it. Unlike skiing, it does not require expensive equipment. It does not even require snow. All you need is a set of wheels and an old baseball bat.

Mailbox bashing season parallels basketball season. It seems to be a great way for people who did not have what it took to make the team to blow off steam after a game. The risks are minimal since mailboxes are unlikely to fight back. Few homeowners who have to make a living, and who need their rest, are likely to stay up half the night after a game on the off chance that their road will be the one that is hit.

If active defense is impractical, passive defense can be expensive. A man in a neighboring county poured his ordinary mailbox full of concrete, leaving a small cavity in the middle for mail. A student leaning out of the window of a speeding car took a swipe at it with a baseball bat. The bat shattered and the young man suffered a broken wrist. His parents sued, and collected damages.

Since my mailbox stands at a high point at the end of a straight stretch of road, it makes a very tempting target. I have lost track of the number of mailboxes I have replaced over the past twenty years.

I have long since stopped buying good aluminum mailboxes. I considered purchasing one of the "guaranteed for life" boxes that are advertised for three-figure prices, but discarded the idea. Could I be sued if they really are as good as claimed, and someone hurt himself on it? I decided I couldn't take the chance.

So when I found the pieces of my white plastic mailbox lying around the base of its cedar post the morning after a game a couple of years ago, I decided to try a different approach. Over the years I had become more and more aware of being a member of the Folk. As such it was my *wyrd* to live in the shadow of the runes. Since they were there for me, why not use them?

But how? I was not a rune master. After years of half-hearted study, I still could not recite the entire *futhark* from memory. And I had no one to ask for advice.

But I did have a lot of books, among them Frey Aswyn's *Leaves of Yggdrasil*. Freya, the namesake of the leader of the valkyries, may be the ultimate mistress of the direct approach. In her description of the *algiz* rune she leaves no doubt that this is the traditional rune of protection. When you look at its shape, that of a tree with upward spreading branches, or a strong man with upswept arms, you can feel its strength. This would be my rune.

Having picked my rune, I had to arrive at a color. Some writers pick different colors for each rune, with complex reasons for their choice. It seemed to me that since runes were often written in blood, it would be hard to go wrong if I used red.

Since I was going to trust in spiritual, rather than physical, strength I bought another plastic mailbox - the cheapest one I could find. I washed it thoroughly in detergent to remove the mold release wax, so the paint would adhere. It was time to paint my runes.

With paintbrush in hand, I considered the consequences of painting a strange symbol on a mailbox in the middle of a rural Christian community. Few people would know what it was, but it would draw a lot of attention, the direct opposite of what I wanted. After a lot of thought, I painted the rune on the outside of the back end of the box, the end that faces away from the road. I painted the same symbol on the inside of the door and on the inside of both sides of the box. It now has runic protection facing all four main points of the compass, but none of it is visible from the road.

Has it worked? Who can say? My mailbox has survived the last two basketball seasons intact, while other boxes on our road have suffered. But I cannot prove that it would not have without the runes. And there is the fact that when I went shopping for a replacement for my white mail box, I bought a black one.

There can be few people among the Folk who would make light of the power of the runes. I would not, or I would hardly have taken the time to carefully paint them. At the same time, there must be many who are aware of one of the most powerful truths of any faith and any age - the Gods and Goddesses are most likely to help those who help themselves! ⊕

Asatru Church honors Asgard

"Be all here blessed. May all ill be banished, all hatred cast out, and weal and well-being prevail, that we may listen to the wisdom within us and without us. In the sign of the Hammer, so may it be!"

BY STEPHEN A. MCNALLAN, Gothi

So begins another public religious service of the Asatru Community Church, now in its fourth month of, bringing the Aesir and the Vanir to our community.

When the AFA first announced our "church services," some muttered that we had sold out to Christianity - but as anyone who has attended our ceremonies can say, that's not the case! Quite the contrary; the ACC honors the Aesir and Vanir in ways entirely comfortable to the average Asatruar.

After the opening, we call on the Gods and Goddesses, asking them to give us their blessings, then I talk for a few minutes on some subject relevant to Asatru. This might be an exhortation to strive for higher spiritual development, or it might be a lesson on the nature of the Holy Powers. I tell a story from the myths. A reading, generally from one of the Eddas, concludes this part of the ceremony.

Up to this point we have dealt with the deities, so now we turn our attention to our human kin...*"In the heart of each of us do the Holy Ones dwell, as we strive for the best. As in one, so in many, for we are a host, a people, a Folk vigilant and mighty."* We state our will to be strong and free, and to endure despite all hardship.

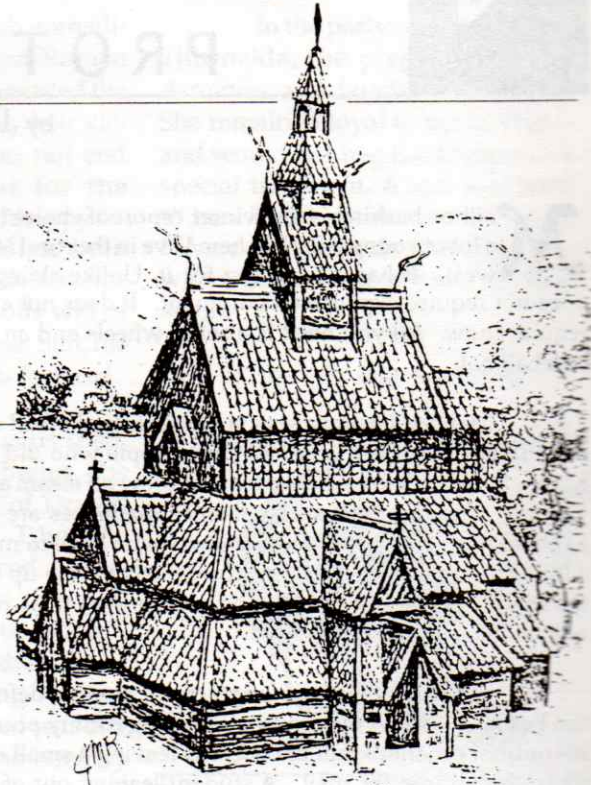
"Let the shining Sun ever find our Folk as it looks over the affairs of Midgard! Let our people be plentiful in the world, that all humankind know of our greatness! Let the tongue of our Folk be always heard in the land that the Gods may rejoice in us! Let us not be an autumn without a spring, but rather a people ever-born and ever new, with mighty deeds on the loom of Fate. To this we bend our hearts and wits, that we may live in the Gods, and

they in us. By our ancestors, and by our descendants yet unborn, so be it done..."

Having honored the Folk, we call upon Odin in song and then transition into a blot honoring one of our deities. The structure now is more familiar, with the usual invocation and the filling of mead with might. I walk in a circle around the standing people, sprinkling them with the power-infused fluid to give to them the blessing of the God or Goddess.

After the blot is ended, I change into mundane clothes and we chat over coffee and cookies. Once again Asgard is honored, and the Folk affirmed...

So come join us, and see for yourself! ⊕



MOOT POINT

Hello, Steve!

I have always felt that my place is in the Scandinavian variety of ancient belief, despite the fact that seven of my eight great-grandparents had English-derived surnames (The eighth, Jones, is Welsh). Been doing my genealogy recently with a cousin, and it turns out that one of my ancestors lived in northwest England, in a region of heavy Norwegian settlement. He was named Gamal de Pennington (usually spelled Gamel by the family). There is a runic inscription in the church just down the road from the family castle that evidently mentions Gamal (runic "KML") as having built the original church on the site. The runes are Scandinavian, but the inscription seems to be a mixture of Scandinavian and Early Middle English.

Looks like my gut reaction in choosing Scandinavian religion is right on target. I'd appreciate any insights you could shed on my experience.

Thanks,

J.

Heilsa!

Well, it could be coincidence - but the coincidental way that "chance" brought it to your attention makes me suspect some deeper working of Wyrd. The ancestral connection is a deep one, and persists even though most of us in modern times choose to downplay it, or to carefully overlook its metaphysical implications. I wonder if you could access "Gamal's" memories through some kind of regression technique?

Hail the Ancestors!

Steve

Hailsa, Steve:

Some great Asatrueer developments have taken place [here] in Sweden. A few new kindreds have been established and we really had a good fall blot a few weeks back, and a Yule blot is coming up soon. About three weeks ago, we met with kindreds from all around Sweden to form Midgardskretsen, which hopefully will be a network of independent kindreds similar to Asatru Alliance in organizational form.

I've informed the Asatru community here about your activities in Vinland, and people are duly impressed. What struck me, retrospectively, is that you've been able to get land and construct permanent places for worship...We're now trying to find land (more scarce here, comparatively) and there are two northern kindreds that opted to find land. We all said that we'll go there helping out to build a hof...

Another good experience was the generally high level of serious religious reflection and discussion; that also inspired us greatly.

We'll stay in touch - looking forward to hearing from you!

Tor ar stor!

M.G.

Heilsa!

We greatly enjoyed your visit to the US, and anticipate your return! Best greetings to all the Asatruar in Sweden!

Hail Thor!

Steve

Steve McNallen:

I am a shaman on the path of Asatru, and reading the FAQ [the "frequently asked questions" authored by Steve McNallen and posted on the Internet] I began to wonder. [Despite what you say] do we not worship stones and trees? Isn't the Windy Tree the actual pillar of our world?...Not worshipping the trees would mean not knowing their true power, their purpose in the Middle World, and their strong link to the sacred Runes!

The actual withdrawal of Asatru set in when a Christian monk cut down Donar's tree. Let us not forget this! Yes, I worship the trees, which are the source through which the land spirits' power springs into the world.

As for begging and pleading [which you say we do not do], it may not be done in the Christian, humiliating sense of the word, but at some point we all do.

I greatly appreciated the article about the ties to the Native American people...Yet I do take offense at the classification of Asatru as an ethnic religion. That remains a poor term, and it brought about the greatest harm the faith of my ancestors ever came to. So say the gods...I am conscious of lives among the Native Americans...

Greetings.

G.M.

Dear G.M.,

Let's take the three issues you raise, one at a time -

First, on worshipping trees: Maybe you're right, depending on what we want the word "worshipping" to mean. The text you're quoting was originally written in the 1980's, and my thinking has shifted. I now consider nature to be fundamentally ensouled, magically alive in a way that I did not understand fifteen years ago. I'm not much of a shaman, so I'll leave the direct perception of this animism to those who wish to pursue it, but I believe there is a way in which you are correct.

Now let's talk about begging and pleading. There isn't a "Christian way" of whining and crying that is bad, and an "Asatru way" of doing the same thing that is somehow okay. All begging and pleading is humiliating, no matter who is doing it, or why! I would bet that most of the people reading this journal have never humbled themselves before the Gods to get a wish granted. Did it ever happen in ancient times? Maybe. All peoples have weaklings among their number, but that doesn't mean we take them as our example. A bargain with the Mighty Powers, a deal, a gift for a gift - these are fair exchange; begging is something else again, and shameful. It implies that we have nothing with which to bargain, that we are without worth before the Gods. This is not true and certainly not elevating!

Sorry you don't like the reference to ethnic religion, but the simple fact is that all native religions are by nature ethnic or racial. Many of the Indians you admire would agree that their religion is inherently linked with their existence as a people. And as for remembering past lives among the Indians - well, I think that very unlikely unless you have Indian ancestors.

Hail the Gods!

Steve

CALENDAR

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

March 20 - OSTARA. Praise this Saxon Goddess of the springtime and the dawn, and revel in the rebirth of life at winter's end. "Easter" is a corruption of Ostara's name, and you can celebrate her day with bunnies, eggs, and the other heathen symbols that usually characterize this holiday.

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

April 9 - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR JARL HAKON OF NORWAY. Hakon restored the worship of the Gods after it had been suppressed by Christian missionaries. 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 9 - SUMARSDAG/SIGRBLOT. This was the first day of summer in the heathen 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 lie in the burial mound, and harbors deeds yet to bear fruit. Pour a libation to the Goddesses 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. Drink on Freya, take a walk in the forest or send flowers to a friend.

May 29 - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR GUTHROTH. This Norwegian martyr stood against the tyranny of the Christian fanatic Tryggvason, and urged others to do the same. For this, the king had his tongue cut out. Call an Asa-friend today - use your tongue to participate in Asatru!



