



THE RUNSTONE



WINTER 1993

NUMBER 6

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

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

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

CALENDAR

DECEMBER 9 - Our observances this month start with a Day of Remembrance for Egil Skallagrimsson - warrior, poet, and devout follower of Odin. Read excerpts from his saga on this day (or look him up in your collection of books on the vikings). Write a poem, or do something bold.

DECEMBER 20 - Coming just before the winter solstice, Mother Night is when the new year is born. The traditional twelve days of Yule begin now. This is a season for honoring the family line and rejoicing in the sun's renewal. Celebrate Yule with all the ancient trimmings, such as wreaths of evergreen, a "Christmas" tree, and good cheer. Visit kin. Tell your children family stories and show them photos of their ancestors. Drink a toast to the God Frey, and to the reborn sun.

DECEMBER 31 - If Mother Night is the beginning of the Yuletide, Twelfth Night is its culmination. Meditate on the past year - what you did, what you wish you had done. Take stock and set a course for the future. Making New Year's resolutions is an old Teutonic custom that goes back at least to the Viking Age, and perhaps much earlier. In the old days, these oaths were sworn on a boar sacred to Frey.

FRONT



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UP FRONT

Greetings and Glad Jol to all our readers! Here we are again, our evenings dark and our stoves lit against the cold. As you sit cosy in that deep armchair, pick up your new **RUNESTONE** and travel in comfort with Gods and fellow pagans as you explore the following pages.

First, Steve reminds us of the big picture in his Yuletide look at the eternal continuities of Nature - wheels within wheels in the great solar cycles.

From revolution to evolution, personal, that is; this magazine's favorite theme is reiterated in Maddy's piece on Odin as an inspiration and model in the often painful quest for wisdom.

Rest awhile with **Bits and Pieces** and then ride back in time with a **RUNESTONE** faithful from our AFA days, Brian Regan. In his always impressive manner, Brian scans Roman Imperial history to back up his assertion that Asatruar, not Christians, are truly in tune with Nature.

When you've digested this main course material, you'll be ready for something light and cool - how about *isa*? Steve has ideas on bringing this rune into our daily life to help us stay focused and calm.

Sound like something you could use? Read on, and practice!

Finally, Maddy looks back to summer days of lakes and mountains. If your fire is getting low, warm up with this vision of girls and Goddesses.

And don't forget our usual features: **Moot Point**, the **Calendar**, and **Questions and Answers**. We hope it all adds up to a rousing good read in the midst of your seasonal celebrations. **Hail Frey, Hail Freya!**

-Steve McNallen
and Maddy Hutter

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Snow, Sun, and Survival

Not Just Another YULE Article

By Steve McNallen

The wheel in the sky keeps on turning...and I don't know where I'll be tomorrow" thunder the lyrics of a popular rock ballad. Behind the superficiality of the song lies a thousand generations of race memory. From continent to continent, from age to age, our dogged Indo-European ancestors followed the orb in the sky. The spinning spokes on their carts and war chariots imitated the glowing source of life that went before them in their migrations.

But sometimes the sun disappears. Not just for a day or two behind some clouds - everyone knows clouds are transitory - but for a long time, in the depths of winter. Life goes underground, dormant. Ice cools the fire of Nature's beating heart; white covers the places that were green before. The deepest, oldest layers in our brain wonder if we, or any life at all, will survive the harshness.

Yule is the antidote to this primitive-but-valid fear. It is the hope beyond faith, the longing based on harrowing experience, that the sun will in fact return, and that springtime is not just a false and faithless memory. Yule is the turning of the sun. All the other risings and fallings, waxings and wanings, that fill the world around us are - like the turning of those still-remembered chariot wheels - imitations of this solar drama.

As you decorate your Yule tree and put out offerings for your ancestors this year, give a thought to those grander patterns. The sun's continuity is the continuity of the clan; the solar disc is reborn from Yule to Yule, but it remains the same sun nevertheless. So it is with us and our forebears, ourselves recycled, ancestors and descendants merely new editions of the eternal Folk.

There are larger cycles... waves on which a year... Great civilizations... gods and heroes of might... Chimes. But nothing is lost... Some things await Nietzsche... among us in a more predictable... now, our own Folk is not... messages from across the... Wiggard. We faithfully... keep our tribes intact... triumph. Though... know that the snow... greatness that will, in time...

Rejoice, Asatir! The... does, indeed, keep on turning... will follow in chariot... being horizon, the great... upon are the illusion...

PORTRAITS FROM

...sage character... Asatir. Renewal... men and women... Like the Deep-Minded... in 1986 AFK Calendar...

Living

by Steve McNallen

A Complete Guide to Living...

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There are larger cycles still, crests and troughs of greater waves on which a year or a generation are only the tiniest ripples. Great civilizations rise and collapse, empires fall into the dust and the gods and heroes of mighty peoples are forgotten in the crypt of Chronos. But nothing is lost. All exists, forever, in Wyrð's Well. Some things await Nietzsche's "eternal return"; others are back among us in a more predictable way. This is good news for us. Right now, our own Folk is not thriving. Our Gods are in exile, sending messages from across the Bifrost border to their underground here in Midgard. We faithfully prepare their way, striving as we do so to keep our tribes intact so that the Aesir and Vanir can one day return in triumph. Though Eurofolk struggle in an inhospitable climate, we know that the snow drifts of the present interregnum only cover the greatness that will, in time, remanifest.

Rejoice, Asafolk! The sun will shine. The wheel in the sky does, indeed, keep on turning - and swarms of Eurofolk, Asafolk, will follow in chariots with spinning wheels. Our rim is the ever-fleeing horizon; the great World Tree runs through our hub; time and space are the illusions we choose to describe our endless migration.

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ODIN'S WOMAN

A Visitor to the Desolate Market

By Maddy Hutter

A year ago, in the newly reborn Runestone, Steve McNallen wrote of the need for personal, collective, and societal evolution using the Gods and Goddesses as guides and inspiration. In this piece, Maddy focuses on Odin, as a model for personal transformation.

Odin, father of the Gods, is a fear-inspiring one-eyed warrior, magician and poet. Not the most approachable of the Gods, he is described as a master of mystery, a God of the Hanged, and a God ready to use guile and trickery whenever needed. Nonetheless, his wisdom-seeking ordeal described in the *Havamal* is probably one of the best known and loved stories among Asafolk:

*I know, that I hung
on the windy tree
all of the nights nine
wounded by spear
and given to Odin
myself to myself,
on that tree,
which no man knows,
from what root it rises.
They dealt me no bread
nor drinking horn,
I looked down,
I took up the runes
I took them up screaming
I fell back from there.*

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Another visionary, William Blake, spoke of the acquisition of wisdom, saying it was sold in a desolate market where none come to buy. The search for deep knowledge suggested by Gods and poets is no easy task, perhaps not one many of us would willingly undertake. But since struggle and crisis come to all of us at one point or another, why not look at them as opportunities for personal evolution and at the Gods as partners in our upward journey?

Each of the Gods and Goddesses has characteristics we can emulate in certain circumstances. Sometimes we need up-front force, a direct assault; call on Thor for help here. When a quieter, more enduring strength is required, Frigga might be a surer model. Heimdal can show us tact, good sense and reason, Freya an assertive, self-assurance, and Tyr a selfless awareness of justice. The trick is to recognise what qualities and therefore what God you require. I'd like to suggest some times when Odin can offer guidance and the chance to take another step towards God or Goddesshood!

Odin's area of operations is certainly bleak. He is the God who must find the secret of the runes at

great personal cost, and who must work to save his folk from the devastation of Ragnarok. With his wolves and his ravens, Odin oversees all the workings of the worlds, so his view is large and his attitude frequently grim. How can we identify with such massive undertakings? How can Odin help us with our petty problems? Let's look beneath the huge endeavor. Odin is involved in to see what connections we can find.

Each of the Gods and Goddesses has characteristics we can emulate in certain circumstances.

Throughout the stories we see Odin dealing with crisis; he works with death and loss, with confusion and mystery. Truly each of us knows these. Times of grief and tragedy, of isolation and uncertainty, are Odinic in nature. Call on him then. Odin is a God of quest and search. As you pick your way through the trials of work and relationships, trying to see your way, Odin can sympathize. Are you the victim of ill treatment, of injustice? Remember the High One; He knows this realm. Mighty Odin is not as inaccessible as one might think. His attributes are ones we need daily.

Suppose you find yourself in an Odinic situation? A time of deep personal confusion, for

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great personal cost, and who must work to save his folk from the devastation of Ragnarok. With his wolves and his ravens, Odin oversees all the workings of the worlds, so his view is large and his attitude frequently grim. How can we identify with such massive undertakings? How can Odin help us with our petty problems? Let's look beneath the huge endeavors Odin is involved in to see what connections we can find.

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instance, a time when the world is upside down for us and nothing looks the way you think it ought. What should you do to make this occasion one of transformation rather than depression or hopelessness? First, ask yourself what would Odin do? Would he quit? complain? beat his breast? or something else? You'll come up with your own answers according to your situation, but here are my thoughts.

Odin has several tactics under tough circumstances. First, he takes action, and he's not afraid to change. So, don't just sit there, do something. Take your crisis as an opportunity to shake things up. Start running in the morning and see if the early air or the rhythm of your feet pounding on the dirt gives you a solution. Leave the TV off and read some poetry for Odinic inspiration. Remember, Odin is God of words, so you might try talking out your problem if that's not your usual habit.

Next, Odin is a complex, multi-faceted God. He combines the rational, the intuitive and the spiritual; you can too. If you tend towards the analytical, take up meditation or keep a record of your dreams. If you rely on feelings to

provide you with answers, try a more reasoned approach. Keep a journal and look for patterns. Be strategic rather than emotional. Again, change is the key to growth.

If you have trouble breaking out of your habits, try the source of Odinic wisdom that's available to us all - the mighty runes. Odin's magnificent sacrifice means that we have access to these great mysteries and we can use them for personal transformation. Runes can help bridge the gap between desire and will. Study them, use them in divination, affirm their truths, and let them inspire you in your search for overcoming.

Don't quit! Odin's trials are unending and so are yours. No pain no gain is simplistic, but often true. You won't find wisdom or renewal without bathing in the deep waters of chaos, at least for a while. Your goal is to endure, learn, and evolve to a stronger, better being. Be careful, personal change involves

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various stages of development, and sometimes we get stuck. Anger, for instance, is a healthy response to certain situations, and very Odinic, but we cannot not stay with it or we may become bitter and cynical. Likewise, acceptance of loss is often appropriate but passivity falls short of the Odinic ideal we are seeking.

When you find yourself with no food or drink, alone, ill-treated or confused, look to Odin. You'll find a sympathetic eye and a cloak full of wisdom. Search out his advice, follow it, and you'll have a friend and guide for life. Best of all, you'll be able to call yourself an Odinsman or, in my case, proudly, an Odinswoman.

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BITS & PIECES



alk about synchronicity
Just as we were

thinking and writing in the **RUNESTONE** about indigenous peoples of Northern Europe, to include the Sami, the energetic folks of **Wotan's Kindred** in the Portland area, were stirring in the same direction. Their project is to interview and videotape **Ailo Gaup**, Sami shaman from Lapland, Norway, speaking of the spiritual ways of his people. The tape is planned to feature Ailo as well as traditional Sami singing and dancing. For information, write **Wotan's Kindred**, 8117 N.E. 32nd St., Vancouver, WA 98662.

A "collection of news, information, Tradition, mischief, naughtiness and bawdiness" - if this sounds intriguing to you, try writing to **The Trollwise Press** for information on their magazine and materials. You can reach them at P.O.Box 080437, Staten Island, NY 10308-0005.

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It's not a new book, and the writer is clearly Christian; nonetheless, **The Unsettling**

of America, Culture and Agriculture by Wendell Berry, Avon Books, 1977, is full of ideas stimulating to a thinking pagan. Maddy especially liked the wide-ranging essay titled "The Body and the Earth" in which Berry compares modern man's treatment of our bodies and our treatment of the earth. Take a chance on it next time you're scouring your favorite used-book store.

For those of you who haven't heard, **Steve is in Africa** as I write this. He's off adventuring, taking a needed break from the craziness of ordinary life! No doubt, he'll have lots of stories to tell and write on his return, but until then, I, (Maddy), will keep things (**RUNESTONE**, correspondence, and so on) going.



RUNE NAME: Elhaz

KEY CONCEPTS: Calling to mind the world-supporting yew tree and the horns of the elk, elhaz suggests both protection and shamanic travel. Associated with flying creatures, the rune is a striving, potential-seeking symbol.

AFFIRMATION: Like a swan, I can fly beyond this earth. My soul is free to travel above the clouds of Midgard.

JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN LOVE OF MAN and Hatred of Nature

By Brian Regan



addy Hutter, in her article "Asatru is for Bad Boys" (Summer 1993 issue of **The Runestone**), made especial note of the unconventional and non-conformist character of Asatru members, a quality which is integral to them. It occurred to me when reading this signal essay that this unconventionality is a direct reflection of their resonance with Nature herself, who is anything but conformist.

Asatruar (and other pagans) share a deep sense of our union with the cosmos, and an intuitive understanding that moderns have become religiously and dangerously alienated from it. In the currently fashionable, self-laudatory sermonizings of Judaeo-Christians, humans are "stewards" of the earth, its life and its resources. The now rampant ravaging of our planet's ecology is claimed to have nothing to do with Christianity, which has really been green from the beginning.

As with most other politically correct ideas, there is something questionable about this new claim. Let us, therefore, consider a few elementary facts before we embrace it.

Due to economic (and not moral) decline, the Roman Empire entered a period of near collapse in the fifty years after Emperor Severus Alexander (222-235 C.E.). From 235 to 284, there were internal and external wars, barbarian invasions, runaway inflation, debasement of the currency, massive bloating of the bureaucracy and the military, extensive devastation in the provinces, and other difficulties too numerous to mention.

The Empire almost ended during that time. Through vast, wrenching changes, however, the Imperium Romanum did manage barely to survive, emerging around 300 C.E. as a completely changed and monstrous entity. Taxation of every sort amounted to a kind of indenture or slavery for anyone who could produce anything or was

in the least bit creative, and permanent. It was the widest and most had ever seen in a higher civilization.

Asatruar share a deep sense of our union with the cosmos, and an intuitive understanding that moderns have become religiously and dangerously alienated from it.

391, Emperor Theodosius (Magnus) sacrificed to pagan gods and acceded to November 8 of the following year for whatsoever. So much for Christians.

Christianity had started out as a worshipping Jewish sect with a native ideology. (Another such sect was taken over under Mohammed [570?-632], became Islam after half centuries of living in the Roman Empire, absorbed many pagan features, including Magna Mater, Mother of the Gods, and "God") and countless lesser divinities. It was taken over by "angels" (literally, "messengers").

Due to its political usefulness, Christianity retained the lingering prestige of the Roman Empire, conquered and destroyed indigenous religions (Druidism, Asatru). Mass slaughters of "pagans" or remote rural settlements (the "pagan" oblivion by omission from the history books) rooted of the pagan customs (e.g. Yule, etc.) new political ideologues, "baptized," and religion.

But because of its essentially unchanging nature in the Roman Imperial state, Judaeo-Christianity in favor of elaborate human political structures.

in the least bit creative, and permanent welfare for those who could not or would not. It was the widest-scale despotism which the world had ever seen in a higher civilization up to that point.

Asatruar share a deep sense of our union with the cosmos, and an intuitive understanding that moderns have become religiously and dangerously alienated from it.

In order to legitimize and justify the Empire's subjugation of the producing portion of the population to servitude, Constantine (Magnus, "the Great," 306-337 C.E.) introduced the ultimate system of political correctness: Christianity. Somewhat later, on February 24,

391, Emperor Theodosius (Magnus, "the Great," 379-95) forbade sacrifices to pagan gods and access to pagan temples, and on November 8 of the following year banned all pagan worship whatsoever. So much for Christians' vaunted tolerance.

Christianity had started out as one of a number of hero-worshipping Jewish sects with a rather meager mythology and ideology. (Another such sect was that of the Ebionites, which later, under Mohammed [570?-632], became Islam.) But in the two and a half centuries of living in the Roman Imperial melting pot, it had absorbed many pagan features, including an Earth Mother (the Magna Mater, Mother of the Gods, was retitled "Mary, Mother of God") and countless lesser divinities, whose psychological place was taken over by "angels" (literally, "messengers") and "saints."

Due to its political usefulness, its command of writing, and the lingering prestige of the Roman Empire, Christianity quickly conquered and destroyed indigenous religions of the North (i.e., Druidism, Asatru). Mass slaughters of "pagana" (i.e., those from the "pagi" or remote rural settlements) by Christians were consigned to oblivion by omission from the history books. The more deeply rooted of the pagan customs (e.g. Yule, Easter) were taken over by the new political ideologues, "baptized," and made a part of the new religion.

But because of its essentially urban and political foundations in the Roman Imperial state, Judaeo-Christianity was and is biased in favor of elaborate human political structures and blind to Nature

and nature spirits (whom Christianity demonized), and seeks to shred the web of nature to ensure the short-term survival and growth of sociopolitical structures. The fruit of this imperial religion: rampant overbreeding, indiscriminate preference of all human over all non-human life, sociopolitical leveling in preference to natural differentiation, subjection of ecology to economics, and a deeply ingrained hostility to biology (especially to evolution, which creates differences among humans as well as everywhere else in nature). In brief, antagonism to "the world, the flesh and the devil".

Deforestation and erosion occurred only after the fall of the Western Empire, and during the Middle Ages, after pagan Roman conservation practices had been abandoned.

Nevertheless, it took some centuries before Christianity was able to permeate the minds of the entire populace of the provinces. Deforestation and erosion occurred only after the fall of the Western Empire, and during the Middle Ages, after

pagan Roman conservation practices had been abandoned.

Christianity's inherent overemphasis on inborn guilt and indebtedness ("pay now, fly later") and the survival of the state at all costs automatically means a deemphasis of the believer's relationship with nature. This was always so, but the imbalance became especially excessive when the Reformation (mainly northwestern Europeans), in a throw-out-the-baby-with-the-bath frenzy, rejected the pagan aspects of Catholicism and adopted a jealous, eunuch-like, Near-Eastern god of deserts and erosion as their preferred divinity. To prove their better-than-thou political correctness, both Catholics and Protestants then began murdering witches, the last custodians of our gods. And, as science and technology grew, even the murderer's denatured mechanic god dried up and blew away.

In other words, the progressive Christian shift in attitude toward nature desacralized - desecrated - the world; and the new sciences and technologies springing up out of our forebears' minds made it possible for them to translate this "mortification" (i.e., killing) of nature into reality on the North American continent - and, eventually, throughout the entire planet.

In contrast, Asatru, as revived by the nature worshiper, ancient Roman historian Tacitus, and ancient Germanics (Germania, 4, 10), **Tyr, and Nerthus, the Earth Mother, confine their gods within well-defined groves and woodlands, and their mysterious presence which the awe alone." (My translation.)**

Thus, like most of mainstream history, Asatru recognizes the sacred in a figurative sense: it is beyond prayers to it - to the spirits of the and of Mother Earth herself.

Judaeo-Christianity, on the other hand, modern materialism and humanist rationalism - view nature as inanimate, dead - as nothing more than a machine.

Yet all that science has "proved" about the true quintessence of nature is that, if you do not treat nature as alive, she will respond only with what appear to humans to be disorder and disintegration: what scientists call "entropy." But this is untrue; it is also disastrous, and planetary. Where the intellectual, i.e., the *paranormal intelligence* behind they kill it. And in so doing, they those of the society which sustains them.

There are a few people who are wrong with the Judaeo-Christian philosopher Rupert Sheldrake, whose

In contrast, Asatru, the shamanic religion of the North, revives the nature worship which our ancestors practiced. The ancient Roman historian Tacitus reported about 100 C.E. of the ancient Germanics (Germania, 9), "**Besides these (i.e., Odin, Thor, Tyr, and Nerthus, the Earth Mother), they think it inappropriate to confine their gods within walls or to portray them in any human form, due to the greatness of supernatural beings; they consecrate groves and woodlands, and invoke with divine names that mysterious presence which they perceive through contemplative awe alone.**" (*My translation.*)

Thus, like most of mankind for almost all of its million-year history, Asatru recognizes the fact that nature is alive - and not just in a figurative sense: it is besouled and reacts intelligently to human prayers to it - to the spirits of the trees, of the mountains, of the waters and of Mother Earth herself.

Judaeo-Christianity, on the other hand, and its offspring - modern materialism and humanist rationalism -, view nature as inanimate, dead - as nothing more than a machine.

Yet all that science has "proved" about the true quintessence of nature is that, if you do not treat nature as alive, she will respond only with what appear to humans to be disorder and disintegration: what

scientists call "entropy." But this alleged "finding" is not only untrue; it is also disastrous, and leads to ecological devastation and planeticide. Where the intellectual elites ignore the miracle of life - i.e., the *paranormal intelligence* behind its outward manifestations - they kill it. And in so doing, they also prepare their own deaths, and those of the society which sustains them.

There are a few people who recognize that something is wrong with the Judaeo-Christian picture. One such person is scientist-philosopher Rupert Sheldrake, whose theory of morphic fields (i.e.,

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memory fields) as the formative cause for the shaping of all things (living or not) is the most cogent explanation for the nature of Nature which has ever been proposed. His most recent book, **The Restless of Nature: The Greening of Science and God**, gives an overview of his earlier work in biological philosophy and reveals lucidly the conclusions to which that work necessarily leads. Although he must of course "Christianize" his discussion, Sheldrake basically argues for a repaganization of religion and society. Needless to say, atheists, agnostics, Christians, Jews, and like-minded types have no use for his work.

Among other things, Sheldrake recommends that, whenever we enter a new locale, we greet the spirit of the place and ask for its guidance. He also points out that the supernatural realm is not only male but also female - implicitly criticizing the one-sided, asexual sterility of Christianity's god - the theism that brought you atheism.

Sheldrake's book should be on the shelf of every Nature believer who wishes to be able to defend against the "no-goddists" as well as the "one-goddists": against the pseudo-scientists and agnostics who claim there are no supernatural forces at all, as well as against the Levantine religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and the like) that demand everyone believe in only one god (which just happens to be theirs). The variety of Nature is itself an argument for a variety of gods. It is no wonder the Equalizers are as callous toward Nature as they are toward pagan religion. In the place of our Wyrds, they invent a "Heavenly Father," who appears very much like the Mediterranean Zeus or other oriental dominator.

And it is the non-conformist nature of Asatruar, which Wade Hutter pointed out, which proves that it is we who, in following the gods of our own ancestors, are in tune with Nerthus, our mother-variegated Mother Earth, and not the cookie-cutter, nature-devastating lovers of gods Zero or One.

If you like what you read in **THE RUNESTONE**, and wonder what the Asatru Free Assembly was all about, you can order many of our original productions from:

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Centering

By Steve McChale

Despite the fact that I help publish a modern journal of alternative religion, I'm not really the hip-kind of person. I don't go print (and write!) about runes, meditation, or other things that are usually associated with "pagan religions", but the jargon, and many of the attitudes, leave me cold.

What am I doing at my keyboard, composing something on "centering"? "Meditation - dolphin telepathy - visualizing world peace"? Several. But this centering thing, well, some of it is really weird in the runes, and is somewhat particular. I wanted to take a closer look. What I thought might be something you could use to further that "conscious upward evolution" was always talking about in *The Runestone*.

What is centering? As I understand it, centering is a re-empowering one's center of gravity, both physically and metaphysically. When you are

centering
involves
focus
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each of
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Centering with ISA

By Steve McNallen

Despite the fact that I help publish a modern journal of alternative religion, I'm not really a New Age kind of person. Sure, we print (and write!) articles on runes, meditation, and lots of other things that are commonly associated with "pop metaphysics", but the jargon, and many of the attitudes, leave me cold.

So what am I doing at the keyboard, composing something on centering? What's next - dolphin telepathy and visualizing world peace? Not at all. But this centering thing...well, some of it is really relevant to the runes, and to one rune in particular. I wanted to take a closer look. What I found might be something you can use to further that Nietzschean upward evolution we're always talking about in **The Runestone**.

What is centering? As I understand it, centering is a way of experiencing one's center of gravity, both physically and psychologically. When you are

centered, you are calmer, more in control, more "in alignment". You're harder to fluster, and assertiveness comes more easily than when you're not centered. Clearly, centering has some real advantages attached to it!

This mental state is approached through its physical equivalent. Just below the navel is the point on which the body would balance if suspended on a pivot. This is your center of gravity. By working with it in certain ways, you can become centered.

The whole idea of centering should remind you of the rune *isa*. Concentration, stillness, focus - a pulling together of one's self that defies stress and trial - are some of the connotations of this rune, whose name means "ice". These same words describe the condition of being centered, as well. It should be no surprise, then, to learn that we can use the rune *isa* to help bring about the centered state.

Here's one way of doing it: First, feel the center. Be aware of it; sense your weight being collected there. Relaxing, pull your essence into that one rather small location. Let it truly feel like your center of gravity. When you have that sense of center, try "breathing" through it. Visualize your breath flowing gently in and out of your center as you inhale and exhale. This will deepen your relaxation. Do this for half a dozen breaths or more.

Once you've succeeded at this, stand. Keep the awareness of the center. Swivel your hips, sensing the center around which your body moves. Now stand erect, imitating the shape of the rune - easy to do, since *isa* is a simple vertical line (Like this: |). Take a deep breath through your center and sing "eeeeee" until the air is out of your lungs. This is the sound, or phonetic value, of *isa*.

As you make this sound, feel it vibrate in your center. Imagine two mighty energy streams, one entering your body from the top of your head and one rising upward through the bottom of your feet. They meet, swirling, at that spot just below your navel. Coming together, they reinforce that feeling of centeredness that you

developed earlier. *Warrior* "eeeeee" several times.

When you have mastered the basic techniques, combine an affirmation with it. Maddy, in *A Rank Inspiration*, suggests "Calm fills my body; I am still, holding the firmness within me". I've used, "I am centered; I know my will and I work my will". If these don't appeal to you, make up your own.

Try it! Five minutes a day is plenty of time to spend on this little exercise. Grow it over a couple of weeks, and see if you don't notice the difference. You just may find this to be a useful tool for your personal growth and upward evolution - all in the context of our ancestral wisdom!

THUNDER FROM THE NORTH

The Way of the Teutonic Warrior
By Stephen McNallen

For those who'd rather be wolves than sheep, this is an explanation of Western martial philosophy (and practical techniques) for today's warrior. Available from Steve McNallen and Maddy Flatter, 194 P.O. Box 445, Nevada City, CA 95959

WAY OF THE GO

By Maddy Flatter

Don't be surprised to see this... Remember the wheel... getting longer and the... will again become

Hhe two women and their dog had been hiking for several hours. Snow-topped granite peaks, black and grey, soared into the blue California sky on one side, and the sun was warm on their laden backs. A well-worn wooden sign offered a choice between lakes, down the hill and the other up. Making it made little difference, they went up.

The path was shaded with thick pines, but the slope was heart-pumpingly steep. Flowers, some with pink centers, others with ivory petals and a deep brown center, decorated the hillside, encouraging the walkers. A meadow opened before them, sweet-spice-scented, covered with tall, fluted plants with pale yellow blossoms - an

DAY OF THE GODDESS

By Maddy Hutter

Don't be surprised to see this piece describing idyllic Summer days in our Yule issue. Remember the wheel has almost come full circle, and we'll soon see the days getting longer and the delights pictured here will again become possible.

The two women and their dog had been hiking for several hours. Snow-topped granite peaks, black and grey, soared into the blue California sky on every side, and the sun was warm on their laden backs. A heat-cracked wooden sign offered a choice between lakes, one downhill and the other up. Thinking it made little difference, they went up.

The path was shaded with thick pines, but the slope was heart-pumpingly steep. Flowers, some with pink trumpets, others with ivory petals and a deep brown center-eye decorated the hillside, encouraging the walkers. A meadow opened before them, lush and spice-scented, covered with tall, fluted plants with gaudy yellow blossoms - an

extravagance bursting from the moist dirt. Up pushed the hikers, round rocky curves and twisty tree roots, up and up, for the joy of being seven thousand feet high in the Sierras.

Before long, the hilly trail gave way to level ground, and then to a gentle decline leading through the trees to the lake, glittering silver-green in the midday sunlight. Skirting the water's edge, both women scanned the tree clusters and rock outcrops for a suitable camping site while their black labrador splashed happily beside them. Then, at the southern end of the rippling water, the ideal space presented itself - smooth rocks jutting right into the lake, a sheltered, soft dirt oval for the tent, and a downed tree against which to rest the packs. Delighted, the women swung gear off their backs and hurried over the rocks to rest, gazing at the perfect scene in front of them.

Perhaps it was the waves gently slapping against the rocks or the sighing of the pine boughs overhead. Maybe the glint of

sun on water and pine needle was somehow mesmerizing. It could have been the lack of human sound or sign, for the place was isolated and seldom visited. In any case, the mystery of nature worked its strange purpose most suddenly, and these two women, one around thirty and the other ten years older, were overcome with its glories. Laughing aloud, challenging the goddess within them, they cast off their dusty clothes and leapt naked into the cold wavelets, calling to their she-dog to follow. Horizon-cutting cliffs, groves of spiky pines and massive man-high rocks surrounded the lake protectively. Thrilled with a joyous energy, the women swam and cavorted, glad above all things to be alive.

True enough, one of these women, the older, thinner, blue-eyed nymph, had previous acquaintance with the spirits of land and water and tree. But could her mild influence have brought about such unrestrained impetuosity in the darker, statuesque beauty who cried out to the powers of the place and threw herself, still innocently unclothed, on the rocks to bathe in the sun? Such lightness, such confidence, such revelry was magic to them both, and as they rested, they spoke from their

hearts in deep female companionship.

A brown-headed mother duck led her ducklings in close formation across the lake. Seven black and white bodies dipped and seven tiny bills bobbed in time behind their leader and coach who dived and reappeared, dived and reappeared. A great rustling sounded high overhead and the women stared upwards. Thousands of geese, trembling in their "V" shaped travelling bands, moved with the fluidity of water through the cloudless blue above, auspicious through the millenia.

And on into the evening did the goddess stay with these lucky travellers. Short stories brought from a bookshelf at random to be read aloud, tales of Dryads, Neriads, Naiads, Pan, Zeus and other forgotten god-creatures working their ways in men even today. Runes were cast and the healing power of the lake (†) appeared. As the light fell, the women, still wet within the poetry of Nerthus, offered a toast to the sprites of the place, in deepest thanks.

That night was retirement for sleep. All three female women and canine creature were restless, dreaming and

...throughout the night. In the morning, the lake was still misty and sun-radiant, but the mood had changed, and the women were suddenly aware of

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waking throughout the night. In the morning, the lake was still tranquil and sun-radiant, but the mood had changed, and the women were suddenly aware of

sunburn and fatigue. Bags were packed, canteens refilled and maps reviewed. It was time for the trip back down from the mountain in more ways than one.

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Moot Point

Moot Point Guidelines: *We can't promise to print a particular letter as there just will not be space, and we may also have to edit letters for length. Within these ground rules, we will do our best to print a variety of letters as a forum for discussion. Write to us!*

Hi, Steve and Maddy!

Greetings from soggy Iowa!

...The Norsemen of Midgard M/C is still together and we had our annual meeting and party out in Akron, Ohio this year. Torch and several other brothers live there so it seemed like the most central meeting place. We had one member leave the club and we added three new members so it's been a good year...

Keep up the good work on **The Runestone**. I especially enjoyed Maddy's article "Asatru is for Bad Boys Too". Being a "biker", I guess that's the way I look to some citizens even though I've had the same job for 15 years and am otherwise a responsible guy. Oh well, I guess it's too late to change now! Keep smilin'!

Hail Odin!
"Dutch"

Heilsa, Dutch!

Good to hear *The Norsemen of Midgard* are still riding their iron horses! Any of our readers who consider themselves "biking vikings" can write to you through us, and we'll be glad to forward their letters. And thanks for spreading the word that bikers can be law-abiding, job-holding folks, too!

Odin Lives!
Steve

Dear Mr. McNallen:

Professor Mirabello sent us some

pages...

We note that you are skeptical about the point of fact, The Odin Brotherhood have some members of the Brotherhood believe in the gods. This is truth - not fiction.

Regarding the magic fruit of Asatru, we do not identify the fruit as apples. The concept of Asatru which we consider useful - but flawed concept. Of course, what is really important is whatever we call it - does exist...

We look forward to additional letters. Professor Mirabello has also promised to write a letter for the next issue...

Dear Readers,

The above letter arrived from Steve and Maddy. For those of you who are, like us, at least curious, we refer you to Dr. McNallen's volume, **The Odin Brotherhood**. Your copy is included in the next issue. The Odin Brotherhood Publishing Group, P.O. Box 623, Edmonds, WA. Postage included.

Dear Steve and Maddy,

It's been a long time since I was still here and still in Asatru. Some things might find interesting.

It began almost a year ago when I was so young she could no longer live alone.

Dear Mr. McNallen:

Professor Mirabello sent us copies of your writings and tapes...

We note that you are skeptical about some of our claims. In point of fact, The Odin Brotherhood has existed for centuries, and some members of the Brotherhood have physically encountered the gods. This is truth - not fiction.

Regarding the magic fruit of Idun, the Eddaic Verses do not identify the fruit as apples. The Christian named Sturluson (whom we consider useful - but flawed) introduced the apple concept. Of course, what is really important is the magic fruit - whatever we call it - does exist...

We look forward to additional study of your publications. Professor Mirabello has also promised us a video of one of your lectures...

Power-Of-Beauty
Grey-Steel
Fire-In-The-Eyes
Mother-Of-Eagles

Dear Readers,

*The above letter arrived from Germany without a return address. For those of you who are, like us, mystified, titillated, or at least curious, we refer you to Dr. Mark Mirabello's excellent volume, **The Odin Brotherhood**. You can order it from Holmes Publishing Group, P.O. Box 623, Edmonds, WA 98020 for \$12.95 postage included.*

*Raido!
Steve and Maddy*

Dear Steve and Maddy,

It's been a long time since I wrote you personally, but I'm still here and still in Asatru. Something has happened I think you might find interesting.

It began almost a year ago; my mother had become weak enough she could no longer live alone. I took her into my spare

bedroom. Four or five months went by and about as many stays in the hospital. It was becoming an ordeal for me and my brother and I wondered how long this could last; dying of a debilitating disease can take years. I didn't know if I could endure it.

Then one night I had a dream, a short one, but very clear and memorable: I saw in the distance a woman seated on a chair. As I approached, I could see it was Odin's throne. I said to myself, "If this is Odin's throne then this woman must be Freya." At the word *Freya*, she turned and looked directly at me and said, "Your mother has about six months to live." And that was the end of the dream. That dream happened on March 3, 1993. My mother finally passed away six months and three weeks later.

I thought this thing significant enough that both of you should know of it. I can only wonder how many others in Asatru have also experienced such stirrings from the Gods, and are silent for fear they'll be packed off. It would be interesting to hear from others.

Hardy Felgate

Heilsa Hardy,

Good to hear from you again! And thanks for the dream story. I am convinced of the truth of dreams. Like myths their truth comes in vivid, pictorial form, but it is easily misinterpreted or dismissed. What was that great definition of myth? It is true on the inside but not on the outside? Anyway, I see dreams the same way and pay attention to my own as another source of knowledge about my world (inner and outer!).

Go with the Gods,
Maddy



(Calendar continued from front cover)

JANUARY 9 - This Day of Remembrance is for Raud the Strong. King Olaf Tryggvason of Norway executed him by making him swallow a snake. His crime was refusing to give up Asatru. Tryggvason then confiscated Raud's land and all his other wealth. Praise Raud by lifting a horn (or cup or glass) in his honor, and by doing something deliberate to spread the religion King Olaf tried so hard to stamp out.

JANUARY 22 - Thorrablot comes in the depth of winter, when we all need our spirits lifted. Gregarious, lusty Thor is our obvious antidote to the blues. Build a snow statue of the hammer-wielding God, or go winter camping, or have a party. Take a walk without your coat, mentally accept winter, and go back to your house for a shot of brandy.

FEBRUARY 9 - Eyvind Kinnrifi was another Asatru martyr. On this Day of Remembrance we recall how Olaf tortured him to death by placing a bowl of red-hot embers on his stomach. Eyvind died, and Valhalla received another hero. Salute his courage the same way you did that of Raud the Strong.

FEBRUARY 14 - Valentine's Day? Not really... rather, a day devoted to Vali, God of Rebirth. Freya has a role to play here, too. Do something erotic to please her, and meditate on the following question for Vali: If we are born again into the family line, as our ancestors thought, how should this affect our actions here and now?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Don't you worship stones and trees and statues?

No. We know that trees, wooden statues, the Sun, and other natural or man-made things are not Gods. In and of themselves, they are no more sacred than anything else in the world around us. However, we sometimes use these things as reminders of a God or a Goddess, and we believe they can become "charged" with a certain aspect of the divine energy, but we would never confuse them with the actual deity! We revere these objects just as Christians honor the cross, or other symbols of their religion.

- adapted from *What is Asatru?*
(Available from Worldtree Publications)