

WINTER 1994

NUMBER 10

UP FRONT

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Believe me, this was not a decision taken lightly! The burden of such a commitment is one that can be truly appreciated only by those who have carried it on their own backs. Certainly, I cannot do it alone; if there is no support for the course I have set, then it will come to naught. For those who see Asatru in the same light I do, for those who felt comfortable with its expression in the AFA, and for those who regret they weren't on the scene during those halcyon days, this is a chance to become involved!

Nevertheless, the body I envision will not be an exact re-run of the Asatru Free Assembly. Evolution describes a spiral, not a circle.

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 the 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.

Submission of articles are invited. Deadlines are as follows:

Spring - January 15

Summer - April 15

Fall - July 15

Winter - October 15

Cover art: Thanks to Keven Knight

CALENDAR

DECEMBER 9 - Our observances this month start with a Day of Remembrance for Egil Skallagrímsson - 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's Night is the beginning of 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.

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Nevertheless, the body I envision will not be an exact re-run of the Asatru Free Assembly. Evolution describes a spiral, not a circle.

Still, it will be similar in many respects. I hope you will give it your consideration.

There's lots more in this issue, though. Freedom, for example, is important to all the Asafolk I know - and we've got an article on it. New contributor Weyland Leegives us new thoughts on an old God, Loki. There's the conclusion of our "Celts and Germans" piece from last time, and we continue our "Profiles in Asatru." Plenty of food for thought to fill your holiday larder!

Best of the Yule season to you all. May the new year bring you victory and wealth!

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ASATRU: ~~Time for a Stand!~~

By Stephen A. McNallen

Controversy...again!

Here at **THE RUNESTONE** we've tried to steer clear of the squalls that periodically ruffle the waters of our little movement, but there comes a time when even the most reticent must speak. Now, as the sun readies itself to turn in the sky at Yule, the time for plain speaking - and for new beginnings - is upon us.

Let me try to summarize a very complicated situation in a small space: Since the demise of the AFA in the 1980's, modern Asatru has been split into two camps which, while not exactly warring, have certainly been in competition with each other. One, the "folkish" faction, has been made up of Asafolk who feel that there's an inherent connection between their biological inheritance - their race, to put it bluntly - and their religion. There have always been a few stereotypical "racists" in their ranks, but most are good-hearted people who feel that the physical and the spiritual cannot be put into separate boxes, and who want to further the interests of their European-descended kin.

The other group, or "affirmative action Asatru," holds that race and religion are unrelated. In their view, one can adopt a religion much as one joins a secular organization, or chooses a fashion of clothing. Some of the individuals under this banner are raving leftists motivated by hatred of everything White, but most are just decent people who, quite understandably, are put off by the looniness of some racists.

The Asatru Free Assembly was folkish in its orientation. When we dropped out of the scene, the Asatru Alliance picked up the torch at our request, and carried on. At about the same time, the Ring of Troth - definitely NOT folkish - began to organize. Until recently, the two groups maintained a balance of power, each speaking for its own beliefs.

It seems this is no longer the case. Reports from the last Althing tell of aggressive inroads by the Ring of Troth into what has hitherto been folkish territory. To make a long story short: (1) There is now a safe sanctuary for affirmative action Asatru, namely, the Ring of Troth. (2) The

Asatru Alliance, formerly the folkish faction, is now in a... field. (3) There is no reliable stronghold, and scattered kindreds across the country. The movement is out of balance.

The time has come for a group which will not misleadingly advocate the folkish viewpoint. We will form an Assembly, because we can't relive the past. But it can be an Asatru Folk Assembly, taking the best of the old AFA and presenting it in a stronger, wiser, more mature form. I am now calling for the formation of such an organization.

What will be the guiding principles of such a group? Here are some of the points that are especially important to me:

- * Asatru is the indigenous religion of the North. It is one expression of a common heritage shared by all the far-flung sons and daughters of the North, Celtic, whatever their nation of origin.

- * Asatru springs from our natural environment. It is not just what we believe, it is what we are. It is a product of shared evolution in a similar environment, with a similar physical, mental, and spiritual pattern, and a similar culture. Thus, Asatru is intimately connected to our people.

- * As a logical consequence of the above, we recognize the validity of other religions, and the right of other peoples to advance their own religions. We are not "anti" anything, we are simply for our own people and their own fate. We are not "anti" anything, we are simply for our people and their own fate. We are not "anti" anything, we are simply for our people and their own fate.

- * Asatru honors the past while recognizing the future. The traditional Asatru of the tenth century. The traditional Asatru of our Teutonic ancestors have great cultural value, but we must not be imprisoned by them. Asatru is a living religion, and it must be able to evolve.

Asatru Alliance, formerly the folkish bastion, is now an ideological battlefield. (3) There is no reliable stronghold for folkish Asatru, except in scattered kindreds across the country. The situation has tilted drastically out of balance.

The time has come for a group which will clearly and uncompromisingly advocate the folkish viewpoint. It can't be the old Asatru Free Assembly, because we can't relive the past. But it can be an Asatru *Folk* Assembly, taking the best of the old AFA and presenting it in a stronger, wiser, more mature form. I am now calling for the formation of such an organization.

**The time has come
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advocate the
folkish viewpoint!**

What will be the guiding principles of such a group? Here are some of the points that are especially important to me:

* Asatru is the indigenous religion of the northern Teutons. As such, it is one expression of a common European spirituality which unites all the far-flung sons and daughters of Europe, whether Germanic or Celtic, whatever their nation of origin.

* Asatru springs from our nature as people of European ancestry. It is not just what we *believe*, it is what we *are*. Thousands of generations of shared evolution in a similar environment have produced a unique physical, mental, and spiritual pattern, and Asatru is its religious manifestation. Thus, Asatru is intimately connected to the interests and destiny of our people.

* As a logical consequence of the folkish viewpoint expressed above, we recognize the validity of other indigenous religions and respect the right of other peoples to advance their own interests. We want a world of *true* diversity, one with a mosaic of peoples and cultures, each working out their own fate. We are not "anti" anybody - but woe to those who aggress against us!

* Asatru honors the past while reaching for the future. We do not live in the tenth century. The traditional costumes, artifacts, and skills of our Teutonic ancestors have great cultural and spiritual value for us, but we must not be imprisoned by them. Asatru is not a historical reenactment

society, it is a living religion which, a thousand years from now, will have spread throughout the Galaxy!

* Although Asatru has sober, industrious, and scholarly sides, it must remain a home for those who treasure zest, vigor, color, panache, and fun. We are not monks or ascetics; our Gods laugh, and so should we.

What will the Asatru Folk Assembly do? We will of course present the folkish viewpoint, but beyond that, we will form kindreds, train our own clergy, start guilds, and organize systems to help each other. Ultimately, we will grow into a new tribe, or a network of tribes, and gain international recognition as such.

The question might well be asked, how will this affect our relations with the Asatru Alliance?

I have deep respect and admiration for Valgard Murray, and I am aware of the incredible job he has done and the vast personal sacrifices he has made. Many other members of the Alliance have been my friends and co-workers over the years, as well. My intention is to work with, and within, the Asatru Alliance unless it becomes plain that folkish Asatru is not welcome or comfortable there. I have absolutely no desire to compete with the Alliance in any way. In fact, the Alliance, assuming it remains a place where we can speak our beliefs, can only benefit by this burst of Asatru activity.

A decision has been made to start a bold endeavor, and indeed, action has begun. Individual kindreds have stated they would become part of the new AFA, and at least two guilds are ready to come on line. But it is you, Asafolk, who must either ratify my move or tell me I am wrong. If there is to be an Asatru Folk Assembly, it must have your support. *If you like the kind of Asatru I outlined in the five points specified above, write to me.* Send me ideas, give me input, and tell me you want to be a part of such a venture. Better yet, write and tell me how you want to participate!

The runes of our fate are cast. Dare we pick them up?



THE RUNESTONE

4

Freedom or F

When I was first drawn to Asatru, the attraction of our religion was the massive, rustic panache of the viking sea rovers. I understand that these vivid and heroic frameworks of family and folk, but not the defiant picture of the viking warrior.

That freedom-urge is not just a part. Our traditional Teutonic culture is of the freeman and correspondingly, news to readers of THE RUNESTONE, many of our legal institutions can be seen.

The old Frisians had a God, which means something like "giver of freedom." Is Friagabi still with us, or has he gone?

We make such a big deal of being free, but I don't think it's true. We're slaves. We're the freest nation on Earth," not only have we traveled enough to agree that most of the world is in chains. The point isn't that we're in Singapore, but that we are not free.

You disagree? Okay, fine -- but we're not wrong.

Let's look at our chains. The biggest is bureaucracy which determines what forms we fill out, and which human actions are regulated. None of these petty rules, however, are revolutionary. Together, though, they are a straitjacket. We have become too used to them.

Other chains are more ominous. They are the chains of people of European ancestry. The chains

THE RUNESTONE

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Freedom or Fetters ?

by Stephen A. McNallen

When I was first drawn to Asatru so many years ago, the greatest attraction of our religion was the insistent freedom and the individualistic panache of the viking sea rovers. Sure, as time went by I came to understand that these vivid and forceful personalities existed within a framework of family and folk, but nothing has quite replaced that bold, defiant picture of the viking warrior!

That freedom-urge is not just nostalgia or romanticism on my part. Our traditional Teutonic culture is one which insisted on the rights of the freeman and correspondingly limited powers of rulers. Nor is it news to readers of THE RUNESTONE that parliaments, trial by jury, and many of our legal institutions can be traced back to our flamboyant forebears.

The old Frisians had a Goddess named Friagabi, whose name means something like "giver of freedom." But just how free are we, these days? Is Friagabi still with us, or has she left in disgust?

We make such a big deal of being free here in America - but I don't think it's true. We're slaves. And please don't tell me that "we're the freest nation on Earth;" not only have I heard it before, but I've traveled enough to agree that most of the world is a cesspool of corruption and chains. The point isn't that we're better off than Haiti or Nigeria or Singapore, but that *we are not free*.

You disagree? Okay, fine - but hear me out before you decide I'm wrong.

Let's look at our chains. The biggest one is the endless web of bureaucracy which determines what forms we must submit and in how many copies, and which human actions are permitted or forbidden by regulations. None of these petty rules, taken by itself, is worth armed revolution. Together, though, they set a mood and a precedent for servitude. We have become too used to taking orders.

Other chains are more ominous, because they are aimed specifically at people of European ancestry. The "affirmative action" mandates

of the last couple of decades have made it less likely that your children will be admitted to college, receive a scholarship to help pay the way, or get the job they deserve when they graduate. There will be campus services they can't use because of the color of their skin, job fairs they can't attend, and government positions for which they will not even be allowed to take the test. Ironically, all this is done in the name of combatting racism!

A third category of offenses against our liberty has to do with weapons. We all know that more and more restraints have been placed on your Second Amendment rights. Type of weapon, size of magazine, more paperwork - the list of infringements just keeps on growing. It seems as though the NRA will eventually be reduced to lobbying for our right to own black powder muskets!

How far will this tip toward tyranny go? I don't know. I can't help but remember it was the confiscation of weapons that threw the Iceni into revolt against Rome, and caused the Khampa of Tibet to rise up against the Chinese. I suppose it depends on how dulled our instincts have become. Historically, only slaves have been forbidden to own weapons...will we willingly place the collar around our necks?

In our delusion, we think that we are free because we can shop when we want and can vote for the stooge of our choice! The cult of material possessions ("He who dies with the most toys wins") has replaced religion as the opiate of the people. And democracy? Pour your vote in with three million others, and see how much freedom it gets you. You'll get as much liberty as the masses - the people in the K-Mart check out line! - think you should have. No, real freedom is more than having lots of consumer choices, and more than asking the permission of the average sludge to carry on your life. It is sharp and cold like a sword, and yes, dangerous like one as well. But anything else isn't freedom, and nothing less will do.

The outlines of a controlled society have been described by better writers than I, so I won't rag on at you about the subject. But I will refer you to one of the masters of such literature - Aldous Huxley, in Brave New World. Isn't it interesting how we all quote works like his, even if we've never read them, or read them many years ago? Every now and then we need to turn the pages of these cliched classics anew, and remind ourselves of what the author had to tell us. I re-read parts of Huxley's masterpiece recently, as well as its valuable non-fiction companion, Brave New World Revisited. I was startled once again by the accuracy of Huxley's vision. If you haven't read it, or if the years have dulled your initial reading, I urge you to get a copy!

So what is the good Asafolk is all

Be Asatru. Your religion makes you stronger and also gives you spiritual strength and guidance. That freedom is a religious issue!

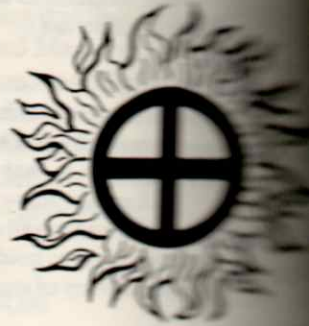
Get involved politically. True, almost all issues are more political than others. Active participation in issues that, to you, extend or protect our freedoms. You figure it out. I have my opinions, and you have yours.

Prepare to resist. Do I mean standing up to the government under your house? Definitely not. The main reason we need to make is psychological - to learn to overcome our fear of disobey when necessary. But, yes, you should have your guns! And it wouldn't hurt to keep a few more.

Build alternatives to the system. The system needs consent and participation. If we can demonstrate things that government typically does for us, we can show Asafolk took responsibility for their own welfare? The world could be a very different place.

To Asafolk, freedom is an integral part of our religion. It's up to us to defend it!

Friagabi live!



So what is the good Asaperson to do? Here is McNallen's list:

Be Asatru. Your religion makes you a part of a culture of freedom. It also gives you spiritual strength and guidance to resist tyranny. Remember that freedom is a religious issue!

Get involved politically. True, almost any act is a political one, but some deeds are more political than others. Actively support the people and the issues that, to you, extend or protect our freedoms. Which ones are those? You figure it out. I have my opinions, and no doubt you do, too.

Prepare to resist. Do I mean stockpiling machine guns and mortars under your house? Definitely not. The most important preparation you can make is psychological - to learn to override your trust of government, and to disobey when necessary. But, yes, you should probably be ready to bury your guns! And it wouldn't hurt to keep a full pantry, either.

Build alternatives to the system. The system derives its power from our consent and participation. If we can devise ways of doing for ourselves those things that government typically does for us, we will be freer. What if kin and fellow Asafolk took responsibility for their own health, education, and welfare? The world could be a very different place!

To Asafolk, freedom is an integral part of our traditional culture and our religion. It's up to us to defend it!

Friagabi lives!



PROFILES in ASATRU

Turn elsewhere in this issue, and you'll see an article on Loki by someone called Weyland Lee. That name might not mean much to you, unless you somehow know that he teaches a course in Teutonic religion at the "Experimental College" affiliated with the University of California, at Davis. Still, a name's just a name - and you deserve to know Weyland better than that.

When I met him at the Denny's restaurant near the university campus, he was a presentable fellow who immediately made an impression with his intelligence and sincerity. He's another of modern Asatru's unsung toilers, a man giving his time and talent for the Gods. And like all of us, Weyland has a story to tell. Rather than hash it over in my words, let me give you his account as he wrote it, after my pestering...

"I was born April 7th, 1971 in a small Illinois town called Monmouth. As a child, I was raised by my grandmother in great poverty, but with more love than most could ask for. We moved to southern California when I was seven or eight, but not long afterward, my grandmother became very ill, and I spent most of my time caring for her.

As I grew older I always felt that there was something missing in my life, but I didn't know what. As a hardcore atheist I knew it wasn't God. After my grandmother's death I moved to Sacramento to work, and the gap in my heart just kept on growing.

In 1990 I met the woman who was to fill that gap and pave the way for my discovery of our ancestral faith. Her name was Paula, and through her and her children, I came to understand the things that are the underpinnings of Asatru: love, honor, family, responsibility.

I began to grow in spiritual ways, knowing that atheism didn't work for me anymore. Searching, I stumbled onto the Church of the Subgenius. While reveling in the sheer goofiness and dark humor of this belief system, I knew it wasn't serious. In a book published by the COSI saw the address for the Asatru Free Assembly, and I wrote, but I had missed the boat.

I purchased books on Asatru from a local occult store as a lark, and I knew that I had found something true and deeper than I ever imagined.

After several years of hard study, I felt that I should do something to bring others the satisfaction that I had found. I began teaching classes in Teutonic religion at UC Davis, at the Experimental College. I was terrified to speak in front of people, but I did it anyway. I had to give something back to the Gods and Goddesses for the heartfood they had given me.

Each and every one of us is a standard bearer for Asatru, and it is up to us to keep Odin's flame burning high at night so that our people may see it and return home. We are all knights of order, and we all must do our best, in our own way, to hold off entropy and fulfill the destiny of ourselves and the Gods."

Never fear, Weyland - as a knight of the Gods, you're riding tall in the saddle!

Loki Loki Loki

by Weyland Lee

You are bound to a razor-sharp sword above you a great serpent coils, scales sliding in darkness, and venom oozes from its fangs. A poison rain. Next to you, you feel the warmth of any thought of love for you. You hear her weeping, matched by the fall of venom into the hollow, helpless body. She turns to empty the bowl from your skin, burning you, searing your soul. Your anguish of your deepening madness, and by the time it is soon to be fulfilled in smoke and fire and ash, the universe; you are the beginning of the next.

Who is this figure bound in darkness?

Some see him as the embodiment of entropy and dissolution. To others, a symbol of laughter, cosmic mirth. Is he any of these, or more?

LOKI AS LIFEGIVER

When the Three walked over the sunken, diminished Midgard, Loki was among them, but then by another name: Lodur. He was warm, and he led to the very new thing that the Gods had made: love and beauty called Mankind. He gave us the gift of humor and lightheartedness. He was the giver of humor and lightheartedness. He was inside the breast of the warrior laughing at the jest that tells a jest even as hunger gnaws at the woman trapped in a place she never wanted to be. He was the sweetest and cruelest of gifts: hope.

LOKI THE COMPANION

He is the traveler, the one that holds the reins as he follows venture deep into the cold lands...

Loki Loki **Loki** Loki Loki

by Weyland Lee

You are bound to a razor-sharp stone by fetters of blood and sinew. Above you a great serpent coils, scales sliding over each other in the heady darkness, and venom oozes from its fangs, dropping through the air like poison rain. Next to you, you feel the warmth of the only creature who holds any thought of love for you. You hear her weeping, the steady fall of her tears matched by the fall of venom into the bowl with which she shields your helpless body. She turns to empty the bowl and you feel the poison strike your skin, burning you, searing your soul. Your pain is matched only by the anguish of your deepening madness, and by the realization that your Wyrð is soon to be fulfilled in smoke and fire and death. You are the end of this universe; you are the beginning of the next.

Who is this figure bound in darkness? Who is Loki?

Some see him as the embodiment of all that is destructive - a living symbol of entropy and dissolution. To others he is the personification of laughter, cosmic mirth. Is he any of these, or is he more?

LOKI AS LIFEGIVER

When the Three walked over the surface of beautiful and still unblemished Midgard, Loki was among them, one of them. He was known then by another name: Lodur. He was warmth, and that is what he contributed to the very new thing that the Gods had made. He gave a gift to the work of love and beauty called Mankind. He gave us the gift of inner fire, of life. He was the giver of humor and lightheartedness, of the fire of the soul that burns inside the breast of the warrior laughing as he walks to his Doom, the child that tells a jest even as hunger gnaws into his belly, the dreams of a woman trapped in a place she never wanted to be. He was the giver of the sweetest and cruelest of gifts: hope.

LOKI THE COMPANION

He is the traveler, the one that holds civilization close when he and his fellows venture deep into the cold lands outside the garths of Gods and

A sense of belonging - it's something we all want, in one way or another. It's not that we want to "fit in" at any price, of course; we also want to be individuals, and we're pretty picky about just which groups deserve our allegiance.

Still, there's a common human need to belong to something good, noble, and larger than ourselves. Even we ruggedly individualistic types want it, so long as our cranky needs for "space", for freedom, can be reasonably met at the same time.

And guess what - Asatru are lucky enough to have found the best kind of belonging! Not only do we have a bond with other Asatruar, we have the unbreakable ties that connect us with our living kin, and those of our ancestors who have left this world, as well. Their genes, as well as their encoded spiritual energy, live on in us. More than that, these forebears can actually be reborn in the family line - we are our own ancestors!

At Yule we praise our ancestors and reaffirm this connection to the clan. We welcome our forefathers and foremothers into our midst, and try to understand - really understand - just what it means to be their descendants.

So how do we do this? Well, Asatruar have lots of ways, and we wrote about them in Living Asatru. But there are other ways, and what I have in mind are ones you can celebrate with your whole family - even if they'd faint at the slightest thought of non-Christian rites! Aunt Maud need never know she's honoring a principle that was ancient before her remotest kin ever heard of Jesus.

Here are some ideas:

* PUT YOUR LIFE ON PAPER!

Ever done any genealogy? Then you know the frustration of digging out the legalistic details of a great-grandfather's life...only to realize that what you have is a skeleton, bare bones of dates and names, documented by a birth certificate at one end and an obituary at the other. Where is the flesh?

Spare your descendants this sadness. Write about your life. Start with a biographical sketch, but don't stop there. Speak across the years of your feelings, fears, hopes, trials, triumphs. It may seem

enough of a problem in an ordinary family photograph album - Is that Uncle Bob, or his daughter when she was just a baby?).

Your time capsule should be water-proof and fireproof. Many companies sell records storage cabinets that will meet your needs, or you can investigate the containers some people use for burying their firearms, precious metals, and the like. Even if this vault takes a more humble form, ensure that it has a lock on it so people can't violate the spirit of the endeavor by peeking ahead of time! Don't worry about losing the key; locks yield to bolt cutters or hacksaws!

NEW WAYS to meet OLD ANCESTORS

by Stephen A. McNallen

trivial to you, but a hundred years from now your kin (You in a new guise?) will thank you!

I'd recommend keeping this life-picture on disk and on paper. Do you have an unofficial family historian? He or she should definitely have a copy, as should your children, and don't forget to stick one in the safety deposit box at the bank.

* PUT YOUR FAMILY IN A BOX!

Specifically, a time capsule. A family reunion, or a family-focused festival such as Yule, would be an excellent time to do this. Simply have everyone contribute something of themselves to be locked away for a set period of time, say, 25 years. Remember to specify that each item, whether a photo, a letter, or other artifact, needs to be properly labeled (This can be

***BRING YOUR ANCESTORS BACK TO LIFE!**...In a manner of speaking, that is. At a family gathering, have selected people represent specific ancestors. Arm them with facts, photos, documents, and material artifacts. Each gives a short presentation on the designated individual. For example, he or she may give a brief and rather ordinary biographical sketch of great-great grandmother Pearl, and then enrich it with photos of her wedding and a picnic by the river from the summer of 1909. The finishing touch could be Pearl's brooch, accompanied by the story of how she almost lost it on the Golden Gate Bridge.

It's occurred to me that this exercise could get very interesting indeed if we assume either literal rebirth within the family line, or actual communication with ancestors "on the other side." Is it

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OLD ANCESTORS

L. McNallen

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possible to be "possessed" by a forebear, or even by one's own previous incarnation? Thoughts like this are spookier than I intended when I started writing this article, but our ancestors wouldn't have scoffed at them, and we should keep an open mind.

***MEMORIZE YOUR LINEAGE!**

Whenever worthies met in ancient Europe, they might well establish their credentials by reciting their ancestry. Beowulf did this in Hrothgar's famous hall, and the Icelandic sagas are full of genealogies. So, how's yours? Research and practice until you can say "I am Stephen, son of Gerald, son of the Albert who pioneered the Texas oil fields, the son of Andrew, son of James, son of Patrick who came from County Tyrone...who came from the bosom of Odin and Frigga!". Some sort of formulaic finish is permissible, once you have gone back to the limits of your knowledge.

How many of us can do this? Not many! And more's the pity, for great connectedness, and much might, lies in this sense of identity with the ancestors. Try it, and the technique will speak for itself.

We all belong - to a clan line going back through the centuries and millenia to the first of our kind. Asatru is a religion that urges us to celebrate and to explore this wonderful kinship. Let's not fail to do it, and to reap the rewards that await us!

Does this topic interest you?

Then you should inquire about the AFA's guild that deals in family traditions and genealogy.

A TIP OF THE HORN...

A TIP OF THE HORN to 10-year old Cameron Noel of Chalmette, Louisiana. When a would-be kidnapper threw Cameron's five year old friend Ernest into his car, the 66-pound youngster kicked the abductor in the groin and followed up with another to the head. He then unlocked the back door and let Ernest out. Angry parents completed the apprehension, leading to the man's arrest. Way to go!



AND, THE OTHER TIP OF THE HORN...



AND THE OTHER TIP OF THE HORN to the Norwegian government! It built an all-weather soccer field in inner-city Brooklyn, because long ago that town had a large Norwegian immigrant population. Within ten days, it had been destroyed and burned by hoodlums. Undismayed, the Norwegians will build a second field in an equally "underprivileged" neighborhood. (Editor's note - Isn't it ironic that the word "neighborhood," more recently abbreviated to "hood," is derived from Old Norse?)

CELTS and GERMANICS

by Stephen A. McNallen

The last time you poured over an issue of *The Runestone* you saw how the Celtic and Germanic tribes were so similar in material culture, and astoundingly parallel in many of their customs. The details echo between the two cultures.

In these pages, we're expanding the discussion of their customs, and the overall cosmology in which the Celts and Germanics lived.

If you recall, I opened the earlier article with a comparison of two essentially identical warrior paradises that waited for the two of us and his cousin among the Celts. The overall picture of these two major groupings of European tribes goes back to the beginning of time.

Consider for a moment the question of sacrifice. In both cultures, the Gods received offerings from Celts and Germanics. These offerings included in battle, food and beakers, miscellaneous items, and sometimes in the same way, to the point that we can't tell which are German and which are Celtic.

When the Druids sacrificed to the Gods, they poured mead on the assembled people with a sprig of green grass. The mead in blood could be directly transferred to the Gods. The Germanics did exactly the same thing in the course of their sacrifices. Both religions use mead or other fermented drinks.

Across the length and breadth of our European continent, the Gods in the open air, because we thought of them as being limiting, lessening structures like the Christian churches of our days, our figures of the Gods and Goddesses were carved from pieces of wood to which Nature had already added only a few refinements from human hands. The Celts as well as Germans.

Tribesmen of both groups used intoxicating drinks. It could be mead, but it could be ale as well. And, while we're talking about mead, let's remember the fit or frenzy of the Celts and Germanics. In old Ireland, essentially the same warrior

There you are -- in a comfortable chair; the air is warm and aromatic from the fire; you take an occasional swig of ale as an old bound dog mutters by your feet. A nice scene--but something is missing. You read your last RUNESTONE days ago! It sure would be nice to stimulate the evening with some of those controversial articles by Steve McNallen.

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CELTS and GERMANS

Part II

by Stephen A. McNallen

The last time you poured over an issue of **THE RUNESTONE**, we were telling you how the Celtic and Germanic tribes were identical in physique, alike in material culture, and astoundingly parallel in matters of religion. Even the Gods themselves are much more than merely counterparts of each other, for in some cases minute details echo between the two cultures.

In these pages, we're expanding the discussion to include specific religious practices, and the overall cosmology in which the Gods and humankind play out their drama.

If you recall, I opened the earlier article with a meadhall scene that alluded to the virtually identical warrior paradises that waited beyond death for the Teutonic man-at-arms and his cousin among the Celts. The overlap between the religious lore of these two major groupings of European tribes goes far, far beyond this, however.

Consider for a moment the question of sacrifice. Bogs throughout Northern Europe received offerings from Celts and Germans alike. Weapons and armor captured in battle, food and beakers, miscellaneous items - all were deposited in lakes and marshes in the same way, to the point that we can't even tell which finds are German and which are Celtic.

When the Druids sacrificed to the Gods, the blood from an animal was sprinkled on the assembled people with a sprig of greenery, so the divine energy inherent in blood could be directly transferred to them. In historical Asatru, our forebears did exactly the same thing in the course of a sacrifice or blot. (Today, modern practitioners of both religions use mead or other fermented drink instead of blood.)

Across the length and breadth of our European homeland, our ancestors honored the Gods in the open air, because we thought it inappropriate to shut them up into limiting, lessening structures like the Christian churches. Similarly, in the earliest days, our figures of the Gods and Goddesses were simple indeed - often carved from pieces of wood to which Nature had already given the basic shape, awaiting only a few refinements from human hands. These customs accurately describe Celts as well as Germans.

Tribesmen of both groups used intoxicating drink in religious ritual. Often this was mead, but it could be ale as well. And, while we're considering altered states of consciousness, let's remember the fit or frenzy of the Odin-gripped warriors, the berserkers. In old Ireland, essentially the same warrior's madness bore the name of *ferg*.

Readers of the Norse stories will remember how Sigurd the Volsung killed the dragon Fafnir and roasted its heart. When he burned his finger, he stuck it in his mouth and found that he could understand the speech of birds. The Irish hero Fenius gained the same gift when he singed his finger on a cooking salmon.

When we look at the map of the universe used by the Germans and Celts, we can't help but see the likeness. Both have the giant tree, the center of the cosmos and indeed the framework in which all the worlds are found: to Asafolk, it's Yggdrasil; the Celts call it Bile.

In ancient Germania, the Well of Wyrd, contained the deeds that make up the past. Drinking from its waters gave wisdom, and Odin surrendered one of his eyes for the privilege. As it turns out, the Celts have an almost identical well; hazel nuts fall into it where they are eaten by the Salmon of Wisdom.

The Northern peoples are essentially one, in both their physical aspects and in their ancient religions.

In conclusion, the only real difference between Celtic and Germanic religion seems to be the names by which the Gods are called. A viking of the tenth century would likely have felt quite comfortable in a Celtic ritual among the Gauls a thousand years earlier. Celtic religion deviates from the "Asatru norm" no more than do, for example, a priestess of Freya in Iceland and a warrior pledged to Wotan in Germania in Herman's time. Indeed, one is inclined to say that there is only "European religion" - and that the Germanic and Celtic beliefs are two expressions of it.

So what are the implications of all this? Well, it means that the Irishman need not feel out of place calling on Gods more often associated with Norway's fjords than the Emerald Isle's hills and valleys. Ultimately all us Northfolk are spiritual as well as genetic kin.

Also, Celtic-Germanic unity flies in the face of the sometimes-heard assertion that since Europeans often boast roots in different countries we're somehow of mixed *ancestry*. How often have you heard someone say "I'm a Heinz 57 blend... part Irish, part Swedish, with some English and German thrown in"? Clearly, that's not mixed at all, because the Northern peoples are essentially one, in both their physical aspects and in their ancient religions. We mustn't let people divide us on the basis of superficialities!

Thirdly, the catalog of our similarities means we can use the one to fill gaps in our knowledge of the other. As we reconstitute the tapestry of our ancient Asatru beliefs, there will be holes where the moths of time and persecution have done their work. But if we know the common pattern and how it's woven in the Celtic material, we can patch the holes with greater confidence.

Enough! All this scholarship makes thirsty work! I'm going to pour a few bottles of Guinness into my mead horn, and toast all things Celtic/Nordic. *Síol, and Slainte, to you!*



Be warned,
O Loki
Of shifting
Eyes!

From Niflhel
Noble Baldur himself
Will return
To host
Like mighty Oak
The white-berried
Unforgiveness
Of Frigga's
Unbounden mistrel

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BREAK THE CYCLE

-- Robert von Testa Redy

Be warned,
O Loki
Of shifting
Eyes!

From Niflhel
Noble Baldur himself
Will return
To host
Like mighty Oak
The white-berried
Unforgiveness
Of Frigga's
Unbounden mistrel

Sigyn's cup
Will then suffice
No longer, as
Death that you gave
To you shall return
Forever
By the mindful
Asatruarar
Of the Fair-One

And nevermore
Shall the Sisters
Thread
Your web.

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U

RUNE NAME: *Sowilo*

KEY CONCEPTS: *Sowilo*, rune of the life-giving sun, offers success, honor, strength and the power of will. *Sowilo* is both a guide and a path for the seeker of magical inspiration as well as invincibility.

AFFIRMATION: Victory beckons. Honor is my broad shield; will, my bright sword.

men. A story, a song, a ribald jest, his is the word that lights the void with humanness. He maintains our awareness of life when all around speak of gravity and lifelessness and the leaden footfalls of dead things.

He is the chronicler of heroic and cowardly actions, the one that observes and remembers for good or for ill. When the Gods and Goddesses gather in Aegir's hall snug in warmth and contentment, it is he that remembers the hidden things that the Aesir and Vanir had rather forget. But, in the nights when the cold winds of Jotunheim blow even into the golden halls of Asgard, it is Loki who gives Bragi the words to sing. Bragi is the weaver of words and songs, but Loki is the one that travels alongside the heroes and remembers.

LOKI AS ENTROPY

The idyll of early Midgard ended with the arrival of the Norns. They came from a hidden place in the mist, and where the Gods had created the intricate clockwork of the universe, it was the three Wyrd sisters that set it running. The worlds of men and the Gods both now had an ending as well as a beginning, and each soul had their place in it. Loki's place was that of the destroyer, the leveler of the old to make way for the new. He was to bring anguish and heartache; his would be the hand that would crush all that Gods and men had striven to create. He who had given humanity one of the greatest gifts would be the one responsible for the death of its children, and the destruction of their works and world.

LOKI AS THE MAD GOD

His Wyrd laid down in the Well, Loki had no real choice in what he was to become. He could alter his way of striking, leavening the murder of his fate with humor, but in the end it was to be the same. He is the Lifegiver corrupted by what he is fated to be. The murder of Balder is the culmination of a creeping blackness that fills Loki's soul like a cancer, transmuting mischief into madness. He is slipping, falling into the abyss of his Wyrd, and the final punishment of the Gods drives him over the brink. His sons are murdered before him, one slaughtering the other, his slain son's entrails used to bind the stricken father far beneath the earth in punishment for doing what his orlog compelled. There he is bound for years immemorial, venom burning traces over his skin and eating away the remainder of his sanity. He is no longer the personification of laughter. Now he is the embodiment of the

anguished scream. He leads the other Children in the destruction of all that is beautiful and sane. In a moment of lunacy, he destroys with a crazed smile and achieves what the Norns laid down for him. He is the beginning.

What is Loki? Companion, liarsmith, all these things...and much, much more?

Yule

It's so easy to describe the joy of Yule. After all, this is a holiday that was it got cluttered up with manger scenes and tales imported from the Middle East. It's like celebrating Christmas! The tradition is ours, the evergreen and candles and who acts a lot like Thor in disguise - all part of our traditional religion. The customs change very little at this time of year. It's the roots of this holy season, and you're talking

It's the feeling of Yule that is hard to describe. You can almost hear the music of the stillness...the way time seems to bend and moments of your life in a heartbeat...from that first Christmas you remember to the most recent. Sure, we could predict all the things we know about the symbolism that goes with it, but the feeling it in your bones is another thing entirely. No book to tell you what every atom of your

Well, the best of Yuletide joy and peace may year shine bright on your hopes and dreams.

anguished scream. He leads the other Outsiders, the outlaws of the universe, in the destruction of all that is beautiful and sane. Filled with the fires of lunacy, he destroys with a crazed smile and tears pouring down his face. He achieves what the Norms laid down for him. He is the end of everything. And the beginning.

What is Loki? Companion, lifebringer, destroyer of all? Or is he all these things...and much, much more?

Yule

It's so easy to describe the proper Asatru celebration of Yule. After all, this is a holiday that was especially ours, before it got cluttered up with manger scenes and angels and improbable tales imported from the Middle East. Celebrating Yule is...well, like celebrating Christmas! The tree is ours, the familial feeling is ours, the evergreen and candles and roaring fires and a Santa who acts a lot like Thor in disguise - all these are our heritage, part of our traditional religion. The newcomer to Asatru has to change very little at this time of year. Just be aware of the ancient roots of this holy season, and you're halfway there.

It's the feeling of Yule that is harder to capture...the way you can almost hear the music of the spheres in the snowy stillness...the way time seems to bend so that it captures all the moments of your life in a heartbeat...the way all Yules are one, from that first Christmas you remember as a child down to the most recent. Sure, we could predict all these feelings from what we know about the symbolism that goes with this holiday, but to feel it in your bones is another thing entirely. You don't need a book to tell you what every atom of you knows beyond doubt.

Well, the best of Yuletide joy to you, and may the new year shine bright on your hopes and dreams!

BITS & PIECES

Guilds of the Asatru Folk Assembly are already springing into existence in anticipation of that organization's birth. The **Warrior Guild** was ritually revived at Feast of the Einherjar, and half a dozen blades were blessed with the rune of Tyr. Likewise, the **Aerospace Technology Guild** has laid plans for renewed activity. Its main mission will be to send the message, loud and clear, that Asatru is not a relic of the ancient past. Other tasks will be to encourage Asa-kids to study space science, and to "launch rockets and have fun." An **Asakids Pen Pal Club** is in the works.

Other possible guilds in search of dedicated organizers include groups dedicated to brewing, runes, arts and crafts, computers, organic gardening, *seithr* (Norseshamanism), and much, much more! If you are interested either in the Warrior Guild, the Aerospace Technology Guild, or one of these other possibilities - drop us a line!

If you're looking for **figurines of Odin and Thor**, you can get them as part of "the viking collection" offered by Hemslojd, P.O. Box 152, Lindsborg, Kansas 67456. They're approximately four inches tall, and are cast in a laquered, pewter-like metal. I've seen a **Freya** one

as well, but it wasn't in this catalog. You might ask if they have it as an earlier part of the series. Other items of interest sold by this company include the famous Dala horses and Yule goats made of straw; both are just the thing for the holiday season. For information, or to order by phone, call 1-800-779-3344.

One of our long-time readers and subscribers, C. Dean Andersson, has a short story titled "Small Brown Bags of Blood" appearing in an anthology called **Dark Destiny**. It's supposed to be out before Yule, so you can start looking for it now. This tale tells the "true" story of the werewolves and their connection with the berserks. It also draws a great picture of the contrast between the Asatru and the Christian worldviews. I've read it, and I liked it!

Wotan's Kindred will host its **Yule Feast** on December 17 in the Portland, Oregon/southern Washington area. Among the attractions: a copy of a megalithic stone circle featuring HUGE boulders, a 750-pound boar, a swordsmith, and a fireworks display! It's also a good place to see Ron McVan's artwork. The ritual will be a "sacred drama" featuring lots of pageantry and an opera singer. If you're interested (and you should be!), contact Wotan's Kindred, 38611 N.E. Amboy Road, Yacolt, WA 98675.



MOOT

Dear Steve,

...I'd be *very* interested in subscribing... not sure if subscriptions from non-White... being a former "trained professional killer"... also have a PhD. in ethnology and archeology... various megalithic sites. I'm afraid this rather... into "the Pagan myth" of a "gentle non-aggressive... matriarchal Never Never Land [as contrasted... Europeans." I think *that one* came about because... writer] was scared by a pony as a child...

Greetings, Bill!

Thanks for your letter! As you correctly... importance around here. However, I really... affinity reading our humble little magazine...

I guess the whole thing requires some... two views on race - the politically correct... Nazi, genocide-contemplating" dogma on the other... there are dozens (hundreds?) of shadings in between... mology helps shape both personality and culture... they're superior but because they're MINE... prosperity and style forever. To hell with the... positive, with the attitude of "What can I do... "What can I do to hurt somebody today?"

Also, I support the right of other people... could gladly work alongside some rain forest... international corporation trying to pour us all... mold - the much-vaunted New World Order... said out his own ancestors, and he's my enemy.

MOOT POINT

Dear Steve,

...I'd be *very* interested in subscribing to RUNESTONE. However, I'm not sure if subscriptions from non-White, non-Asatru are welcome... Besides being a former "trained professional killer" and a meat eater on top of that, I also have a PhD. in ethnology and archeology. I've done a bit of digging on various megalithic sites. I'm afraid this rather negates any chance of me buying into "the Pagan myth" of a "gentle non-aggressive Goddess-worshipping matriarchal Never Never Land [as contrasted to] "nasty old horse-riding Indo-Europeans." I think *that one* came about because [a prominent feminist Pagan writer] was scared by a pony as a child...

Bill Hines

Greetings, Bill!

Thanks for your letter! As you correctly intuit, race is a matter of some importance around here. However, I really have no problem with people of any ethnicity reading our humble little magazine! In fact, our latest is enclosed as a gift.

I guess the whole thing requires some elaboration. To most people, there are two views on race - the politically correct "we are all the same" credo and the "neo-Nazi, genocide-contemplating" dogma on the other end of the spectrum. Actually, there are dozens (hundreds?) of shadings in between. My own position is that biology helps shape both personality and culture; that I love my people, not because they're superior but because they're MINE; and that I want my people to exist with prosperity and style forever. To hell with the melting pot! I try to keep all this positive, with the attitude of "What can I do for my people today?" rather than "What can I do to hurt somebody today?"

Also, I support the right of other peoples to work out their own destiny. I would gladly work alongside some rain forest dweller against a nominally White international corporation trying to pour us all into the same economic and social mold - the much-vaunted New World Order. A white-skinned internationalist has sold out his own ancestors, and he's my enemy.

I do feel we European-descended people have some real challenges facing us. Our population is dropping (in absolute numbers, not just proportion), our culture is dying, our power is shrinking, and we have lost our collective soul in much the manner that an individual loses his or her soul, and seeks the help of a shaman to recover it. We must all be shamans, to help Eurofolk get well...

Live long and prosper!
Steve

Hails!

Of course I'll stay with you and **THE RUNESTONE!** Are there any other real Odinit publications out there?

It seems to me that there are too many of our kinsmen that are yielding to the yuppies prancing through the doors, trying their best to turn Asatru into some warm fuzzy, neo-viking, new age, weird sex religious anti-tribal fad.

I find it refreshing that you openly put down the socialistic ideas of the New World Order types. Keep up the good work.

Odin Lives!
S.O.

Greetings!

Thanks for the praise! But in all honesty, yes, there are other real Odinit/Asatru publications out there. Vor Tru, from the Asatru Alliance (P.O. Box 961, Payson, AZ 85541) is one with a philosophical orientation similar to our own - this in spite of a perceptible ideological shift within the Alliance itself.

Hail Odin!
Steve

JANUARY 9 - This Day of Remembrance Tryggvason of Norway executed his crime was refusing to give up Asatru, his land and all his other wealth. Those who were in his honor, and by doing something in his honor, Claf tried so hard to stamp out.

JANUARY 22 - The trillium one in the snow our spirits lifted. Gregarius, just the same, build a snow statue of the hammer-wielding god, have a party. Take a walk without your shoes back to your house for a short while.

FEBRUARY 9 - Eyvind Kinnif was a hero. In Remembrance we recall how Claf's men re-hot embers on his stomach. Eyvind was here. Salute his courage the same way.

FEBRUARY 14 - Valentine's Day? No, it's the God of Rebirth. Frey has a role to play in the family line, as our ancestor thought here and now?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Does Asatru involve ancestor worship?

Asatru says we should honor our ancestors, we are bound to those ancestors in a special way. However, we do not worship them.

We believe our forebears have special qualities just as surely as they have traits. They live on in us. The limitations of time and space do not limit our ancestry even though we do not worship them as such.

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 depths 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 re-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. Frey 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

Does Asatru involve ancestor worship?

Asatru says we should honor our ancestors. It also says we are bound to those ancestors (and to our descendants) in a special way. However, we do not actually worship them.

We believe our forebears have passed to us certain spiritual qualities just as surely as they have given us various physical traits. They live on in us. The family or clan is above and beyond the limitations of time and place. Thus we have a reverence for our ancestry even though we do not involve ourselves in ancestor worship as such.

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