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of the Asatru Folk Assembly

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

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

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Change YOURSELF!

STEPHEN A. McNALLEN

... and you will change thousands!

He had needed a place to stay for a day or two. Two weeks later, he was still in our house. His eagerness to get a job and help us build an Asatru community seemed to evaporate as the days went by. We had invested tens of hours, and a couple of hundred bucks, in getting him established as a contributing member of our local group, but this adventure was quickly heading for disaster...

Another person. The phone rings. I pick it up. He tells me that my voice had sounded tense when I spoke to him last week. He assumes I was angry at him - listening to the lies told by his enemies, no doubt. It was a shame I couldn't be a loyal and honorable person, like him. Why was I such an ungrateful jerk?

The sketches above are only slightly disguised descriptions of Asatruar I have met. No, they're not typical. But even one such person holds us back, tarnishes our reputation, and makes it harder for us to achieve Asatru's potential. I sigh in sadness when I think of the fine men and women who, upon meeting defectives of this sort, have headed for the exit - and never returned. As an Asatru person who is not like them, you should be sighing, too!

Consider, though, that they are only the worst examples of a more generalized problem - namely, a lack of spiritual evolution. Folks like them are fond of saying that "nobody's perfect" - and they're right; none of us are. We may not have their particular set of faults, but none of us are where we *could* be. (If we were, we'd be Odin!)

The Need for Evolution

Does it matter? If Asatru works for us as individuals, isn't that enough?

My answer to that last question is - "No." Sure, I'll step on some toes with that reply, but I have to call it the way I see it. It's not enough just to sort of stumble along, failing dramatically to meet even the minimal Asatru standards. Insensitive of me to mention it, but it's true.

Here is why: We are trying to build Asatru as a strong, coherent way of life in the modern age. We have come a long way. Years ago, in the old AFA, drinking was a big problem - but anyone who has been at our gatherings in recent years can testify that folks who have too much alcohol are rare, and they tend to not get invited back. Similarly, we have turned away those addicted to negativity, or who have other agendas they would impose on us. We are much more attractive to normal people with real lives, jobs, and families. It's much better that it was - but it's not yet good enough. Forging the sword of Asatru requires high-grade ore, impurities burned away, tempered and hardened by spiritual discipline into a fine blade.

Asatru may be the last hope for the European-descended peoples. I won't attempt to justify that statement, but all the evidence - demographic, cultural, political, spiritual - screams that we, as a people, are in trouble. We have a duty to the Gods, to the ancestors, and to those yet to be born, to ensure the survival and the high status of our kind!

To fulfill our responsibilities, we must develop our virtues, our capabilities, and our spiritual prowess to the highest possible level.

Change Yourself!

Years ago, I had a friend who was deeply involved in politics. He tried it all - newsletters, meetings, distributing literature, forming a community. But as the months turned into years he realized that there was a problem: Namely, the quality of the people with whom he was trying to work! Some were stupid. Others were bright...but twisted with hate and negativity. Others were drunks, or incompetents, or cheats, or unreliable. Almost no one met the standards needed to form a functioning community of dedicated activists.

Finally, my friend jettisoned the riff-raff. No more meetings. No more newsletters. No more entertaining bums and hate-addicts. His ideals remained unchanged, but he turned to other methods to promote them. In the years that followed, he worked with a relative handful of idealists, teaching meditation techniques for personal spiritual evolution. He accomplished more - for his cause and for himself - in the next year or two than in all the painful and discouraging years that had gone before. "Change yourself and you will change thousands!" he wrote. And he was right.

The way to purify the iron of Asatru lies in spiritual evolution. With effort, we can transform it into a fine steel sword with which to hack out our destiny.

Strangely enough, Ananda - a yoga community here in Nevada County - provides a shining inspiration for us. Now, yoga is not really my thing, so it took me a few years to overcome my preconceptions about these folks. In time, came to

Some Asatruar rationalize their lack of effort on behalf of the Gods - and lack of monetary commitment - as a sign of "independence" and "freedom." These are the Asatruar who think they're being generous when they pitch in the change from their beer money (Don't laugh; I've literally seen this!). Similarly, they scoff at any form of spiritual discipline - "We're rough, tough Vikings and we don't do stuff like that." They would have nothing but contempt for the yoga practitioners at Ananda, and label them as misguided and exploited. But are the folks at Ananda mindless robots? Hypnotized sheep? On the contrary, I found them intelligent, friendly, and dedicated. They are doing a lot of things right, and the root of it all is *spiritual practice* aimed at *spiritual evolution*.

A Plan for Spiritual Evolution

We all need to work at improving ourselves - not randomly, not in a hit-or-miss manner, but in a systematic and deliberate way.

So how do you do this?

1. Assess yourself -

The first step is to take a look at where you are. Edred Thorsson, in his *Nine Doors of Midgard*, describes a procedure in which the individual makes two lists - one reflecting his or her desirable traits, and another of undesirable characteristics. This isn't something to be done in a few minutes; a number of days should be given to this task. Simply put, the idea is to increase or strengthen the good points, and decrease or eliminate the bad ones. Some of you may want to assign a rune to each trait, and use that as a basis for affirmations or runic exer-

As are the metal from which the sword is forged. If we are weak, Asatru will be weak. If we are strong, Asatru will reflect that strength.

Today is a good day to start!

Change yourself, and you will

change the world.

the beings that live there, physical and subtle alike. Nourish the land wights, the spirits of the place, with edible and drinkable gifts. Try to form a link with them through a declaration of good will and friendship. And then - follow through with some actual deed in sup-

remind yourself not to take the easy way out.

3. Strive to serve -

Asatru certainly has an individual, private aspect, but we do not live in a vacuum. Our spiritual practice should not be so self-centered that we slip into a sort of narcissism, isolated from others. Our talents and capabilities should be brought to bear in service to the Gods, to the growth of Asatru in general, and to the Folk.

4. Exercise your spirituality daily -

The Ananda people meditate twice a day, in addition to numerous other religious duties and events. Each of us should seek our equivalent of these daily devotions. My personal routine includes *hamingja* work (meal blessings, a washing/purification rite, Greeting to Sunna), *ond* and *othr* work (in the form of meditation exercises which concentrate on, and manipulate, the subtle energies associated with breath), and runic exercises. Most days include a physical workout, as well.

Your own practice will be different, something adapted to your needs. The important thing is to be consistent, to find a program of self-improvement which you can maintain over a long period of time. An overly-strenuous regimen, which you drop after a few days, is not as good as a more modest one that becomes a long-term habit.

The future of Asatru depends on us.

We are the metal from which the sword is fashioned. If we are weak, Asatru will be weak. If we are strong, Asatru will reflect that strength.

Today is a good day to start!

"Change yourself, and you will change thousands"



May 1st -

Earth Work '99!

One way of advancing your spiritual evolution is to link with the Earth and the powers that reside in it. This is something that the AFA is promoting for the third consecutive year now, with Earth-work '99.

It's unfortunate that sometimes abandon environmentalism to the overly-sensitive, the pacifist, and those who want even more intervention from a government already running amok over our liberties. The Earth *does* belong to us all - gun owners and meat eaters included!

This May Day (which conveniently falls on a Saturday), go to a place outdoors that is significant to you. It may be a forest clearing, a rock in the desert, a park, or your back yard. For our purposes, it may be even more important to honor those "not so natural" places where life is trying to keep a foothold, rather than to seek out pristine wilderness!

In this place, make an offering to the beings that live there, physical and subtle alike. Nourish the land wights, the spirits of the place, with edible and drinkable gifts. Try to form a link with them through a declaration of good will and friendship. And then - follow through with some actual deed in support of the environment!

TIME FOR TRIBES

STEPHEN A. MCNALLAN

In the previous article, I mentioned that Asatru has both a private and a group aspect. While the two are really inseparable, it can be useful to look at our ancestral way from these two complementary perspectives.

There is a tendency in some parts of modern Asatru to think mostly of the individual - in terms of values, personal behavior, inner fulfillment, and the like. A few pages ago we saw how this personal dimension shapes the collective religious experience, and helps determine how the larger group fares: By growing spiritually as individuals, we can help all of Asatru to be stronger.

For the next couple of pages, though, I want to write more about the group, or "tribal," element of Asatru - ways in which our ancestral religion can impact the world in the coming millenium.

It doesn't take a genius to see that there are many things in the world, and even quite close to home, that need fixing. The far left, the far right, and plenty of people near the center of the spectrum all realize that something is wrong. There may be disagreement about the problems and about the solutions, but the overall urge to "find a better way" is a common one.

Like any idealistic and motivated person, I have given a lot of thought to just how to bring about social change. There are the ordinary means in a democratic republic - the ballot box, lobbying, educating the public. More radically, there are the revolutionary techniques of the left and the right. But none of these are appropriate for us, either because they are destructive of the social fabric, or lend themselves to totalitarianism, or are not effective for our ends.

Speaking of our ends - just what are our goals? In social terms, what do we want to accom-

plish? Our guide in these matters is the Declaration of Purpose of the Asatru Folk Assembly. A look at this document reveals that our intention is to re-create not just the religion, but also the social context in which it existed in ancient times. In other words, we want our own functioning tribal systems, our own way of interacting with each other, our own way of governing ourselves and regulating our internal affairs. Asatru as a religion cannot and must not be separated from the whole of our ancestral culture.

The best way to get what we want is not to beg the government or some other outside entity to give it to us. We don't need anyone's permission to build our way of life - we need only begin immediately to *live our vision*. Nor are we starting from scratch: The Asatru community is, on one level, an accomplished fact. We already communicate with each other, interact in countless ways, and consider ourselves part of a group of men and women with common ideals and aspirations. The next step is to tighten this up, to intensify it, to pursue it deliberately rather than casually. Instead of just letting things go, we must consciously and purposefully rebuild the social structure of our ancestors. It is time for the new Euro-tribes to be born.

Some Asatruar will choose not to take part in this adventure, preferring instead to practice alone or with small independent groups. So be it. We honor them and value them as a part of the larger community. But for many of us, there is the realization that it is time for the next step in the evolution of Asatru!

The Allemani, the Goths, the Iceri, and all the other tribes of our ancient Folk grew in a natural, organic way. There was no preconceived plan. The rebirth of our peoples must, likewise, have room for natural development. Because of the time in which we live, however, we must facilitate the

process. Consider: There are two ways to grow a garden. You can thoughtlessly stick seeds in the ground and hope for the best - or you can plan your garden carefully, plant with care, and lovingly nourish, water, and weed to get the best and the fastest growth. This second approach is the one we must use in bringing our new Euro-tribes to life.

One way to encourage this re-tribalization is simply to promote the tribal ideal, building the self-help systems that will be the lifeblood of the future tribes. We should provide for ourselves many of the things being given us by the outside society: From employment to care for the needy, from education to preventive medicine, we can help *ourselves* and in the process of doing so, become a tightly-knit community. All of these are things we will discuss at the Gathering of the Tribes this coming June.


But there is another essential ingredient, and that is - wisdom. The founding of tribes, the seeding of nations to last through the centuries, calls for leadership that is not merely capable, but inspired by the *Blaze Powers*. Many of the ancient kingdoms traced their leaders' descent from the Odin, who imparted to them the fiery *othr* as a sign of spiritual evolution. And here, we tie back in to the subject of the previous article - we must all strive to grow in might and wisdom, to help this task of the ages to succeed.

All Asatruar ought to contribute to this work, and some will be called to give and to do more. In times past, I have worked at creating a course for the training of priests/priestesses/leaders, in the AFA. Every time I tried to complete the outline for it, it

seemed woefully inadequate, incomplete. Now I know why! I was not thinking far enough ahead. There is a need for training in lore, and in ritual techniques - the sort of skills needed to lead a local group in the practice of our religion. But this is not enough for the men and women who would seed, and *lead*, the coming Euro-tribes.

The Druids of the Celtic nations studied for twenty years, memorizing an immense amount of lore and growing in spiritual might through techniques (such as breathing exercises and prolonged meditation in darkness) which we can only dimly discern through the intervening centuries. In the Germanic world, the Heruli guarded and transmitted the sacred knowledge of the runes across tribal boundaries. Something like these specialists are what we need to give birth to the new tribes of the next millennium. The sooner we begin to develop these women and men of might, powerful *othr*-filled leaders with beliefs, hearts, and heads full of fire, the sooner we can bring our people out of the darkness and into the light.

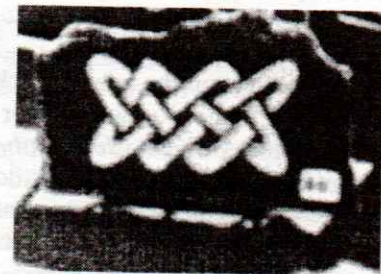
A network of systems can be started more or less immediately - indeed, we have already begun. The training of religious and temporal leaders of unprecedented prowess is a longer-range project, but the foundations can be laid at once (I have some ideas on this, you will not be surprised to learn!). And the actual mechanics, the details of how to build anew the tribes of old? These are techniques still in the making, and we'll have more to say on them another day!

See you at the Gathering of the Tribes! 

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June 24 -27

Gathering of the Tribes

The Asatru Folk Assembly has hosted dozens of local and regional events, but until now there has not been a national meeting specifically for the Asatru Folk Assembly. *Well, it's time!*

June 24-27, in Northern California, we will hold the Gathering of the Tribes. This will not be "just another Asatru gathering;" it will be the beginning of a new phase in our movement's history. If you are an AFA member or sympathizer, we hope you'll be here!

The core of the Gathering of the Tribes, as the name indicates, is tribalism. It is time to form organic groupings of our Folk, and we will begin that undertaking during these four days. I have put a lot of preparation into some ideas which I hope will excite and inspire you as we carve our path into the next century.

We'll also address intentional communities as the core of these evolving tribes, and take a long look at the social, political, and religious environments in which Asatru will operate in the coming century.

Other items on the agenda include a very relevant talk by Dr. James Russell, author of *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, a class on y2k preparation by the Back to Basics Guild, a presentation on the challenges of forming an intentional community by an expert in the field, and a traditional weapons demonstration by the Warrior Guild.

We've long felt that the women of Asatru needed to take a higher profile - so our *gythjur* or priestesses will be more visible as we honor the Mighty Powers. Womanly wisdom will also express itself in seithwork or runecasting. There will be a blessing of the children, as well.

As if all this wasn't enough, the Western Regional Thing of the Asatru Alliance will meet during the course of the Gathering - making this event especially attractive to members of Alliance kindreds, and setting new precedents for inter-organizational cooperation in Asatru.

Those who attend the Gathering of the Tribes will remember it always, as the time when "business as usual" and "status quo Asatru" were burned up on the fire of passion and forward movement. You will want to be here! &

The Asatru Folk Assembly continues to grow *month by month* and we want you to be a part of it!

- Get "the breaking news" as a recipient of BEAR CLAW Online, and immediately send us your comments; or read a hard-copy version at your leisure.
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A Tribute to



DICK JOHNSON

On December 12 of this last year, Dick Johnson shucked off an ailing, pain-ridden body and departed Midgard. He was 78 years old.

To all but a handful of you, this is not a statement that conveys a lot of meaning - another name, another death; it happens countless times a day. But there is a story here, one relevant to the history of Asattu in Vinland.

After returning from four years of active Army duty, in 1976, I had moved to the San Francisco Bay Area and was living in Berkeley. Upon returning Stateside, I thumbed through the card file of *Runestone* readers, located a few people in the immediate area, and made tentative approaches toward a meeting.

Dick was the first to respond, and I remember well the day he walked into my upstairs apartment on Channing Way. In the years that followed, his insurance office at 1000 University Avenue became the focus for organized Asattu in the Bay Area. We offered blot in his back room, and met with a few other memorable renegades - people like Hal and Gerald and John - who dared remember the old Gods and Goddesses of our Folk... Sometimes we gathered in nearby Tilden Park in the Berkeley hills; occasionally without assemble at places like Rodeo Beach - but Dick was always a constant feature. He was there for the public Odinnot in Codornices Park, and at the first Althing, in 1980.

Esther was always the warm hostess, and although Karen and Linda had their own lives and were seldom in evidence, I remember them as two very different, but very attractive, young women.

Dick moved from Berkeley to the nearby community of Richmond, then escaped the Bay Area entirely and took refuge in Klamath Falls, Oregon. We didn't see each other much after that, but we'd exchange the occasional phone call or letter, and I sent him *The Runestone* as a matter of course. I knew he was ill with Parkinson's Disease and severe anemia, and the maladies took their toll on him as the years went by.

When Esther's note arrived to tell me that Dick had died, I was hardly surprised. But I was saddened, and knew that an era had died with him.

Fare well, Dick. We'll all follow you eventually, so save us a seat on the mead benches. The fight continues here, and we'll be thirsty when we arrive.

LAND!

The Quest for Tribal Turf

STEPHEN A. McNALLEN

Land.

Jack London wrote of how our people needed to sink roots in it. Patriots, farmers, ranchers, mystics - all sing its praises for reasons that are both different and the same. Tribes need it, and if they don't have it, they undertake vast migrations to find it. Conceived on it, nurtured by it, buried in it, it is *boden* for our *blut*.

And we want some for the AFA...before the end of 1999.

It's no secret that we are building an Asatru community in northern California. We've done our initial planning. Now it's time to put the ideas on the soil.

Here's the vision: Twenty to a hundred acres that is both beautiful and useful, inspiring and practical. On it there are, first and foremost, ritual sites - groves, a hof, even a stone circle or standing stones. A sacred spring? An underground chamber modeled after megalithic tombs, for rites of initiation and transformation? All these can find a place here.

In a separate area, there are headquarters for the AFA, sheds for light industry, gardens, ponds and windmills. Camping areas and cabins house Asatruar attending retreats and classes, or provide a getaway for members who just can't stand another day in the city. Meeting facilities, a library, a museum, a nature trail, a school full of Asa-kids - all these would eventually find a home on this special piece of soil.

Then there are the grave mounds, where our noble dead sleep in the earth awaiting rebirth. Ringed by rocks and by memorial stones, they rest among their kin in land dedicated to the Gods.

Giving birth to this community will take careful preparation and the right people.

It will also take money.

"Money" is a dirty word in Asatru. Ask first, and there will always be someone to accuse you of greed or of hidden Christian tendencies, as if there was no difference between an endeavor of this kind and the exhortations of the typical televangelist. (Perhaps we need to remember that *fehu* is the first rune of the futhark!)

To make a realistic plan, we need to know just what you, AFA members and *Runestone* readers, will support.

For example: People in the San Francisco Bay Area pay four to six thousand dollars for burial plots in a very ordinary cemetery, where they will be surrounded by the bodies of strangers. Wouldn't you pay a similar amount to know your remains, consecrated by an Asatru funeral, would be interred in a proper mound? If ten - *only ten!* - of the people reading these words responded affirmatively and backed that with their pocketbooks, we would have the downpayment for a very nice piece of land.

On a smaller scale, how many of you would pay a hundred dollars for a tree to be planted in memory of a kinsman? These could make a significant contribution to land payments.

How many of you would pay a more modest amount for camping privileges at such a community, or use of its other facilities?

On an enclosed sheet, I am asking each of you to indicate just what your level of support would be. *This is not a binding declaration*, but we need to get an idea of just how much you want this vision to come to pass. Please give it your careful consideration, and return it to us.

A new wind is blowing through Asatru and through the AFA. The time has come to break through the obstacles of the past, to demolish the status quo and continue our forward march. Let it begin! ▲

There is a great deal of truth in the old saying that "Most men live lives of quiet desperation." Modern culture lacks a center that has substance, or any reason to draw us into a meaningful existence. We go to work, zone out on our particular form of entertainment, and occupy ourselves with things that have little connection to the deeper impulses that call within us. The sense of wonder and awe is dim. I think we forget we live in a universe full of magic and mystery.

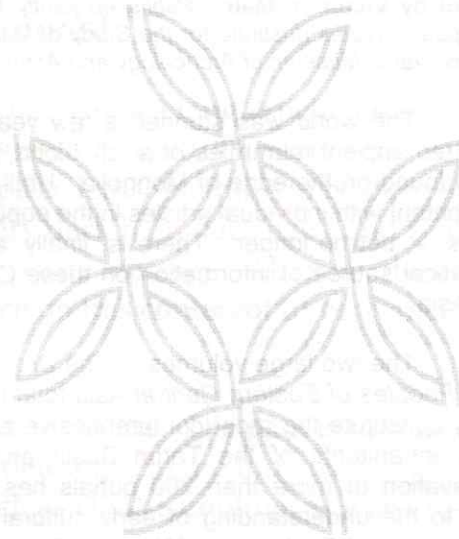
This massive disconnection, this fragmentation, drives many to drugs or to alcohol as a way of numbing the throbbing emptiness. Others waste their lives in front of an endless supply of witless sitcoms and fatuous dramas that distract us from anything meaningful. For others, religion is the opiate. So I see a lot of wannabees, fluffbunnies, and the simply lost wandering around the spiritual cafeteria taking bits and pieces to try to construct a life. At the risk of sounding judgemental, the spiritual landscape of modern America is awash with Zen masters, White shamans, evangelists, and New Age mystics. There may be a lot of sincerity in all of this, but very little of it seems to have any real impact in changing how we are, or helping us to understand who we are. It's a massive deception most people buy into, because it's better than the alternative - a tedious monotony until we die.

If all of this sounds harsh, it's because I've been there. After years of playing the game, I wanted off the hamster wheel. I was spiritually deadened, and wondered if there really was anything to this life other than an accidental collision of random molecules.

The idea that we have an ancestral soul, an ancient way of being in and looking at the world, was a revelation to me. In all honesty, I am still very new to Asatru - I still have those moments of wondering if Odin and Freya (who I sense are my patrons) are just another dead end or affectation. Time will tell with all this, as I'm not likely to meet Odin on a bench in the park!

When I look at Asatru or Odinism, it seems like more than just the search for individual enlightenment. It raises the issue of Folk, a people of whom I'm a part. Suddenly I'm looking down a line of ancestors who stretch back into the mists of time. Forty thousand years or more of ancestors, kith and kin. It's because of them that I'm in this world now. They made it possible with their living and dying to keep my family line in existence. I sense they are asking

OUR



DUTY

in the
"Age of Unqualified Decadence"

something of me...that I represent them in this place and time. In another sense I *am* them in this moment of time and space.

This will probably sound ridiculous, but there are moments of stillness when I sense that all of them are watching me - a silent moment of balance when their attention and hopes and expectations are focused on me. I can almost see them arising from the feasting tables in Valhalla and Tir-na-Nog and raising their drinking horns to me - and waiting. Waiting for what I am not sure. This description sounds so inadequate compared to the meaning I want to transmit, but it is the best I can do. What it signifies is that my individual journey now has a bigger element. It's no longer just my own search for something real, for meaning. Somehow it all becomes tied in with the life and living of my ancestors and my Folk. There is a

BOOK REVIEW

The Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Peoples of Eastern Central Asia

Edited by Victor H. Mair. Published jointly by the *Journal of Indo-European Studies* (Institute for the Study of Man) and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology, 1998.

The world was stunned a few years ago when several hundred ancient mummies of a tall, blond, European-like people were found on the edge of Mongolia. Until now, we have had to be content with individual articles in the popular and the academic press - but no longer. There is, finally, a comprehensive and analytical source of information on these Caucasians from Central Asia.

The two large volumes of *The Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Peoples of Eastern Central Asia* total more than 900 pages. They constitute the most comprehensive available report on the early inhabitants of the Tarim Basin and surrounding area. Excavation of more than 200 burials has revealed information vital to the understanding of early cultural contact between the civilizations of Eastern and Western Eurasia, and of the acquisition of Bronze Age technology, horses, wheeled carriages and other artifacts by Asian civilization from Western Eurasia.

In these two clothbound books, distinguished authorities from a dozen nations have contributed a total of 46 hefty papers on archeology, migration, nomadism, linguistics, genetics, physical anthropology, metallurgy, textiles, geography and climatological history, mythology, and ethnology.

The information compiled here has important implications for questions such as the origin of the Indo-Europeans and the development of civilization in East Asia, but the general theories discussed have implications for modern issues. For example, these ancient Caucasians may have migrated from their homeland to the Tarim Basin because of world-wide climatic change, a phenomenon we may well face in the coming century. Comments on how language barriers slow the exchange of genes between groups are relevant in the light of today's debate on bilingual education. We who face the challenges of the next few decades would do well to learn from not only history, but prehistory as well.

These are magnificent volumes in terms of information and in sheer quality of production. I strongly recommend them to anyone who wants to know just what was happening in ancient Central Asia - and how it affects us today.

The Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Peoples of Eastern Central Asia may be ordered from: Institute for the Study of Man, 1133 13th St. NW, Washington DC 20005. Their telephone number is (202)371-2700, and the fax is (202) 371-1523. The cost is \$165, plus \$4.50 postage, and they


yearning here that I don't fully understand.

The Asatru Folk Assembly, the Odinic Rite, the Asatru Alliance - these have taken on the task of reminding our Folk who we are. This seems a mission of epic proportions. Our people are weak and timid. They've forgotten what makes them great. I know that some try to blame other groups for this - but I don't agree. We are our own problem. No one took our greatness from us. We surrendered it. Whether we are Northern Europeans, Jews, Blacks or other peoples, we have all been fed the same drivel. We are all hypnotized and seduced by the same foolishness that is destroying us, the People of the North.

I wonder also about the job of awakening our people. If the Odin Brotherhood is correct, we live in the Age of Unqualified Decadence and are our own worst enemy. The idea that we are moving into an age of peace and enlightenment is a fantasy, serving to confuse us as we sink into the hive mentality. Rather than enlightenment, we become specialized worker bees assigned to our tasks, with our roles controlled and managed.

So, if the Odin Brotherhood is right, where does it leave us? How do we reach through the fog and get our Folk to hear? Again, if the OB is right we live in a time of declining sensibility. It is a time when heroes are needed. The world is full of manufactured celebrities and synthetic personalities - but few heroes. Can we reach through the cult of personality, the celebration of the trite, to the place where mystery once again lives in us?

Our ancestors had community, kith and kin. We have alienation and isolation. Can we move to the former and live as a Folk? Will we see warrior bands sharing hardship and emerging transfigured? Can we find a common life?

The task is before us. 

NEWS *from the AFA*

THE SAGA OF KENNEWICK MAN continues!

The February issue of the science magazine *Discover* contains a long article discussing the possible presence of Europeans in the Americas as long as 20,000 years ago! Although we felt the illustrations accompanying the piece left something to be desired - all the reconstructions of ancient Americans had very dark hair, dark eyes, and typically Indian features - much of the text sent the opposite message. All in all, the article was a sort of grudging admission of our presence on this continent in very ancient times.

Study of Kennewick Man's bones has begun in Seattle. The plan is to commence with "non-invasive" investigations - out of deference to the Indians - and then to commence with more "destructive" tests such as DNA sampling, as a last resort.

Less encouraging are indications that the team set up to study Kennewick Man's remains are getting ready to play out a **pro-Indian, pro-government script**. As one newspaper account put it recently, "*Under the government's definition, any skeleton older than documented European arrival to what is now the United States is American Indian. That means that if Kennewick Man is more than about 500 years old, the government will try to find the closest American Indian tribe to give the bones to - even if the bones are shown with near certainty to be of European or Asian descent.*"

A predictable scenario might run like this: After a series of measurements and various tests, the carbon-14 dating will be redone to confirm that Kennewick Man is more than 500 years old. At that point, the powers-that-be will declare him to be "Native American" and he will be given to the Indians with no DNA testing done. End of story.

The injustice of the government's policy is obviously discriminatory against European-Americans, and we will not quietly tolerate it.

Attorney Needed!

As this issue heads off the the presses, we are in need of a lawyer to replace Mr. Clinton. The case may be winding down, or heading for a new round, which may land us in the Federal Supreme Court. Remember, our issue with the government (not the Indians) concerns "equal treatment under the law" (Amendment #14).

If you know of a lawyer qualified to appear before Federal Circuit Court in Portland, please forward information on to us.

AFA's New FAX number: 530-272-8142

FEAST OF VALI IN NEVADA CITY

February 13 saw twenty-some adults and a handful of children meet in Nevada City to honor the Mighty Powers and lay the groundwork for the upcoming Gathering of the Tribes.

Blot was given by Sheila - the first time a woman has officiated at one of our local AFA gatherings. She called upon Vali and upon several other of the Gods and Goddesses, giving our gifts and asking theirs in return. For a long time, we have sought a more active role for the women in our community, and Sheila's ritual is the first concrete step toward this objective.

Business revolved around the need for AFA land - and generating ideas as to how it might be acquired! The Gathering of the Tribes was discussed, along with the ideas of community and seeding the emerging tribes which will carry Asatru and the Folk into the twenty-first century.

Children were given a special blessing - something we intend to do more often, as a tribe without children is doomed - and we were all well-fed at the feast that followed!

SEITH GUILD REVIVED

Since the departure of guildmaster Ragnar Schuett for life in the Army, the Seith Guild has been adrift without a helmsman. On the eve of taking this publication to the printers, we are pleased to announce the appointment of J. Stephen Mathis of Washington state to head up this high-interest guild. Please send your ideas and comments to Mr. Mathis c/o AFA.

A WEDDING



Steve McNallen had the pleasure of performing wedding rites for Stephen Von Till and Kristin Lange on January 23, in San Francisco. They exchanged not only rings (into which their blood had been poured during the forging) but also swords - blades which had been in their respective families, and which symbolized the coming together of their ancestral lines.

About two hundred people were in attendance. Most were men and women who knew nothing of Asatru when they arrived, but much more when they departed! Let it never be said that Gothi McNallen hesitates to instruct near-strangers on the rudiments of Asatru...Hail, Kristin and Stephen!

BLESSED BIRTHS

A welcome to our youngest Asafolk!

A son, born February 19, to Osferth and Heidrun of the Odinic Rite Vinland.

A son to AFA members Scott and Phaedra Buckley.

A son, born January 5, to Eric and Belinda Lowe.

PUBLICATIONS

Huginn & Muninn, P.O. Box 1159, 121 Reykjavik, Iceland. Dedicated to the Nyall philosophy associated with Asatru in Iceland. \$10 US, preferably cash.

Lina, P.O. Box 75952, Oklahoma City, OK 73147. Quarterly journal of Frigga's Web. \$20 annually, \$28 international rate. Make check or money order payable to Frigga's Web.

OR Briefing, P.O. Box 2022, Sandusky, OH 44871-2022. The voice of the Odinic Rite; always good for a fresh perspective on our religion. \$8 per year for non-members, payable to the Odinic Rite Vinland.

Renewal, Box 4333, University of Melbourne, Victoria, 2052 Australia. Very good writing, particularly "Ota's Talking Point," and lots of information that you won't find anywhere else. \$12 Australian, plus \$4 for airmail.

Runa, P.O. Box 557, Smithville, TX 78957. Publication of the Rune Guild; edited by Ian Read of England. Sample copies: \$6.

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

Vor Tru, P.O. Box 961, Payson, AZ 85547. Journal of the Asatru Alliance. An important publication which has grown with the Asatru community for twenty years. Over 80 pages of content. Highly recommended. \$18 for four issues.

Hnikars' Folkish Asatru Page (Odin's Nation's News) A comprehensive online update of all the breaking news and significant articles within the Asatru community. <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/5056/index.html>.

VENDORS

Heidnischwerk, P.O. Box 17656, Portland, OR 97217-0656. Divinely inspired wall-sculptures of Freyr, Tyr, Odin, Thor, and Freya by artist Markus Wolfe. Cast in plaster with your choice of finish.

Heritage & Tradition, C P. 244, Succ. P.A.T., Montreal, Quebec H1B 5K3 Canada. Creators of numismatics, jewelry, and other quality collectibles with Asatru motifs.

Northern Visions, P.O. Box 407, Georgetown, CA 95635 (asatru@cwo.com) Polished-granite pieces cut with Asatru and Celtic designs. Free catalog. All items are made by AFA members.

Wodanesdag Press, P.O. Box 190, Union Bay, British Columbia V0R 3B0, Canada. Asatru inspired products including booklets, stationery, t-shirts, mead labels, and much more!

KINDREDS

Calasa Kindred (California)
www.runestone.org/calkin.html

Raven Kindred of the AA (California)
www.asatru.org

Ulfhethnar Kindred (California)
www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/6939/

Ulfheim Kindred (California)
www.home.earthlink.net/~ulfpakki

High Reaches Kindred (Colorado)
[www/highreaches.com](http://www.highreaches.com)

Wolfgar Kindred (Montana)
www.members.tripod.com/~Grauwolf/wolfgardindex.html

Eagle Kindred (Utah)
www.eagleut/~eagle

ORGANIZATIONS

ASATRU FOLK ASSEMBLY
www.runestone.org

Asatru Alliance
www.jcave.com/~eagle

Odinic Rite
www.lrbcg.com/heathen/

Odinic Rite Vinland
www.lrbcg.com/heathen/orv.html

Wodanesdag Press
www.odin.org

